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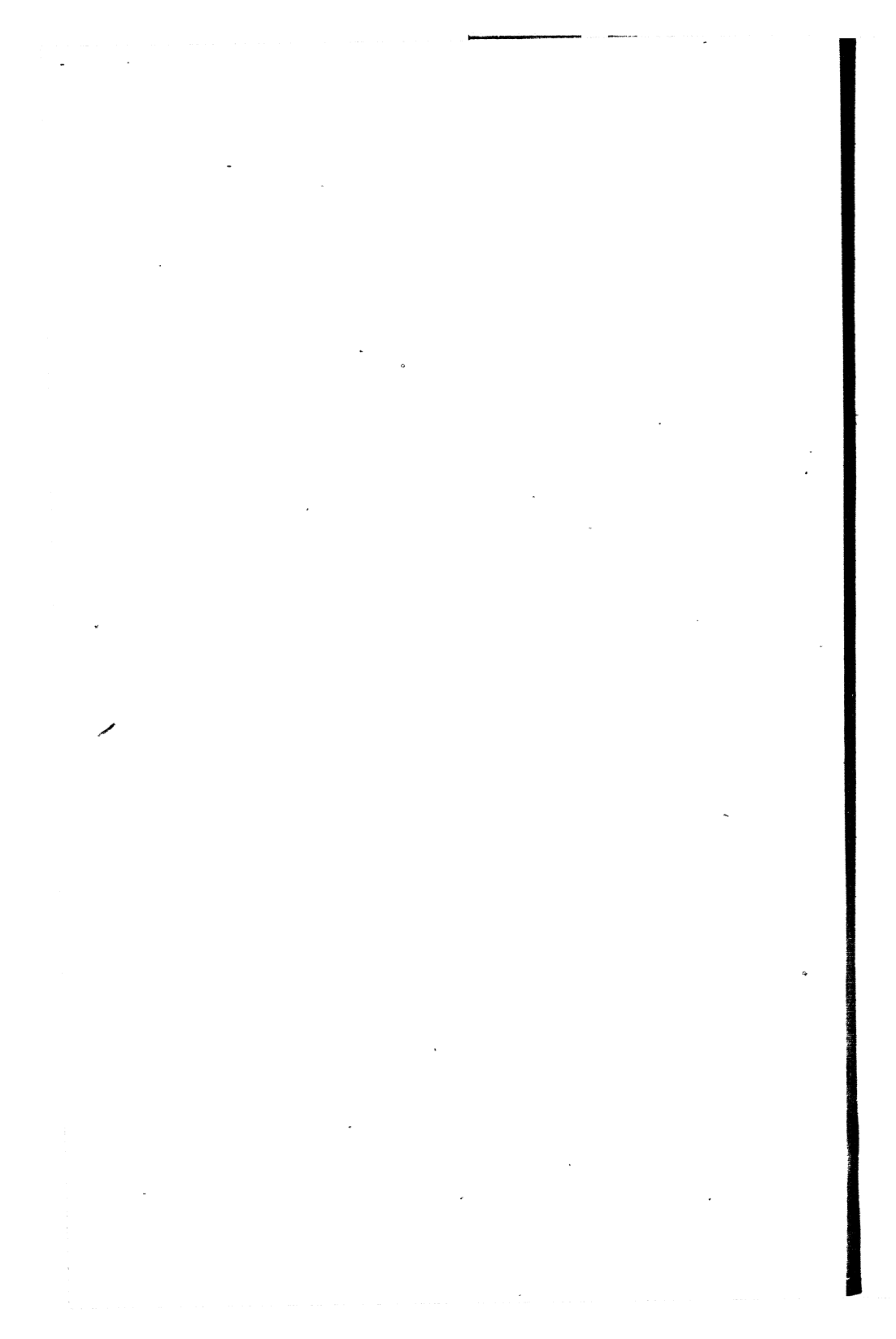
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THE
DEAR OLD FARM

A CANADIAN STORY.

BY MALCOLM,
Author of "The Ingle-Nook."

1897
THE JOURNAL, PUBLISHERS,
ST. THOMAS, ONT.



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ERRATA

Page 21, read "they" for "They." Page 23, "magnificent" for "magnificent." Page 32, "marvellous" for "marvelous." Page 65, put "dead" after "nor" instead of after "Harry." Page 67, leave out "house" after "school-house." Page 69, read "lightning" for "lighting." Page 104, "dissembler" for "disserubler."

ILLUSTRATIONS.

The Home-Coming, - - - - -	Page 8.
Col. Thomas Talbot, - - - - -	" 32.
Summer Evening at Maple Bend, - - - - -	" 48.
The Old Swimming Hole, - - - - -	" 64.
Winter Sport at School - - - - -	" 72.
A Shady Corner in the Pasture. - - - - -	" 112.
Skirmish at Fort Erie, - - - - -	" 168.
The Dear Old Farm, - - - - -	" 196.

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To the Memory of
Those Brave and Hardy Men,
The Pioneers of Upper Canada,
Who made this Province
what it is now,
The Home of Contentment,
This Volume is Dedicated
By the Author.

"I remember the home on the hillside,
House, garden, old well and the lane,
The wide-spreading fields of the upland,
And the lowland with billows of grain.
Again, the fair redbreasts are mating,
And building soft nests 'mid the trees ;
Of cherries, blood red, I am dreaming,
As I sleep 'mid the hum of the bees."

PREFACE.

Even to-day, when the printing presses are turning out volume after volume daily, the author has no apology to offer for the appearance of this book. He does not intend to doff his cap to any patron, nor to ask the indulgence of any critic, knowing full well that if his work in this line is false it will perish from off the face of the earth, regardless of any attempted bolstering up, and if it be true, even in ever so small a degree, that essence of truth will be preserved, despite censure.

Nor does he lay claim to any exaggerated degree of modesty. The son of one of the early pioneers, his childhood passed amid the later surroundings of the axe-and-spinning-wheel period of our national existence, a large share of his life spent where stories of pioneer days could be gathered at first hand the author believes that he has a story to tell, and that he can tell it, in a rude and halting fashion it may be, but truthful as far as it goes.

He does not expect to be able to bring out the charm of the first telling — the crackling fire of logs in the chimney corner, the quaint old cheery face of the pioneer, sharpened by intelligent battling with his environments for an existence, and the snoozing house dog on the mat, a very picture of content. If he can but give a glimpse of these to any reader, he will feel that his work has not been in vain.

Strange to say, too, in these days of books written "with a purpose," the author makes no such claim for this volume; nor will the reader find therein a mystical and often disgusting study on the relation of the sexes. If he had had the first named in mind when writing he would have labelled this book "Essays," and if the second "Medical Talks." This volume, however, is sent forth just as it is, a plain, homely, Canadian story.

Malcolm.

St. Thomas, Ont., New Year's, 1897.

The Dear Old Farm.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOME COMING.

“Shut in from all the world without,
We set 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.”

—*From Snow Bound.*

THE scene with which our story opens might not be accounted a pleasant one to all people, but to a Canadian or New Englander landscapes of snow have a peculiar charm. For deep down under the snowy, fleecy mantle of white, they know that the future plant and fruit are being nourished, which with the first burst of spring clothes the hillsides in a glorious green, unknown in warmer lands. If to them is given the brilliantly red dying splendors of autumn and the harsh severity of winter's arrested plant growth, to them is also given the subtle thrill of spring's annual resurrection to life again. Life in northern countries is much the same as in the tropics, it has its ups and downs, its joys and sorrows, its passions and ambitions. But let us look a little closer and see for ourselves, dimly it may be, but we can at least get the shadows if no more.

It was a typical Canadian winter day in the early part of January. All day long the snow had been sifting down quietly through the still air, till in the late afternoon all the bleak outlines of bare fields and zig-zag rail fences and half grubbed-out stumps and even the course of the little creek were all swallowed up in a uniform coat of white, several feet deep, for this was the ending up of a three days snow-storm, piled high on top of what was before good sleighing. The branching beeches, the graceful maples and the tall old elms of the neighboring

forests were all alike laden down with such a wealth of snow, that it seemed as if their branches must give way, whilst the great, sprawling straw-stack at the back of the barn looked like the peak of a snow-capped mountain. The snow had now ceased falling and the sky assumed that steely gray appearance it always does before the weather turns colder, but away off in the southwest a bank of clouds still lingered, that meant a blow before the day was much older.

A tall, raw-boned man's figure, surmounted by a Glengarry cap with a heavy, blue tassel on it, was shovelling a road down a long lane that led from the road to the house, and which was now fast filling up with drifting snow, for already the wind had begun to rise. From time to time he stopped work, and leaning on his scoop-shovel, shaded his eyes from the whirling snow and looked long and earnestly, first in the direction of the substantial looking log house, where a thick smoke was pouring out of the kitchen chimney, and then toward the snowy road, where he evidently expected somebody. "That English fool of a boy drives so slow that the storm will catch the folks yet," he muttered to himself, at the same moment driving his shovel savagely into the snow as if to wreak his temper on it. His fierce energy soon dissipated the drifts, leaving a clear road up the lane, and, shouldering his shovel, he started for the barn, where already the cows are standing around under shelter of the straw stack, patiently waiting till the doors of their stable would be thrown open and each could take her own snug stall for the night. They see the approaching figure, shovel in hand, and low softly to each other, for well they know that he will not neglect them, such is the instinctive trust that continued kindness will inspire among the lower animals. As he goes about his chores, filling up the sheep racks here with sweet clover hay and bedding down the colts there with clean oat straw, or throwing a fork-full into the pig's quarters, where the old sow has been carrying straw in her mouth for some time to make her young comfortable, let us examine his features and try to learn who and what he is. His occupation seems an humble one, but humble characters are often worthy of study — say, rather the most worthy.

He is evidently a Scotchman; that long, kindly and yet severe face can belong to no other country. His manner is suited to his work, and yet there is something, an undefinable air of independence, which indicates that it would not be safe to class him in with the ordinary "chore boy" of the Canadian farmer. Usually these "boys" are

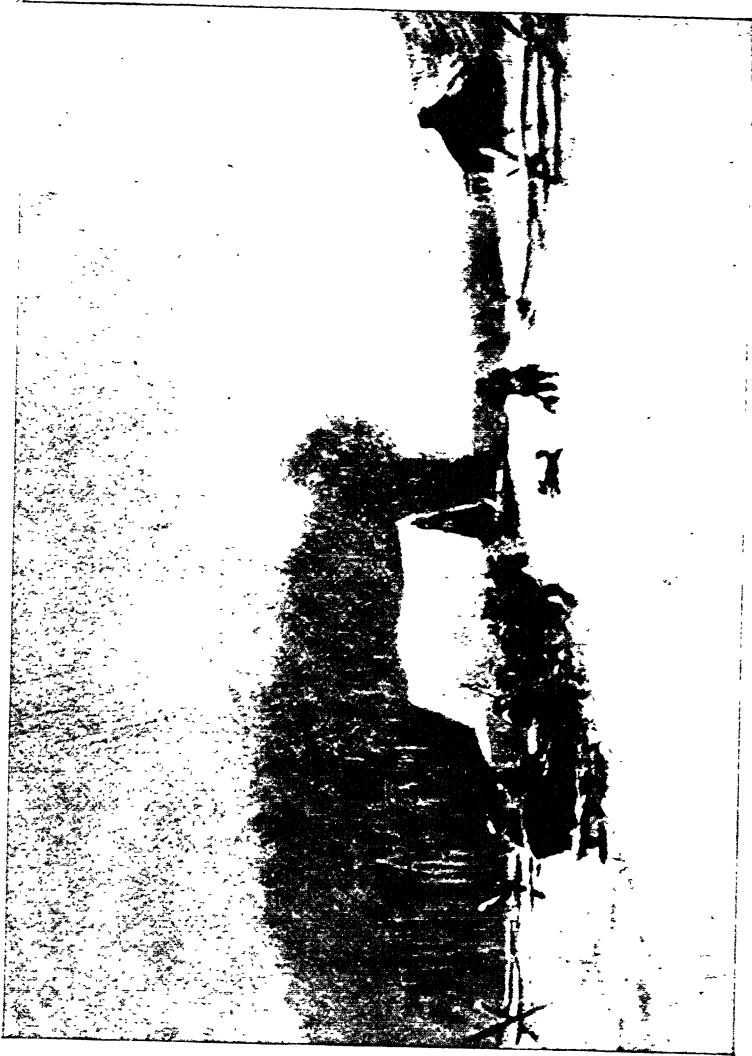
broken-down men, who have made a failure of life, country school-masters or such, lacking the ambition to rise, and gradually they have slipped back, cog by cog, till they are willing to do the chores during the winter for their keep. Where one of them is found who has the necessary ambition it is invariably found also that side by side is a craving for liquor. This variety make undesirable "chore boys," for they are usually snarling about what they might have been, when you find them sober, and when not sober the poor dumb creatures under their care have to suffer. Of the two kinds those who have failed to rise through sheer incapacity are preferred by farmers, for they are usually contented. But, after all, the position of "chore boy" is not without its pleasures. The satisfaction of knowing that all your stock is safely housed from the drifting storm, that the chores are all finished, and that now the long winter evening may be spent around the blazing wood-fire in the great old open fireplace, telling stories or exchanging gossip, as the sparks fly glowing up the big chimney, are comforts which only those who have enjoyed can understand.

All this time though, Donald Gordon—for such is his name—has been attending to his chores, and now he is standing at the corner of the stable, peering into the gathering storm, and straining his ears to catch the sound of sleigh-bells. Rover, the house dog, is beside him, alert and watchful for the same object—even more anxious than old Donald, as he was usually called, though his actual age was somewhere about forty. It is now almost twenty years since Donald Gordon, just landed from an immigrant ship at Quebec, had presented himself at the little clearing where John Ruthven was carving out a home in the forests of what was then Upper Canada. Mr. Ruthven and his wife had nothing to spare, but when their countryman asked permission to remain and share their fortunes, they could not refuse, and so Donald, in fair weather and foul, through harsh strugg'es and through sunshine (for even the early settlers had streaks of sunshine like golden threads running through their lowly lives) continued to make the Ruthven house his home.

Just one week before our story opens, the Ruthvens were called away to Toronto by the news that their only child Mary, now Mrs. Scott, was dying, and about a week later came a letter saying that she was dead, and asking to have the long sleigh and team set out at once to meet them, for they intended driving home with the body. Donald

could not go himself, for it would not do to leave the house and all to others, so he got William Stubbs, the eldest son of an English settler nearby, to drive the team. He had great faith in William's honesty of purpose, but not so much in his speed, for he was known as a rather stolidly slow fellow. However, Donald calculated that slow and all as he was, he could reach home before nightfall on the third day, and it was with growing impatience he watched the stormy winter's evening closing in, and still no sign of the homecomers.

At last, just as he was on the point of going to the house to prepare his own supper, and after he had, for the third or fourth time, cursed the slow-moving English in general and William Stubbs in particular, he and Rover heard the welcome sound of the big, open-throated bells which the horses wore, and then dimly through the drifting snow and gathering night they could see the heavy farm team making their way up the lane, the Englishman, stolid and unmoved, holding the reins loosely, Mr. and Mrs. Ruthven sitting in the seat behind, and placed lengthwise a box, containing all they once held dear on earth. Mrs. Ruthven held in her arms a thick bundle, from which issued sounds like an infant's cries, as indeed it was — Mary's baby boy, for which she had sacrificed her own life — the highest price that altruistic motherhood can pay. Rover bounded to meet the sleigh, half frantic with joy, leaping up at the horses' noses and barking wildly. But he met with no answering response, for the parents' hearts were heavy with grief over the loss of their only child. Mr. Ruthven assisted his wife with the babe to the house. Donald and the Englishman came behind carrying the long box, and thus, in the gathering night, through the drifting snow, Mary Ruthven was borne to the home she had left less than a year before, a happy, light-hearted girl. As they laid the box down in the little parlor, made cheerful by the cheap fancy work that Mary's own hands had wrought in the long winter evenings, whilst the wild winds made weird music in the tree tops outside, even William Stubbs was moved, and brushed his eyes uneasily with his coatsleeve, whilst Donald broke down completely, and sobbed as only a strong man can when grief has crushed the manly reserve, behind which he usually takes refuge. To the Englishman, Mary Ruthven was only remembered as one of the little girls at school, but to Donald Gordon she was a lovely forest flower that he had watched over from the first faint budding to the full fruition of bloom. No wonder, then, that his sorrow had broken down all barriers, and it was with a savage vehemence that



THE HOME-COMING.
From the original water-color by W. Smith.

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he snatched up the lantern to go and put away the horses. Whilst he is attending to this, the last chore of the evening, let us see how and why Mary Ruthven came to leave her lowly log home, and let us, if we can, get a glimpse at the early settler in his rude, homely, but cheery life.



CHAPTER II.

THE HOME SEEKING.

"I hear the tread of pioneers,
Of nations yet to be ;
The first low wash of waves where soon
Shall roll a human sea."

— *Whittier.*

THE story of the early settlers in Upper Canada still remains for some magician to weave. There has been much writing at, but not into their lives. The surface of the soil has been scratched, but no goodly crop has been brought forth, though the subsoil is rich to abundance. Nearly all the writers, who have ventured near this treasure country, took their incidents from the picturesque French period, the voyageurs, the Indian wars and so forth. But after all is said about their picturesqueness — and they were undoubtedly picturesque — there still remains the blunt fact that these people made but little headway in shaping out a nation. Had the efforts to colonize and civilize Canada been left to hunters and trappers solely there would most likely still be only a stretching line of trading posts from the Atlantic to the Pacific instead of the nucleus of a hardy northern nation. It is undeniable that Canada owes the greater part of its comparative success in nation building to the English, the Scotch, the German, and in a lesser degree to the Irish settlers, who came in like Will Carlton's hero in the little clearing

"Who had come with heart thrift in his song
And brought his wife and plunder right along."

These men were not hunters or trappers, they were practical men with one purpose in view, to hew out for themselves homes in the dark forests, and this they did so effectually, that to-day their posterity are in possession of one of the fairest lands in the world — a land where wealth is equally distributed, a land of even-handed liberty to all.

John Ruthven was one of the settlers who came into Canada immediately before the war of 1812-15. In the little glen of Argyleshire, where he was born, news came of a land of promise beyond the sea, towards which the settlers were fast flocking, and he resolved to risk his fortunes, such as they were, in this venture. He was only twenty years of age, he had no wealth, for his parents had all they could do to wring a scanty living from the bleak hillsides, that stretched upward around the Ruthvens' cabin, but he, the eldest of a family of four, had something better than wealth, for he had buoyant good nature and a stout, manly heart. All his boyhood days he had been drinking in pure mountain air, and though he did not know any of the fine points in the vaunted system of athletics, he did know, that he could race down one steep hill and up another without panting. He had barely any schooling, for schoolmasters were few and far between those days in the remote glens of Scotland, he could not conjugate a Latin verb to save his life, but he could point out the little mountain streams, which the shy trout could be whipped out of, and what is more, he could show you how to do it, too. Many a fine string thus found its way to his humble home, and helped greatly to reinforce the rather scanty larder there. Born of honest parents, bred up in a hard school of economy that taught him to regard money at its full value and not to be lightly wasted, fed on plain, coarse food and constantly out in the open air and sunlight, is it any wonder that John Ruthven was a man in everything, strong of action, strong of limb and lion hearted? For him the world was wide, its difficulties might loom up large to others, but when was a stout, healthy, young nature appalled by such? Success would be all the greater if the dragons in the path were fierce and powerful. Thank Heaven for blessed youth and its brave, fearless fighters, who do not fear the future's padlocked gate.

"God holds the key of all to be, and I am glad;
 If other hands but held the key I might be sad.
 Better that He unlock the door, and as it swings open say:
 Thy will is best."

Already John Ruthven was in love. Further up the glen was the wee house of Andrew Gillies, a shepherd, whose occupation often called him away from home for long periods at a time, and who was scarcely known among even his own neighbors. The few who were well acquainted with him described him as a dour, sour man, more given to singing

droning psalms to himself than to taking notice of those around him. The truth was that Andrew Gillies, from being alone so much with his sheep, out on the mountain slopes had unconsciously drawn into himself, until he scarcely felt kinship with his fellowmen. Not so with Jennie, the eldest daughter, a young woman, whom all, through the length and breadth of the glen almost worshipped, for a more winsome lassie was never seen. Old Sandy Johnston, the cripple, the glen's only beggar, used to say that "Jennie Gillie's laugh was better than any medicine for a sick child," and had even hinted that her sweet presence was the only tie that held him in an unthankful community, else he would have long since sought a district where bawbees were more plentiful—a doubtful advantage to the glen itself.

John Ruthven had often met this sunshiny girl, and to meet her was to love her. She, in turn, admired the manly natural bearing of this young man, "so they were wed, and merrily rang the bells." Quite often the young man of to-day is too timid to get married, unless all the little crooks in his pathway are first straightened out, all the rough places smoothed over in advance. Many a cowardly soul stands shivering for years, afraid that they cannot make a living for two, till the glow of youth has left them, a poor, forlorn derelict, floating aimlessly around on the vast ocean of life, with no one to mourn, when the final submersion comes. God pity the poor creature that is afraid to battle bravely with his two hands for the girl he loves, and as for her, she is much better to remain single than to join a partnership in which she would have to bear the heavier share of the burdens.

When John Ruthven and Jennie Gillies were married, they had absolutely no capital and no prospects, but still they were undaunted. With much difficulty John managed to get enough money advanced from among his relatives to pay their passage out to America, and leave a small margin besides, promising faithfully to send back this money as soon as he had earned enough to do so in that land of promise beyond the sea. One bleak, raw day in March, 1811, less than a month after his marriage, we find John Ruthven and his young bride on board the stout sailing brig, "Julia," outward-bound for New York. Though both had left behind them all the dearest associations of childhood, the little kirk, the wild, rugged glen and, dearest of all, the playmates of youth, yet they were now looking forward hopefully—nay ardently—to making a home for themselves in the broad, new world. In those days a trip

across the Atlantic was no trifling matter. It was exactly three months to a day after sailing that the "Julia" dropped anchor off New York, and waited for a quarantine officer to come on board. The voyage over had been rather a stormy one, but the days flew swiftly by, for they were happy in each other's love, and were building airy plans of the future. John was much surprised, on landing and talking with those around, to discover that nearly all were intensely hostile to Great Britain, the land he had just left, for already the first mutterings of that great storm were heard, which soon would burst fiercely on an unoffending people, who had no part or parcel in the paltry quarrel, which the United States were about to force on the mother-land. It all seemed like a ghastly nightmare to John. In the little glen at home he had grown so accustomed to hearing the British throne and all its associations spoken of with respect and veneration, that he was deeply shocked at now hearing such fiercely attacked and even referred to with curses. The people around him spoke his language, they looked intelligent, and he could see no difference in their general appearance from those at home, but here they were, planning how they could best injure the home land.

He had never thought of war before as something immediately near him. He remembered seeing some poor, pale fellows brought home who were said to have been wounded in Spain, fighting against the French there, and he had often heard of Napoleon Bonaparte as a destroying ogre, but to think of a war where he might be called on to take one side or the other was altogether new to him, and made Jennie shudder for fear lest her husband might be torn from her side at any moment. However, their minds were soon made up. They would stand by the flag which had sheltered them all their lives; they would continue on their way to Canada, even though that country was threatened with a descent in force, as soon as war would be declared, which John could see by the temper of the people would not be very long.

Accordingly, our young Scotch couple took passage to Albany by boat, and from thence, partly overland, partly by a little boat John purchased, they made their way to Oswego, through the dark forests that at this time covered nearly the whole of the northern part of the State of New York. They took advantage of the little rivers and creeks on the route, and, as the boat was light, John would lift it in his stout arms and carry it across the portages, whilst Jennie, none the less

willing, would shoulder the two bags that contained their provisions and worldly effects. Near nightfall they would draw up their little boat on the shore in a cosy-looking place, turn it upside down, its two ends resting in the crotches of low-growing trees, and make ready to pass the night. John with his ready axe would soon strip off enough fresh sweet-smelling juniper branches to make a nice bed under the boat, and to cover it over, so that the mosquitos might not get in to disturb their slumbers. Then, after he had gathered and cut some dry wood, he would leave Jennie to make the fire, whilst he hurried down to the stream to try and get some fish for supper. As he always selected their camping place with an eye for likely pools, it rarely happened that a meal passed without having crisp and tender morsels of fresh-caught trout, for the streams were not then fished out, and brook trout rose readily for an experienced angler like John. After supper they heaped the dried branches on the dying fire, and as the bright flames leaped higher and lit up the solemn old pines around them, their voices blended in some dear old psalm that brought back their distant Scottish homes again. When they had finished singing one night he noticed that tears were glistening in Jennie's eyes, and, drawing near her, he whispered, "Are you sorry that we came to this wild country, darling?" "Sorry; oh no, John, not sorry. I can go anywhere with you and not be sorry; but I was thinking of that little cabin in the glen at home, of my brothers and sisters." Her head drooped forward, and she added, sobbing, "I was thinking too, of poor lonesome father, out alone on the hills with his sheep." "Never mind darling, we will rear a home of our own away out there across those great northern lakes, a home protected, too, by the Union Jack." "But, John—" and she shivered, for mention of the flag had called up thoughts of the impending war—"do you think Canada will be attacked?" "Well," he answered, "I don't know, but they all talked that way, you remember, in New York, and I cannot but believe them." "Would you have to go and fight too, John?" she asked, in alarm. "Certainly," he answered, "I would have to defend as far as I was able, the land where we expect to make our home." Her head bent forward again, and John could see by the glow from the firelight that she was sobbing softly to herself. He did not interrupt her, for he deemed it best to let her grief have its way, and there was silence for a few moments, broken only by the weird sobbing of the wind in the pinetops overhead. Then Jennie looked up, and her beautiful face had that wondrous expression, which

comes only to a woman when she is proud and happy that the man she loves is brave and noble and would die for her. Taking one of John's brawny hands in both her own soft little ones, she said, simply but earnestly, "It is hard John, that we should leave our native land so soon after getting married, and coming to this country find that we are about to be plunged into all the horrors of war, but you were right after all, and if these people invade Canada my John must not be a laggard. Let us, before lying down to sleep, ask Him who rules over all to avert, if possible, this cruel conflict." Then the two—husband and wife—as they had been taught at home to do knelt down, and Jennie raised her womanly voice high above the whispering of the pines in a prayer—eloquent because clothed in that strong religious language which is natural to the most unlearned Scottish peasant.

"Oh Thou, who art in the deep, dark forest as well as the crowded city, hear this, the prayer of one of the least of Thy children, that Thou mayst in Thy wisdom, cause it to come to pass, that all men shall dwell as brothers in peace, not given to contention or war, and may the present warring passions of men be stilled by Thy counsel and advice. May our earthly rulers be guided in all things by the teachings of the Holy Book, so that wars and clamors may cease forevermore. But, should the dread trial of conflict come, may the arms of Thy people be strong to defend their homes and loved ones from harm, and give Thou the victory to they who fight for the right; and now, as we in this thick forest lie down to rest, may Thy fatherly care protect us from all the dangers of the night, and may we rise from our humble, leafy couch with the morning sun, refreshed and prepared for the labors of another day. Amen."

In this primitive fashion John Ruthven and his young wife gradually worked their way through the thick woods till they reached Oswego, at the mouth of a river of the same name. At this fort—they did not know its name—they noticed the American troops being drilled for their expected encounter with the British, and this only made the young couple more determined than ever to overcome all difficulties and dangers in order to reach the British possessions before hostilities commenced. One night indeed, they had a terrible experience of what a storm is like in the depths of the forest.

When they pitched their camp for this night at the foot of a little waterfall, which was the end of a series of rapids, both were struck with

the marvellous beauty of the scene before them. The river, just at this point, made a sharp turn and bore away to the west, so that they were enabled to enjoy what can be rarely seen in the unbroken forest to advantage, viz., a glowing sunset. The day had been a hot one for even that season of the year — middle of July — John and Jennie had fairly staggered on under their burdens when making their portages, for the high trees kept off every breath of air, and long before night they were both nearly exhausted with heat and fatigue. Therefore, when they reached this quiet little haven after the foaming rapids were passed, both sat down on a jutting crag and watched the peaceful scene in the broad reaches of the river that now ran calm and untroubled, as if it too were tired of strife. The sun was setting in an angry-looking bank of cumulus clouds that every moment piled up higher and higher and changed their shapes continually. Now there was a frowning castle with symmetrical, round towers, and even its lower dungeons were clearly outlined; now there were confronting armies enveloped in the smoke of battle, and now John and Jennie saw clearly the blue mountain peaks of their native Scotland again. "Is it not lovely?" she murmured to her husband. "Lovely, yes," he answered, "but there is a storm coming, or else these skies are not like ours at home. I think we had better get our camp in shape, for darkness will close in early to-night." But neither stirred — they were so entranced by the beauty before them — until bright flashes of lightning began to show all along the western sky, behind the dark masses of clouds. John did not think it safe to make their camp among the trees as usual, so he drew the little boat under the crag on which they had been sitting, and was rejoiced to find that there was a small cavern underneath. This enabled him to draw the boat up so far, that it was a considerable distance away from the rocky bed of the river, making a delightfully cool retreat after the heat of the day. Then he gathered together dry wood on a flat table of rock in front of their resting place, and Jennie prepared supper. They had scarcely finished when the storm was upon them. For some time they had heard the booming of thunder high overhead, and stepping to the front of their cave, they could see far down the river by the lightning flashes that the placid water was now lashed into a foam. Then their fire and the wood John had gathered were swept into the seething river, and darkness so intense that it could almost be felt, dropped down on them in the twinkling of an eye. Jennie clung closely to her husband, her whole frame shaking, for she was thoroughly

frightened. Now there came an even fiercer burst of wind, and through the sheets of flaming lightning they could see a large tree twist over into the river just above the waterfall, saw it swiftly whirled around by the rushing water, and the next moment they knew it was directly in front of their little refuge, its roots having caught in the shelving bottom. The crash of thunder was now one continuous roar, varied by heavy reports like artillery, when the flashes of lightning were particularly brilliant. John, holding his frightened little wife in his arms, watched the fury of the storm unmoved, his attention being riveted on a tall pine tree that towered above its fellows on the rocky bluff opposite. He could see it bend down before the force of the gale so that it seemed as if it must break in two, and then he could see it reassert itself proudly, magnificently—it seemed to John almost defiantly braving the elements to do their worst. All at once there came a blinding flash, violet tinged, and John felt stunned—a hot iron seemed to pass across his vision—but above it all, above the surging of the storm, above the crashing of the thunder, he could hear the shivering of wood as it was rended apart, and when he could see again, the lordly pine was gone, the deadly bolt of lightning had destroyed it in an instant. When Jennie could manage to speak, she complained of a pain in her left arm, and it was found that a flying splinter from the pine had entered it, inflicting a slight flesh wound. The worst of the storm, as far as the wind thunder and lightning were concerned, had now passed, but still the rain descended in torrents, and now that the flashes no longer lit up the scene, the darkness seemed blacker than before. "Don't you think the waterfall roars louder than it did before?" she asked anxiously. "Yes, I do," answered John, "and it must be that the river is rising." Feeling cautiously along the sloping ground, he was startled at plunging his hand into running water, and a moment's search revealed the dreadful truth that their escape was cut off and the river still rising.

John had to act quickly, for already the water was swirling around the stern of the boat, threatening to sweep it away. They must embark in the frail little craft, though an ugly murmur came up from the black river of foaming waters and angry cross currents. Very fortunately for them, he had scanned the lower shore cautiously when making the landing in the evening, and now he had a clear picture in his mind of a little cove a few rods farther down, which he determined to try and make in the intense darkness. As gently and calmly as if no danger threatened, he assisted Jennie into the boat, and grasping a

paddle in one hand, he shot the boat out into the murky blackness, at the same time springing lightly in himself. Caught immediately by the current, the boat swirled round and round before even John's strong grip availed anything. But through it all he remembered clearly and distinctly the outline of the shore which he had just left, and now commenced a battle royal to gain it.

Well it was for him that he had often fought through storms on their own little loch at home, or he never could have made it. The currents seemed determined to hurl them towards the other and rockier shore, but John would not have it. Time and again by sheer force of muscle he swung the little boat around towards where he wanted to land, and time and again it was swept out into the seething waters. At last, after what seemed hours of struggle but which really occupied but very few moments, he caught the nose of the boat on the shore, and leaping nimbly out he soon pulled it in, so that Jennie could safely disembark. Wet and weary, they climbed the steep bank of the river in the darkness, and sitting down listened to the roaring of the waters beneath them. For the first time since leaving Scotland they felt dispirited, the more so because in some way their little bundle of belongings had been swept away, and, excepting the small stock of money, which John had in his pocket, the boat and the clothes they had on, nothing whatever remained to them, and they tossed on the shore in the middle of a dense forest. Truly their situation was pitiable indeed.

Jennie threw herself on the soaked ground and sobbed bitterly to herself, but presently, John watching the distant east, saw the first faint blush of coming day coloring the sky above the tree-tops, and turning to his weeping wife almost shouted "Look, Jennie! the clouds are clearing away and daylight is at hand. Let us take hope and courage that our clouds may also clear away," saying which he tenderly lifted her to a seat on a log beside him, and soon soothed away her tears. As the warm rays of the morning sun began to light up the forest depths their spirits came back, for nothing can long depress healthy youth, and then Jennie, falling on her knees and facing the rising sun, poured out her heart in a prayer of thankfulness to the Almighty that their lives had been wondrously spared during the storm, the fury of which was manifest in all directions by fallen and shivered trees. By ten o'clock they were on their way again, laughing and chatting as if nothing had happened. Such is the happy, cheery forgetfulness of young lives.

At Oswego, where they arrived in mid-July, John and Jennie were pleased to fall in with a party of twenty or so — Scotch and English people — who proposed settling in a fertile country they had heard of on the northern side of Lake Erie. These people had first settled in the United States, but irritated by the constant denunciation of Great Britain they heard on every side, they decided to cast their fortunes in with the old flag — the flag of their younger days — even if by doing so they would have to suffer the horrors of a likely invasion. It is extremely doubtful if any other time or land ever witnessed such a scene as this; settlers imbued with a high sense of patriotism, leaving their adopted homes and deliberately taking up new homes where they knew they were liable to be attacked in the near future. The average person usually tries to select a place of safety for a home in war time, but these sturdy characters rather chose the danger spot. This absolute disregard for the ultimate consequences of actions, right in themselves, is exactly what separates the rare, fiery souls of earth from Tom, Dick and Harry.

They did not have to wait long at Oswego before getting a little vessel to take them to Queenston, on the Niagara River. Our little party of adventurers were amazed as they got out on the broad sweep of Lake Ontario and cast their eyes around the whole circle of the horizon without being able to see the land. "Why, it's just like the ocean, John," said his little wife, as they stood on the forward part of the boat and gazed on the scene, new and strange to them, of a fresh water, inland sea. The morning was a delightful one, the wind from the south, and just strong enough to send the little vessel through the blue waters of Ontario and leave a perceptible wake behind. "Yes, wife, it is like the ocean with the saltiness left out and with a freshness and vigor of its own," he answered. "Oh John, do you know I am just as happy as I can be, for as I look out over this rolling water, I catch a glimpse of our little home beyond among the trees; and I see a clear brook running by the very door, and I see you bravely hewing out the clearing so that we may have a field of waving wheat all our own." She spoke eagerly, joyously, for she had a fine strain of hopefulness and some sentiment in her make-up. "Well darling, we will look for just such a place as you have described and there we will build our home," he said simply, "but meanwhile let us cultivate the acquaintance of our fellow-travellers, else they will think us distant."

And now whilst the vessel is sweeping on towards the mouth of the Niagara river, it will be a good time to introduce the other voyagers to

our readers. First and foremost there were the Stubbs, without mention of whom no description would be complete. Ezra Stubbs the father, was a thorough going Englishman—a typical John Bull. Short of figure blunt and even coarse in speech, he had no delicate sensibilities and of course made no allowance for such in others. All references to the softer emotions, all allusions to the pathos and beauty of life, he included in the one general term “dishwater.” Did one of the little Stubbs—there were three of them—ask him to tell them a story in the evening, he would reply that “all stories are dishwater” and that “they would be better in bed than listening to stories.” Emily his wife, was much the same—a dull, unimaginative Yorkshire woman, a splendid housekeeper and worker, but with not a shadow of romance in her. She could make butter fit for a king, and spiders soon gave up in disgust the task of spinning their webs anywhere around her house, for the ever-ready broom pursued them relentlessly, but to save her life Emily Stubbs could not tell you who John Milton was or repeat a stanza from any poem. Still, this prosaic couple were very happy in their own way. She called him “my man” and he referred to her as “the missus,” and in their dull fashion they really loved each other, so that if married life to them had brought no fine sentiments, neither had it brought any of the unhappiness which sometimes, alas, characterizes the union of more delicately organized beings. Ezra Stubbs would crack rough jokes before his wife and children without even shrugging his immense shoulders, but, on the other hand he would resent with a knock-out blow of his brawny fist anything which he deemed an insult to them. The young Stubbs were their parents over again. William, the eldest—whom we have met before—Samuel, and the baby girl Ellen, all were sturdy, stocky little beggars at this time, much given over to rough squabbling among themselves, and when one did get hurt in this rude play it was endured without a whimper, for their parents had schooled them that the only solace they need expect in such emergencies was to be told to “keep out of harm’s road.” In short, the whole family was a splendidly equipped one to stand the rough and tumble fight of Canadian forest life. As for the rest of the company, it will be sufficient to merely mention them now, since they will all turn up again more or less in the course of our story. There was only one German in the party—Carl Lutz, a slow-moving, slow-spoken old bachelor, with a short pipe constantly in his mouth. We will meet him again years after this, and have a closer acquaintance with him. Then

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there were the Morgans, the Winters, the McLartys, and last of all the Craigs, whom John Ruthven from their first meeting cordially detested, though he scarcely knew why.

But meanwhile their little brig had arrived off the mouth of the Niagara, and beautiful indeed was the sight that met their eyes there. The great volume of clear, blue water pushing its way out into the lake, the dark green foliage of its forest-covered banks, and the quaintness of the little stone fort on the Canadian side, all helped to fill out a picture such as once seen will never be forgotten. The Ruthven's would fain have stopped here and begun to build their home, but as the rest of the party wished to continue on their journey, they reluctantly consented, and arrangements were soon made for teaming all their effects to Chippewa, past the great falls they had heard so much about. Most of the way the route was only a winding road through the thick woods, sometimes near the rolling river, which stretched away a broad ribbon of blue, and sometimes far back in the forest, where the generous tree-growths cast their leafy arms across from either side of the road till they fairly embraced in the middle and formed an arched canopy of green overhead. Here and there among the foliage, leaves could be seen slightly tinged with gold or scarlet—it was now the third week in August—sure harbingers of approaching autumn, and looking up, they could see the ruddy glow of wild plums and great clusters of grapes only half ripe yet, but giving promise of good things later on. "This must be God's own country," Jennie reverently exclaimed the first day, as they halted for the noonday meal. High overhead they could hear a black squirrel chattering to his mate, a pair of blue jays perched in a little cedar close by surveyed them with wonderment, whilst a saucy red squirrel from the crotch of another tree scolded vigorously, all the time making a desperate pretence of flying at them. Even stolid Ezra Stubbs, after he had made a hearty meal and before lying down to take his usual nap, felt constrained to say, "It is a pretty enough sight for people who like that sort of thing," adding drowsily, "but I like a good sleep better."

Thus, on past the Heights of Queenston, where very soon Sir Isaac Brock and his little band were to lay down their lives in repelling the invaders, past the great cataract and its flood of leaping, swirling waters, past the boiling, rushing rapids, where the rainfall of half a continent rushes pell-mell down a steep hill, gathering speed for its last magnificent leap of one hundred and sixty feet, our adventurers

made their way to Chippewa through the glorious sunlit forests. Here they managed to buy a long boat that would carry them all and their effects, and though oars were the propelling power, that did not matter seeing that they had strong arms and stout hearts. The pull up the Niagara river especially was a stiff one, as even above Chippewa the current is very powerful, but they did not mind this. Taking turns at the three pairs of oars, the men of the party did not exhaust themselves, whilst the women took their knitting and chatted in the stern of the boat.

No country has such lovely autumn weather as Canada. It almost seems as if nature was trying to outdo herself in brilliancy before winter's chilly garb settles in over the landscape.

"Like the swan that sings its sweetest story
Ere it floats in death away,"

So, to our wee company pulling their way along up river and lake, each day seemed sunnier and pleasanter than the preceding one. Morning after morning from the little camp on shore—for they hugged the Canadian side closely, and were in no hurry, as they wished to scan the country closely with a view of choosing a site for their future homes—they beheld the old sun come up flaming red across the glittering waters, and night after night they saw him again almost hesitate in a flood of glory before dipping down again to rest. Several times each day they landed, and the men prospected to see what the country was like. Though they found everywhere lovely stretching reaches of forest land, yet nowhere did they find exactly what they desired. Flocks of wild turkeys ranged through under the spreading beeches (picking up the luscious nuts) in such numbers that it was no difficulty to bring down a fine bird when required. At one place near Long Point peninsula—for the fierce waves had not then battered through the narrow isthmus of sand making it an island—they saw a herd of deer, which they calculated must have numbered several hundreds. So tame were these usually coy animals that they did not hesitate to come to the very water's edge and gaze at the passing boat and its occupants. Several times Ezra Stubbs raised his long, awkward-looking rifle to fire at them and as often did he lower it again. "I can't shoot them," he said at last as he poked the weapon under the seat, "they're too blamed nice."

At last one calm, clear morning as they pulled out in the lake about

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half a mile to get a better view of the country, they saw a lovely stream of water making its way out between banks of high towering chestnuts, oaks and maples. The surrounding ridges were glowing with the first faint tinges of early autumn — there had been a slight frost the night before, and here and there a leaf was fluttering down through the September air — all nature was in one of its dreamiest, most delightful moods. Suddenly John Ruthven rose to his feet, his eyes bright with excitement. "Somewhere up that creek" he fairly shouted "I propose we build our homes." "Just what I was about to say myself, young man," replied Ezra Stubbs, who for some little time had been studying the shore line and the magnificent background of forest. "You see, its like this," he added turning to the others "any ground that will grow trees like those, must, if cleared, also grow wheat and we are the people who can clear it too." He looked around the little group with an air of pride.

Straightway the boat was headed towards the shore, the high wooded bluff on the right hand seeming to almost bend down over them in a loving welcome. Scarcely a word was spoken as the rowers quietly urged the little craft up the stream under the overhanging branches, for all were thinking seriously. Even the shy beavers, disturbed in their snug homes by the unusual appearance of a boat-load of people, were allowed to scurry away into the depths of shrubbery, that lined the banks, without exciting any comment. Noisy blue jays, perched on limbs that hung far out over the water, screamed shrilly at them, as if daring them to thus invade their territory, and once when their boat rounded a sharp bend, they came across an ungainly looking brown bear feeding on berries near the water's edge. He was standing up on his hind legs, holding the bushes down with one powerful front paw and stuffing the berries into his mouth with the other. "I guess I'll have to shoot that fellow," Ezra Stubbs said as he reached under the seat for the gun. Quickly raising it to his shoulder he fired, but the bear was too far ahead, and the only effect the shot had on Bruin was to cause him to hurry perceptibly in raising the last pawfull of berries to his mouth. Turning deliberately around, he looked for a moment at the oncoming boat, and then getting down on all fours, he clumsily trotted away into the bush. But if the discharge of the gun had little or no effect on the bear himself, it had a decided one in the surrounding forest. All the trees lining the creek were now fairly alive with birds and squirrels, each one adding its protest against the startling and novel

echoes of the gun's report. For several miles they followed up the boat screeching out their angry scoldings, till gradually the din subsided.

After about three hours' rowing, they came to where the valley widened out into wide, rolling stretches of wooded uplands, and just here, by a strange freak of nature, there was one spot of about ten acres entirely free of trees. The creek which here flowed very swiftly, almost enclosed this in a long, sweeping bend, and back of this clear space was a beautiful maple wood, with a sunny south exposure, an ideal sugar bush in fact. Perhaps ages ago the course of the stream had been across this bend, for it looked fertile, as if covered with an alluvial deposit; at any rate, the reasons for its existence did not trouble our boat-load of settlers. Here in front was a nice-looking, clear bit of ground ready for sowing, and there back of it was the virgin forest, rich in promise. That was all they cared to know, and unanimously it was decided to land. As soon as the nose of the boat touched the shore, John Ruthven who was strangely excited, leaped ashore, and tossing his hat high in the air, proposed "three cheers for our new home." "No John," said his little wife gravely, at the same time laying her hand on his shoulder lightly, "rather let us ask God to bless our venture, that will be the best cheers to give." One by one they reverently knelt around the plain-spoken Scotch woman while she offered up this simple, brief prayer:

"Most Merciful God, we humbly ask Thee to aid us with Thy Divine assistance, so that we may be enabled to carry forward our daily labors in this new country. May our lives be so strengthened and uplifted that we will lay broad and deep the foundations of happy homes for generations yet unborn, and may Thine own special blessing rest on this little colony we are about to found. With a sincere trust in Thy unfailing goodness towards even the least of Thy creatures, we ask for Thy protection to rest over our new home, Maple Bend."

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CHAPTER III.

THE HOME GETTING.

“Rickety, shingleless, old and gray,
Scathed by the storms of many a day,
In a wayside spot where the wild weeds grow,
Stands the old log cabin of long ago.
Rarely a foot o'er its threshold falls,
Rarely a look at its old gray walls
By a friend or stranger is cast, I trow,
Nobody cares for the old house now.
Yet, mouldering away though its walls, to me
Forever green will the memory be
Of that dear old house that I used to know,
Where I lived and loved in the long ago.”

—*T. Sparks.*

It is not at all likely that you could find Maple Bend on the map now, even if you should look for it. Forty or fifty years is a long time in a new land, and the swift, onward sweep of the years cover up their tracks much more quickly than they do in older civilizations. With the clearing-up of the forests, trade and commerce seek new routes and the old are abandoned to swift decay. Indeed, when the present author, a few summers ago, went to the site of that once flourishing hamlet, it was only with the greatest difficulty that the location even of the one store could be made out, for a waving wheat field was there instead. The stump of a post and a few scattered bricks from an old cellar were all the evidences that aught else but the plow and harrow had ever been there. Even the memories of the olden, golden days had partly vanished, and now let it be our task to try and catch up again some of the ravelled threads of the settlers' lives ere they become not even a memory.

It is quite certain that the full story of the struggles of the early pioneers in Western Canada never will be told, unless, indeed, in the final settling up of the Great Day, when all the little, unrecorded deeds of kindness—nay, of heroism—will be revealed and have their meed of reward apportioned. As a writer (Mr. John Ferguson, of Eagle, Ont.) said in a *newspaper a few years ago, "I am myself the son of one of the pioneers of the Talbot settlement and heard much of the hardships incident to early settlement. Many an interesting story have I heard related by the fireside. They were told sometimes with feelings of glee and gratitude, sometimes in association with pain and sadness, often in triumph and satisfaction. They were told as no one else can relate them. The interest of the narration appears to be gone with the presence of those to whom the incidents were a reality. I often try to recall them, but a big gap interrupts me here, uncertainty there, and a fading recollection everywhere. The indistinctness of the sacred picture warns me from the attempt to retouch or reproduce it. That appears to me now to belong to lips that are forever silent, and to pens that will never again extend the record. None others than the early settlers themselves could do it justice. They alone could give it the full impress of authority; their pens alone could make the story of early life in the backwoods truthful, interesting and imperishable. But they go one by one, and one opportunity after another slips away, the narrative is not engraved in time, the last chance cannot be recalled. Much of what is interesting in the history of our early settlements will soon be forgotten lore. But a few years more and the last of the pioneers will tell his last tale of life and adventure in the wilds of Canada."

What Mr. Ferguson so pathetically forshadowed only a few years ago has now (1897) actually come about. A short time ago the present author asked one of the older men in this settlement to tell him where to find a living witness of the early days, so that he might again hear the story at first hand. Sorrowfully the man answered (he was himself a son of one of the pioneers), "Indeed there are none left. All have passed to the great beyond." Fortunately though, here and there they have left in writing passing glimpses into those past days, and one of the very best summaries appeared in the sketch previously quoted.

*The St. Thomas Journal.

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This is the way Mr. Duncan Leitch of Aldborough, Ont., one of the very early settlers, described the then social life :

"Those were the times of peace and good will in a neighborhood, for the one helped the other. Each man shared his good fortune with his fellow. He was happy when he found himself able to exchange the results of his industry for those of his neighbors. Nor was he over-anxious about the security of the little property he acquired. In those days there were no bolts or bars to houses or barns. The door was ever on the latch and the string always out. The ring of the bell or visiting cards were formalities found quite unnecessary. The feelings of good neighborhood, strong friendship and genuine hospitality dispensed with all such ceremonies. The glad welcome, and the unreserved, hearty kindness disarmed every hesitancy to enter the log dwelling of your neighbor. This was the general rule, though there were a few exceptions as there are to every rule. But we were supremely happy, for we had a bark roof to shelter us, corn in the crib, a cow in the shed, wheat in the log barn and more growing in the stumpy fields."

Now let us again look in on our little band at Maple Bend, whom we have left so long after landing from their boat. Their first care was to get a title to their lands, their next to get roofs over their heads. Ezra Stubbs and John Ruthven, who had now come to be regarded as leaders of the colony, were selected to go and see Colonel Talbot in regard to the first. At this time and for many subsequent years, Colonel Talbot, it may be safely asserted, virtually owned the settlers bodily in the western district of Canada. He had many of the characteristics of a tyrant, was quick tempered, apt to judge almost solely by first appearances, and to judge harshly at that, hated to revise an opinion once formed and heartily despised many of the poor settlers with whom he had to deal. But for all that — and the present author is speaking from scores of conversations with those who had to do with him — he was very generally respected throughout the settlement, even by those who had come under the rough lash of his bitter tongue. For no man could truly say that his pledge once passed, Colonel Talbot had ever broken it. Such was the confidence reposed in his word, that many a settler after journeying for days through the deep, dark woods to Port Talbot, where the Colonel resided in an odd collection of rambling buildings, turned his face again homeward, happy in the mere promise of the Colonel, that if he

rigidly performed his settlement duties his title would not be withheld from him, and for years, scores of settlers thus went on improving their chosen homes and fighting the grim, silent battle with the forest, and only the Colonel's word between them and absolute beggary. Be it said to his credit then, that among the hundreds — nay thousands — of descendants of these early settlers now inhabiting prosperous, happy homes on the sites their fathers cleared up, there can be found scarcely one, who retains a sense of injustice suffered by his forefathers at the hands of their early patron, Colonel Talbot. Indeed, were no other evidence at hand, the Talbot settlement tells its own story of strong, firm foundations, by its smiling fields, magnificent roads and general air of rural contentment. You, dear reader, may ascribe all this to the vagaries of chance, but the present author will still persist in thinking, that the keen foresight of Colonel Talbot had much to do with it. An accomplished fact is ever a difficult thing to argue into nothingness.

Meantime Ezra Stubbs and John Ruthven are pushing their way through the woods to see the man, they had heard so much about. Night overtook them before they reached Colonel Talbot's lodge, but as they were now accustomed to sleeping out of doors it mattered little to them, and they saw the long fiery trail of the sun gradually dip down below the tree tops without apprehension. Both carried guns and once during the day they came on a large herd of deer disporting themselves along one side of a sunny ravine, the lower part of which was completely filled up with fallen leaves. Both fired almost simultaneously at a huge buck with wide branching antlers, he standing apart and a little further up the ravine than the rest. Instantly the whole herd were away down towards the mouth of the ravine at full speed, the buck fired at bringing up the rear but swinging along in grand style. Both men concluded that they had missed him, but all at once as he was about to leap over a fallen tree he suddenly threw his head back hard, his neck became rigid and springing high in the air he dropped to the ground limp and dying. Bravely he half rose to his feet again but it was a last effort, his noble horns could be seen to twist around half under his body and then slowly at first, but gathering speed each moment, the magnificent animal rolled down the side of the steep ravine and was lost to sight under the wealth of fallen leaves. Almost sorrowfully they lifted the leafy covering off the beautifully proportioned creature and set about getting a store of venison ready for their further

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journey. "Say Ruthven, I feel almost like a murderer in killing this critter," Ezra said, stopping halfway in his work and holding his keen hunting-knife downward so that the blood might drip on the leaves. "I don't feel exactly right myself," John replied, "but we must have something to eat on our long tramp through the woods." After skinning the deer, stretching the skin on a huge beech near by and cutting off what venison they needed, they suspended the carcass from a limb, intending to get it on the way home again for the weather was now cool and the meat would take no harm for two or three days. Then they carefully blazed a line of trees up the ravine with the little axe that John had strapped on his back so that they might know the place again.

Near nightfall they stopped again to select a sleeping place, and the air being decidedly chilly they first cut short pine branches and laid them alongside an immense fallen tree till they had formed a depth of five or six inches of springy, natural mattress. Then they cut longer branches of the same and leaned them up against the trunk, making a perfect leanto roof, one end being closed completely. At the other end they built a fire of dry twigs, and now each man selecting a piece of the fresh venison began to cook his own supper, by holding it over the glowing coals suspended on a clean whittled stick. There was a good deal of sputtering and cracking as the fat dripped down into the hot embers and sometimes a quick eddy of the night wind drove the smoke into their faces, but both ate almost savagely for their long tramp up and down ravines and over fallen timber had brought in its train keen hunger to robust constitutions. Maybe too, dear reader, that simple meal of deer meat in the forest, prepared without any of the nice appliances of modern cookery, was in truth more toothsome than any of the dishes on the fashionable hotel bill-of-fare, and possibly too even the jaded, satiated, hotel boarder would have found it so. But however that may be, certain it is that Ezra Stubbs and John Ruthven were amazed themselves at the way they ate that night under shelter of the big tree trunk. "Blamed if I don't think but that we could eat the whole deer, Ruthven," the Englishman managed to say, as he was tearing a huge morsel to pieces after disposing of half a dozen or so slices. "Yes, it certainly looks that way just now," John answered, at the same time slicing off another large piece, which he now held over the hot coals to cook. "But," he added, "let us like the Scriptural fool, eat and be merry, for who

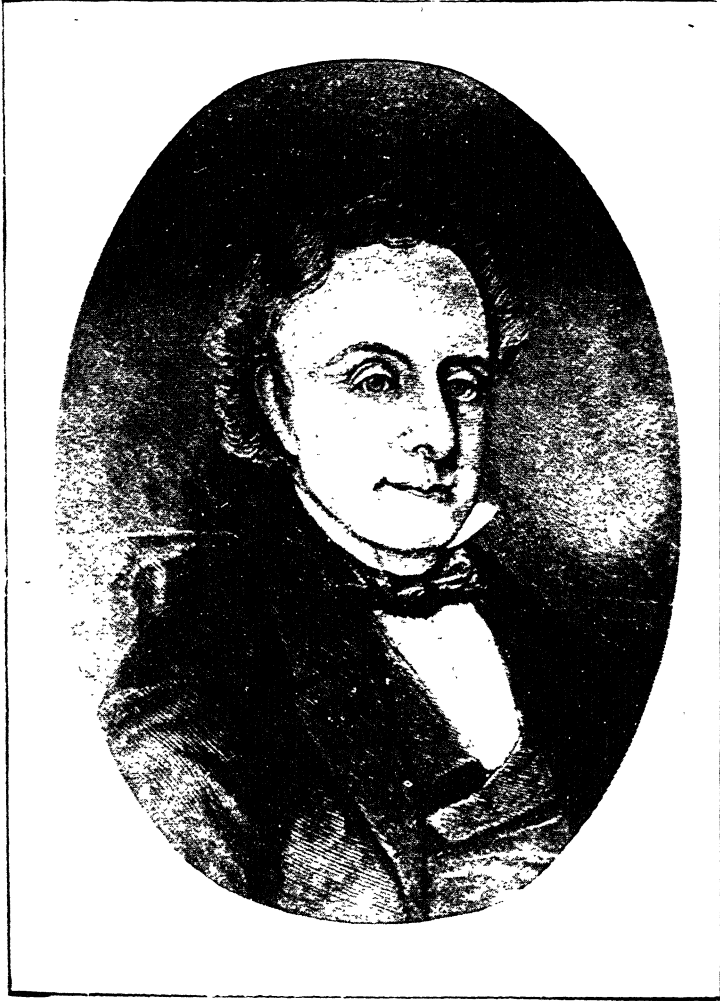
knows what kind of a welcome is just ahead of us to-morrow. This Colonel Talbot is said to be rather a surly man, is he not?" "Yes he is," Ezra answered, decidedly "but he had better save his surliness for others, else he may get his answer in kind. Surly answers for surly people, kind answers for kind people is my style." "That is not what your Bible teaches is it?" John said, for he loved to slyly jab his companion once in a while if for nothing else than to stir him up. "No, it's not what my Bible teaches, but my own nature teaches it good and strong, and if Colonel Talbot or anybody else uses me like a dog they will get a dog's answer in return, Bible or no Bible. Now I am going to sleep, and you can watch the blooming stars through the tree-tops as, I see you are doing already, if you want to, but a sound snooze suits my taste better," saying which Ezra Stubbs crawled in under the pine boughs, curled his huge body up in a coarse blanket he carried with him, and in a few moments was snoring soundly, undisturbed by a thought of the morrow. "He is nothing but a great, healthy animal," John said to himself, as he listened to the deep, regular breathing of the sleeper, "but after-all, he has a warm heart and that atones for much." John himself was not sleepy, but he felt that he had better lie down and sleep might come for he was tired; so after throwing some dry brush on the dying fire, he too crawled in under the sloping roof of pine boughs. For a time he watched the leaping flames and the black shadows as they chased each other back and forth over the prostrate figure beside him, till gradually the fire died down again into embers, and then through the branches overhead he could see the quarter moon, a narrow semi-circle of silver and here and there a scudding cloud which flitted swiftly across the narrow zone of sky, seen through the tree-tops. Gradually, tired nature was asserting itself, the vague outlines of trees and overarching sky were beginning to blend into one dim picture and he would soon have been as sound asleep as the impassible Stubbs, when suddenly a something, he could never afterwards define, told him that they were not alone. Cautiously, half rising on one elbow, he listened intently and soon satisfied himself that there was another sound of breathing in addition to his companion's deep snoring. Dropping his head again, he asked himself the question, "What was to be done?" Try to wake Stubbs! As well might he try to rouse the Seven Sleepers. Quietly parting the pine branches he nearly lost his breath, for there within a few feet of him was a pair of gleaming eyes, the eyes of some wild

animal, and he could almost feel its hot breath in his face. Instantly reaching for his gun behind him John Ruthven did not hesitate a moment, where hesitation meant death for a deep growl assured him that mischief was intended. Poking the shot-gun out through the branches he fired both barrels directly at the advancing eyes and awaited results. The combined noise of the two reports half awakened even Ezra Stubbs and he hastily sat up, savagely muttering, "Shut up, I tell you," evidently thinking the young Stubbs were scampering around in the early morning. As quickly as possible, John acquainted him with the true state of affairs, adding, "I think I killed the animal, whatever it was." The half-asleep Englishman said nothing, but seizing his own gun he pushed the branches aside and stepped out into the gloom. The next moment John heard the savage growl of an animal in pain, a quick onrush and then the sounds of a horrible struggle in the dark. Hunting-knife in hand he hurried out, but for a moment all he could dimly distinguish were two heavy objects rolling over and over each other, but for the life of him he could not tell which was which and for a moment he hesitated what to do. A sharp cry of distress from Ezra, who appeared to be now underneath, decided it and instantly he leaped on the top of the confused mass, alighting squarely on the back of the bear (for such it was). The animal at first never hesitated a moment in its work of clawing poor Ezra, even when John plunged the knife again and again into its side, till all at once with a deep snort of pain, it rolled over on its side, almost pinning John under its huge bulk, for it was dead now. The keen thrusts of the knife had found a vital spot at last. Meantime Ezra, groping around, had found John and shook him warmly by the hand, saying at the same time, "I won't forget you, Ruthven, for this night's work and that you saved my life. That blamed bear would soon have clawed me in two, and even now I am pretty badly scraped."

It appeared that when they came to examine the animal by the light of the fire, which they now stirred up, that when John fired it had destroyed both of Bruin's eyes, but had not mortally wounded him, for bears are notoriously hard to kill. Then when Ezra, half asleep, stepped out from his couch of pine he had stumbled heavily over the wounded bear, and it had immediately seized him without giving him an opportunity to use his gun even if he had been awake enough to think quickly. Not knowing with what he was engaged, nor caring much

either, but aware from the fierce grip that it was some formidable opponent, he, Englishman-like, dropped his weapon and grappled with his foe in true Cornish fashion. But for once he met a wrestler against whom his most cunning trips and locks were unavailing, and gradually he found himself forced to the ground. Realizing now that it was a powerful animal he was battling against and not a man at all, he shouted for help and it was then that John had come to his assistance. "But if it had been a man, mind you," Ezra was accustomed to say always in relating this adventure, "I would have died before yelling." Binding up the wounds received in this encounter and piling some larger timber on the fire so that it might burn till near morning, both men laid down to rest again and slept so soundly that the morning sun was high in the heavens, gilding the tree tops with his marvelous tracery of gold, before either of them awoke. John was the first to awake, and as he sat up he looked around with some amusement at the odd figure presented by his sleeping mate. Great furrowed scratches ran lengthwise down his face, the blood on which had dried in patches here and there, making a perfect map of an archipelago with the intersecting channels. His clothes on the upper part of the body were torn into ribbons wherever the bear's claws got a fair hold. His broad, hairy chest and sinewy shoulders were exposed, making altogether a strange-looking customer. Yet he was enjoying a deep sleep, unmindful of appearances or surroundings, and it was only after repeated shakings that John aroused him sufficiently so that he sat up and drowsily asked what was the matter. After as hearty a breakfast of bear steak as if they had been fasting for a week, they set about skinning the animal, but the problem of what to do with the rest of the carcass bothered them considerably. Eventually they decided that there was nothing to do but to leave it in the forest. The skin itself they stretched on a tree-trunk, as they had done that of the deer, for both would make cozy house mats. Then when they had partly mended the rents in Ezra's clothes, they set out again for Colonel Talbot's place, but as their start had been such a late one it was wearing on towards evening before they approached the picturesque spot, where he had taken up his abode rather than be cramped any longer by the hollow shams and conventionalities of aristocratic society—a society which Colonel Talbot quitted more gladly also on account of an affair of the heart, for so he hinted himself on one occasion.

No one can visit Port Talbot even now, when it has lost much of



COL. THOMAS TALBOT, FOUNDER OF THE TALBOT SETTLEMENT.

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its rustic loveliness, and not be struck with the natural beauty of its surroundings. The bold sweep of the bluffs, thickly fringed with red cedar, the magnificent groves of tall old chestnuts and elms, that overlook the placid, blue waters of Lake Erie, and the sun-kissed slopes of valley land all tell the tale why this odd aristocrat chose this quiet nook as an ideal home. Doubtless too, as Colonel Talbot looked out on this lovely rural scene from day to day and saw a happy contented people gradually filling in around him, he must have often reflected on what happiness might have been his in this rude home, with her who was now wedded to another in that older land. Perhaps, nowhere else, can there be found a more pathetic instance than this of self-effacement—a proud, haughty man, descended from one of the oldest families in Europe, running back to the Normans, a companion in boyhood of the Duke of Wellington, voluntarily casting aside all the ties of society and plunging into the backwoods of Canada to ease his wounded heart. No word of complaint seems to have come from him concerning the gay world he had left behind, no snarl, dog-in-the-manger fashion, was he ever heard to utter against that fashionable society he had lately mingled in, and if he had any repinings, they were kept to himself. He had made his own bed, and would lie in it, even if it was a trifle hard to a frame cradled in luxury. Nor did he altogether disdain to enter society when occasion offered. Anecdotes are yet told of him at rare intervals visiting London, C. W. — then a small garrison town—casting off his rough, backwoods garb and appearing at the officers' ball in full dress, the most polished and courtly gentleman there. Now reposing, in the little Anglican churchyard near Port Talbot, beneath the spreading branches of the old, majestic, wide-sweeping elms he loved so well, are the remains of this unique character in Canadian history, sleeping the calm sleep of death, side by side with many of those he had settled on their farms, a simple white slab marking his last resting-place thus — “Sacred to the memory of the Hon. Thomas Talbot, Founder of the Talbot Settlement. Born 1770, Died 1853.”

As Ezra Stubbs and John Ruthven emerged from the forest on the eastern side of the bluff that overlooks Talbot creek, the sun, a flaming red globe signifying dry weather, was casting a long shadow of glory backward across the calm waters of the lake, ere he plunged down into its cool depths to rest. Below them two men were leaving the little mill, their day's work ended, and were about to climb

the opposite hill to where their quarters were under the chestnut trees near the Colonel's own dwelling. Suddenly one of the men noticed the two strangers and drew his companion's attention to them. Hurriedly descending the hill, John and Ezra approached the men and asked them was Colonel Talbot at home. They answered that he might be found somewhere along the western cliff, as he always wandered along there about sunset. "But if I were you," one of the men added, "I wouldn't bother him to-night, as he hates to be disturbed in his evening walk." "Well, look here," Ezra blurted out, "we've walked for two days through the woods to see Colonel Talbot, and we're going to see him if he can be found, and that right away too. His walk can wait, but our business can't." "Well, suit yourselves," the man answered as he smiled meaningly to his companion, but Ezra was by this time striding heavily in the direction indicated as Colonel Talbot's favorite sunset haunt, leaving John to catch up as best he could. They were not long in finding him. He was standing under a great, gnarled old beech on a little point of land that jutted out from the rest, and commanded a clear view up and down the lake for many miles. He had his back to them, and in his left hand he held a small volume, richly bound, which he glanced at occasionally. It was a copy of Byron, recently issued in England, and he had been reading that famous satire, "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," about which all England was just then talking, for Colonel Talbot kept himself fairly well posted on all the latest literature, even in his distant forest home. For a moment the two men stood motionless, watching him, and so absorbed did he seem in his book and the glowing sunset across the waters that even blunt Ezra half regretted intruding on his privacy. In fact, both men had silently turned to go away again when Colonel Talbot happening to turn around, noticed them. Instantly his florid face became dark and he fairly shouted "Stop, I say, you scoundrels. What do you want here?" "We want to see Colonel Talbot on business," John answered in a respectful tone. For a moment or so no further words were spoken; the two settlers had time to briefly study the appearance of the famous figure before them, and this is what they saw. A man below the average height, fairly thickset but not corpulent, with the dignified air of one accustomed to command, a fresh, rosy-cheeked face and a sharp, searching pair of eyes that now glowed with a fierce passion. He was roughly clad in a coarse, sheepskin coat, having the wool side out, and an ill-fitting cap of the same

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material was thrust far back on his head, showing the broad, high forehead we usually expect in people of gentle birth. The oddity of his dress was so marked that both John and Ezra were disposed to laugh, but a glance at that firm face of command showed that it belonged to one whom it would not do to trifle with. He scanned John's face closely for an instant without deigning to look once at Ezra and then said sharply, "You are Scotch, are you not?" "Yes," answered John. "Listen then, while I read to you what effect your stupid Scotch critics have had on one of the noblest souls that ever was born." Opening his Byron he read these lines in a beautifully modulated tone of voice :

"The time hath been when no harsh sound would fall
From lips that now may seem imbued with gall ;
Nor fools nor follies tempt me to despise
The meanest thing that crawled beneath my eyes,
But now, so callous grown, so changed since youth,
I've learned to think and sternly speak the truth ;
Learned to deride the critic's starch decree
And break him on the wheel he meant for me ;
To spurn the rod a scribbler bids me kiss,
Nor care if courts or crowds applaud or hiss ;
And arm'd in proof the gauntlet cast at once
To Scotch marauder and southern dunce.

As the Colonel read on with all the characteristic intonations of a finished elocutionist, the bitterness gradually faded out of his voice, and when he had finished he looked at John as if expecting an answer. But John, only half understanding the passage read, said nothing. Not so Ezra though. That usually stolid, but now impatient individual had been chafing to himself all through the reading, muttering "dishwater," "blamed nonsense," etc., and now he broke almost savagely in with "Say mister, we are only poor settlers come to see Colonel Talbot about land, and we don't understand your poetry, and what is more don't want to either." The Colonel turned and looked the Englishman up and down, as if he had been examining a piece of statuary, whilst his face again darkened. "Well," he said at last haughtily, "I am Colonel Talbot, now who are you?" "My name is Ezra Stubbs, an honest name I am not ashamed of," came the sturdy answer. "Then I want to say to Ezra Stubbs, that he cannot do any business with me till to-morrow morning at nine o'clock in my office yonder," pointing back in the direction of the little pile of buildings huddled together.

“Meanwhile, you had better go to the kitchen and wash the blood off your face and clothes, else my man will not let you sleep in the house.” “And I want to say to Colonel Talbot” Ezra’s voice was harsh too now “That he should be ready at all times and places to listen to his settler’s affairs.” “That is my business, not yours” answered the Colonel, as he turned deliberately around and resumed his walk “and remember” he shouted back “no earlier than nine o’clock, or I will set the dogs on you.”

At first, since he had left them so abruptly, they were too proud and angry to think of asking for shelter under any roof belonging to Colonel Talbot, but as the cold evening mists came rolling in from the lake, and as their hunger increased, these feelings gave place to calmer and better ones, and presently they were knocking at the men’s quarters for admission. This was cheerfully granted them, and soon, before a roaring wood fire in the big open fireplace, whilst supper was being prepared, they forgot their little quarrel with the Colonel, and gave themselves wholly over to the pleasing and novel sensation of once more having a roof over their heads. Even in the building of his rural home at Port Talbot, the Colonel had taken pains to indicate that a certain distance intervened between him and his men. All the buildings were of squared logs, but the Colonel’s own quarters were apart from the rest, and in addition, the bare logs were boarded over, giving the appearance of a frame house, whilst its greater height commanded the rest of the buildings stretched in an irregular line for probably a hundred and fifty feet. This strange collection of log houses were set in the midst of a magnificent natural park of chestnuts, elms and beeches, overlooking Lake Erie and the deep wooded gorge of Talbot Creek. They became known as Malahide Castle, and it is not stating it too strongly to say, that they were for years the Mecca of a wide district of settlers, stretching from the Detroit River on the west to Long Point on the east, a district which then stood, as it stands now, in the very forefront of advancement, a district which even in those early days was constantly pointed to as the type of what a vigorous settlement should be. The land embraced in this district was nearly all very fertile and thickly wooded with valuable timber. Consult any timber man to-day, if you will, and he will refer in terms of glowing delight, not unmixed with regret at its swift disappearance, to the unrivalled stretches of forest that formerly lined Lake Erie’s northern shores. As early as 1721, Charlevoix the famous traveller who had

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traversed this unbroken forest land, spoke of it in these words : " In every place where I landed, I was enchanted with the beauty and variety of the landscape, bounded by the finest forest in the world ; besides this, waterfowl swarmed everywhere." The beauty and magnificence of that forest is now but a legend, transmitted from father to son, but it is an abiding legacy of memory in this southern peninsula, and even yet traces of its former splendor may be seen, notably around Port Talbot itself. With the exception of the extreme western portion, all this wide district was well drained by the numerous creeks with deep ravines, that discharge into Lake Erie. In what is now Tilbury township though, the water in the spring months often stood two and three feet deep from an insufficient fall in the land. It is related, that on one occasion a would-be settler on these wet lands came to Colonel Talbot and anxiously inquired, whether the land itself was good if the water was drained off. " How can I tell, you fool you " answered the Colonel indignantly " do you take me for a duck, that can dive down and see?" Every settler in this immense district had to some time or other make one or more excursions to see Colonel Talbot in regard to their titles to land, and thus Malahide Castle and its odd occupant came to be regarded as the centre of gravity around which the rest of the colony revolved. All that is interesting and romantic in this settlement, and there is much that is so, all the numberless tales of a rigid self-devotion to duty ; in short, all the lifework and deep pathos of the early settler's struggles naturally group themselves around Colonel Talbot and Malahide Castle.

Ezra and John made their way next morning shortly after nine o'clock toward the Colonel's quarters with very mixed feelings indeed. John felt that they had seriously impaired their chances of making favorable arrangements with him about their land by reason of Ezra's impetuous speeches the night before, whilst Ezra himself was more determined than ever not to tolerate anything that he considered being " put upon," as he termed it. As a matter of fact, though neither was then aware of it, the surest way to gain Colonel Talbot's respect was by standing up boldly for your own rights and returning bitter speech for bitter speech. In answer to their knocking a new face, that of Jeffrey Hunter an old and trusted servant of the Colonel's, appeared at the little moveable wicket and demanded their names and business. Being answered he carefully closed the wicket again without vouchsafing another word. In a few moments they heard the door being unbarred,

and they were ushered into a little room that served the Colonel as an office. The furniture was a heavy oaken writing-desk, littered with papers, three chairs curiously carved and a rough lounge where the Colonel was accustomed to snatch a nap now and then when business was not pressing. A pair of wide, branching deer horns was fastened over a side door leading into a large sitting-room and a magnificently silver-mounted rifle was suspended by thongs of deer skin above the horns again. The floor was cleanness itself, but uncovered save where an immense bear skin was placed directly in front of the Colonel's chair. They had just time to take all this in when the Colonel himself entered by the side door and bade them good morning. His manner was business-like and formal, there was nothing to indicate that he had ever seen them before. "You want land to settle on, my man tells me," he said, looking them straight in the eyes. John nodded an affirmative. "Have you chosen any place?" "Yes," answered John, describing the spot. "You can't have a foot of that." The Colonel's manner was stern now. "Why not?" broke in Ezra. "Because I say you can't; it's half promised already," was the answer. "First come, first served, we have our families there now and I would like to see any one drive us off if we behave ourselves and do our settlement duties." Ezra was talking angrily too, and when he had spoken he got up abruptly and went outside. Left alone with the Colonel, John Ruthven did not have much trouble in persuading him to allow them to settle at Maple Bend on the usual conditions, viz: that each settler should sow and clear ten acres of land, open one-half of the road in front of his farm inside of three years, and then he would be entitled to fifty acres free. The Colonel also laid it down as a special condition in the case of our little colony, that they should cultivate in common for the first three years the space formed by the bend in the creek which, as was told before, nature had already cleared up ready for the plough, thus ensuring to all a supply of wheat for bread by the next summer. Then as John named over the settlers the Colonel put their names down on a map, each name on its own place, picking out the lots for every man according to the way the name seemed to strike him at the time, something like this: "Daniel McLarty, sure to be Scotch and stubborn; he can have number one to keep him from grumbling. Carl Lutz! Sounds exactly like sauerkraut. I will put him off by himself, so that the others may not smell the sour cabbage; number ten. Ezra Stubbs! Is that that saucy Englishman with the scratched face?"

Still, he looks like a worker and I will give him a good lot, number three, but don't bring the beast here any more." Thus he went on, John taking down on a slip of paper the number assigned to each one. Ezra he found outside, still in bad humor, but his brow cleared when told of the success of their mission. Our two settlers now set out for Maple Bend in high spirits, where they arrived the next evening without any unusual incident, and right glad were all of the little colony to hear that now they could set to work to build their homes, confident in getting justice if they did their part. Carl Lutz grumbled a little at being placed apart from the rest, but honest soul that he was, he reflected that now he could smoke his pipe in peace, whilst the rest consoled him by saying that he would have to get a wife to cheer up his loneliness.



CHAPTER IV.

THE HOME MAKING.

“From the ground
 Comes up the laugh of children, the soft voice
 Of Sabbath maidens, and the sweet and solemn hymn
 Of worshippers. The low of herds
 Blends with the rustling of the heavy grain
 Over the dark brown furrows.”

—*Bryant.*

It is difficult for us now to fully comprehend the enormous difficulties with which the early Canadian settlers had to contend. We may read, it is true, that tea was two dollars a pound and common pins fifty cents a paper, but unless we actually set about imagining it to be our own case and strive to put ourselves in their places again, we never will become fully seized with those hardships as they once existed. That unfortunately is exactly what very few of us are disposed to do. We are so engrossed in the butterfly existence of the immediate present, it is more pleasant to slur over those days, when all the powers of human mind and body had to be exerted in order to keep afloat at all, and so we lightly skim over, or what is more probable skip them altogether. But, if we would but reflect a moment, that the most of the advantages we now possess are owing to the brave struggles our forefathers made with the forest, even a sense of gratitude, which is a very lowly ideal, should make the story of their lives interesting. It was not alone that everything they had to buy was five times dearer than now, that the physical difficulties to be encountered were enormous, but money itself was extremely difficult to get hold of at all. To quote again from an old settler (Mr. Duncan Leitch of Eagle): “Money was scarce and getting scarcer. Old stores of it were waning fast. Those, who had the most, saw one sovereign follow another with painfully unceasing regularity, until at last they found

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themselves on a common level with those who had landed at *'Cnoc Nellie' without a bawbee in their pockets. Yet even in those days it was necessary to have some money, and it could be neither made or earned in the neighborhood, for it was not there. Nor could we hear of a place in Upper Canada in which a day's labor would control a York shilling nearer than Toronto. A day's labor could always command a share of the produce, but cash, if not foreign to our vocabulary was foreign to our experience. Occasional reports reached us of public works in progress at Toronto and of demand for labor there; payment in real money or sometimes part money and part trade. Eager to get hold of some money again, parties were made up in the neighborhood to go in quest of it even as far as the city of Toronto. I was one of the second gang." This quotation gives a clear glimpse into the hardships of life at that time, coming as it does from one who fought, not unsuccessfully either, the rough and tumble battle of backwoods existence. So the present writer never sees the little log shanty on the edge of a clearing in the newer parts of Canada, but he feels like taking off his hat to one of the grim heroes, who are fighting the stern conflict silently and well. The world hears much of those in the full blaze of public stations, but far too little of the voiceless, dumb ones just along the border line of civilization, who are smoothing out the rough spots so that those who come after may have pleasant travelling.

No time was lost at Maple Bend in getting to work. Early the next morning after Ezra's and John's return the little colony was called together, the terms of settlement by which they could secure titles to their land was explained and the position of each man's lot indicated. Then the condition about the cleared ground to be used in common for three years was gone into and approved. Finally, it was decided that as many hands make light labor all the men should work together in building the houses, the order of building being determined by casting lots. Luck was with Carl Lutz now, though the sound of his name had been against him before, for he drew first house. With a touch of

* A little island at the mouth of "Sixteen Mile creek," formed by the washings down of the stream. It was so called by the early settlers because Nellie Campbell, a determined, masculine woman, often referred to as "Big Nellie," and one who had much to do with the early settlement of the country, landed at this point and pitched her tent under the giant trees. Most of the early settlers of that district came ashore at "Cnoc Nellie," which means in English "the place where Nellie landed."

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generosity, that the others had scarcely given him credit for, he waived his right in favor of Ezra Stubbs, the next on the list, explaining that "if he had as many chicks as Stubbs, he would want a nest for them right away too." It was an inspiring sight to see the men assemble that bright September morning, whilst the hoar frost still lingered in the openings of the forest and now and then the swift flight of a wild bee could be heard overhead, as he swept on towards his morning haunts among the purple asters and wild rye grass down by the creek. Each man had his axe sharpened and their first move was to fell all the big trees in a wide circle, so that there would be none to threaten the house with destruction during wind storms. Having done this and piled up the brush, they set to work to square the logs for the house and fit them to their places one by one. For the roof and floors they peeled the bark off the huge elms, making a fairly satisfactory job, though here and there the open sky could be seen through the roof, thus securing ample ventilation and, let us add, health too. In most of the houses there were no partitions dividing it into bedrooms, the beds usually occupying the four corners of the big inside, and many are the amusing stories related of the straits that guests were often put to in order to get up and dress in the morning without attracting undue attention. However, it was a well understood rule that the women of the household should have outside duties to attend to for half an hour or so in the morning, so as to give an opportunity to their male guests to dress. But woe betide the unfortunate wight who allowed this chance to slip.

The present author remembers—can he ever forget it?—an incident which caused him untold misery at the time, in the days when he was abnormally modest and retiring. He was teaching school at the time and one night was a guest at a staid Scotch farmer's home, who had two fresh faced boys, almost grown up, and two charming daughters a little older than the boys. The evening was spent in cheery conversation. The old Scotchman was relating stories of the early pioneer days till about ten o'clock, when the old folks slipped away somehow to bed in one corner of the room, whilst one of the boys was already snoring in another corner bed. Along near eleven o'clock the conversation began to flag somewhat and the older son with a quiet, easy dignity said, "Your bed is in that corner, teacher. We get up here at half-past six," and immediately blew out the light. The teacher managed to find the bed all right and slept a dreamless, untroubled sleep, so untroubled in fact that when he awoke the family had already

had their breakfast, the father and sons were away about their work, whilst the mother and daughters were busy in and out with their household duties. Everybody seemed to have forgotten the presence of the teacher altogether. The morning sun lit up the face of the old clock, with the long swinging weights, on the opposite wall, and showed the time drawing perilously near nine o'clock, when the teacher should be at the schoolhouse. The young ladies hummed over old Scotch airs to themselves as they hurried around, washing dishes, dusting and sweeping, but the teacher anxiously peeping out from under the covers, was fervently wishing that they and their tunes were somewhere else just then. He thought that he could detect them from time to time casting roguish glances at each other too, as if it was an understood thing to keep him in bed, and even the mother seemed to be helping the scheme along, though it appeared to the teacher under the clothes that a woman at her time of life might be in better business than encouraging such nonsense. Finally, as the old clock showed five minutes to nine, the teacher became fairly desperate. Watching an opportunity when the girls had stepped out for a moment and the mother's back was turned, he bolted for his garments that hung on the foot of the bed, and was making excellent progress in getting into them when there came a merry burst of laughter as the two girls re-entered. He got dressed some way or other but did not wait for breakfast, and at school could not understand why the children looked at him so curiously. The mystery was explained when a small parcel was handed in to him at recess containing his collar and necktie and this laconic sentence, "Always get up in time to dress."

After our little colony at Maple Bend had completed their dwellings of log their next care was the furniture, nearly all homemade. The only tools they possessed were their keen-edged axes, a few augers and one hand-saw. Choosing a nice, straight ironwood tree without knots they would cut it into lengths of six feet and peel off the bark. These furnished the sides for their beds, the ends being completed by smaller poles inserted into auger holes bored for this purpose. Four stout legs also inserted into auger holes, two rude uprights at the head and foot and the bed proper was completed. Then the ropelike bark of the basswood was woven in and out, across and back, making a mattress not luxurious looking, but eminently comfortable. Their tables were made by splitting away slabs from large blocks of wood, boring auger holes at each corner and inserting legs therein, whilst for

chairs other and smaller blocks were used. These articles differed somewhat in each little log home, but in one particular all were furnished alike. That was, that no matter how lowly the log house or how poor its occupants, a big, open fireplace occupied a large share of the side of the house. Many of these old fireplaces were so large that a man could easily climb up them were he so disposed, and the amount of wood that one of them used in a winter would heat a modern house for a couple of years. But as wood was worth little or nothing this did not matter, and so night after night big logs of dried maple and beech went roaring up the wide chimney, whilst the merry tale and jest went round, for let no one think that those early days had not their pleasures and enjoyments. On this point let another old pioneer (Mr. Garrett Oakes of New Sarum) speak :

“I think the possessor of a fortune at the present day would envy the lot of a pair of new settlers, could they in imagination pay them an evening visit and see them sitting by the bright blazing fire on the hearth of their rudely-built log house, discussing incidents of the past or laying plans for the future, whilst listening to the breathing of their little ones as they lay sleeping in their rude bed, the personification of innocence. And then to witness the thrill of pleasure with which a hearty ‘come in’ would be given in answer to the knock of a neighbor, who in passing had called to spend an hour of the evening to enquire after their welfare and to give and receive an account of the doings in the settlement since they last met. Then the handshakings at parting that carried conviction to the heart that the friendships were sincere and mutual. To the new settlers it appeared as though Providence interposed to dispel the nightly gloom, where the howl of the wolf was responded to by the solemn hoot of the owl, for as soon as an opening was made in the woods the cheerful whip-poor-will would take possession, and each summer night would sit near the door and dispel the feeling of solitude with its shrill notes of welcome to the new settler.”

As soon as their houses were erected, and their families fairly in them, the little colony at Maple Bend began to look around them to see how they could cultivate the plot of cleared ground, as it was now getting along late in the fall and their winter wheat, if they were to have any, must be put in at once. But how, for they were absolutely without tools to work the land. A journey of two days through the

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woods had to be made to Port Ryerse, where the only store in the district was situated, to get some spades and hoes. Then came the long trip back again, or four days hard travelling by two men to get articles, that may now be purchased almost at your door for one quarter of the money then paid for them. The long, dragging labor of making the ground ready for sowing was much lightened by the readiness with which old and young entered into the work, and the joyous shouts of the children echoed and re-echoed up the slope, that led to the maple woods beyond. It was decided to leave a part of the ground for the planting of vegetables the following spring, and thus in planning and sowing and clearing up the fallen timber in their future sugar bushes, the beautiful autumn days sped away very happily for our settlers, the walnut and butternut trees cast their wealth of nuts down to the ground, where they were eagerly snatched up by the children and dried for use in the long winter nights ahead of them, the women picked the sweet thimble berries, that grew so abundantly along the bank of the creek, and preserved them as well as they were able, till one late November morning, a light fall of snow warned them that winter was close at hand. Fortunately though, the men had prepared great stores of winter wood, and no inconvenience was felt from the cold. So much has been said and written in regard to the intense cold of our Canadian winters, so much utter nonsense has found its way into print and illustration about the matter, that the present author as a native Canadian, who not only loves his country but also its climate, is specially pleased to be thus able to bear testimony to the absolute delightfulness of our winter seasons. Ask any native Canadian, if you will, whose home is now under more southern skies, if he retains unpleasant recollections of the rigors of our winters, and you will be surprised at his prompt disclaimer. The keen, healthy, frosty air, the long bracing, drives over the moonlit hills when each footstep of the horse crunches the hard snow, gleaming with millions of glittering diamonds, the never-to-be-forgotten excursions up the frozen rivers or creeks on skates with a mere companion or better still your sweetheart are delights, that even to look back on must and will send the blood tingling through the veins of the dullest clod that ever drew breath among our glorious northern valleys and slopes.

The first winter was the worst one at Maple Bend. Money was very scarce, but those who had a little cheerfully helped their neighbors, and yet after all there was some real suffering at times. The prices of

everything — high at all times — were now ruinous on account of the threatened war with the United States, and the distances through the woods to get anything were enough to try the stoutest, more especially in winter time. But they managed to exist somehow. Colonel Talbot had sent word to them that if they would come to his mill they could get flour and had testily refused to take pay for it. "Pay me back when you take off your first crop or don't pay me back at all," he said when they went to his house and proffered the money, slamming the door in their faces at the same time. It may sound strangely now, but one of the most difficult and costly articles to obtain was salt — ordinary table salt — that we hold so lightly. It could only be obtained by a toilsome four days' journey through the snowy woods to Hamilton, and then by paying at the rate of sixty-five dollars per barrel. The little colony at Maple Bend purchased a quarter of a barrel and it was almost amusing the care exercised over it when finally secured. It was placed in John Ruthven's house, as they had no children who might be tempted to waste it, and each handful taken from it had to be sanctioned by all the colony before it was given out. To be "worth your salt" in those days had a real meaning. The woods around though fairly swarmed with wild turkeys, quail and partridge and on Christmas day a game dinner was given by Ezra Stubbs and family to the rest of the colony. And so winter wore away, till with the first sunshiny days of April all was excitement to tap the trees and make their first maple sugar. Ah! can any one ever adequately portray the homely joys of a sugar bush and maple sugar making?

The icy embargo of the long winter has lifted at last, each tiny rill and streamlet is dancing in the warm sun, hurrying down to tell its wondrous story that spring is here, the snow is still lying in little daily-diminishing heaps adown the sheltered ravines, but out on the sunny crests that slope away southward the ground is almost dry. The nights are frosty yet, but the days are glorious bursts of sunshine. This is the time to tap the maples. This is the time to be abroad on the wooded hills if you want to really know the subtle charms of the country, for the delicious thrill of awakening life is everywhere.

"And now began a round of busy weeks,
The nightly frosts, with winds and vernal sun
Brought forth the forest nectar of the trees
To lighten labor with a promised gain."

So the bright spring days passed happily at Maple Bend and spring had merged into the heat of summer, when one unlucky day a horseman appeared in the little settlement and announced that the United States had declared war against Great Britain, that an invasion was feared at Windsor and that every man who could be spared must be prepared to march at a moment's notice.



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CHAPTER V.

THE HOME DEFENDING.

“Handful of men as we were, we were English in heart and limb,
Strong with the strength of the race to command, to obey, to endure.”

—*Tennyson.*

It would be idle to say that Maple Bend was not agitated at the threatening news which the horseman had brought. As he rode away through the forest to warn other settlements, it seemed to all he left behind, that he had brought each one a death sentence and that the magnificent animal which he bestrode was in reality the pale horse of death. For “war” is a frightful word to us when it really reaches our own households. Away off in other countries and among other people it is “magnificent” and “grand,” but when it swoops right down among us, and demands loudly and imperiously that we ourselves must march away from homes and loved ones, ah! then war is “horrid” and “brutal.” A meeting was called at once, and a sad looking one it was. Under a tall, old maple, that towered high above its fellows on the slope, the people gathered in twos and threes to discuss the situation, but their brows were gloomy and turn the matter over as they would it presented no favorable aspect. War itself was rolling straight towards them and that is all there was to it. Just then John Ruthven mounted the stump of a huge beech, lately felled, and began speaking. In every crowd there is always a leader and Maple Bend had found him. His voice was very grave and even sad at first, but as he went on it gradually turned to a note of defiance and ended in a burst of hatred.

“Fellow settlers” he began, “women and children as well as men, for unfortunately the miseries of war are often visited on those least

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SUMMER EVENING AT MAPLE BEND.

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able to stand them, we have met together to-day under circumstances that could not well be sadder. We had hoped that in this new country with its broad forests, surrounded by unsalted seas on which scarcely a sail may be seen, we might be allowed to build up our homes afar from jars and strifes. We had no grudge against others, and we ourselves had given no cause for war. We thought to have been left alone to work out our own destiny, but it seems it is not to be thus. Another country, sprung from the same source, is determined to attack us, hoping thus to injure that dear old motherland by striking down one of her children. Well, let them come on. We are here before them, and let us stand fast, shoulder to shoulder. For myself, I am lately from that old land, I love it still, and I love this new land too, where we have started to build our homes. I for one am ready to march out and meet the invaders, trusting in the truth of the doctrines held by my covenanting fathers among the far-off hills of Scotland, that God will not allow a righteous cause to be overborne. Let us then push forward in defense of our homes and return blow for blow, thrust for thrust."

As he concluded old Ezra Stubbs tossed his greasy-looking cap high in the air and shouted, "Ruthven is right; we'll fight the Yankees, and we'll lick them too." How wonderful is the power of enthusiasm! The little crowd of settlers, who a few moments before were bowed down with sadness, now were all alert and active, ready to march at once—two of the older men being selected to guard the settlement and harvest the crops—the women volunteering to assist in the latter task. They had been ordered to assemble at Port Talbot for orders, and thitherward they took their way about a week after this, where they found other settlers already drilling for the fray. Several weeks were spent in acquiring a fair knowledge of military movements, and then they received orders to join Colonel Proctor's force, engaged in defending Fort Malden, near Amherstburg. Very toilsome was the journey up the lake shore in open boats, landing at night, building their camp fires, and next morning pushing on again. The third day of their journey a fierce storm arose, blowing a perfect hurricane from the southwest and lashing the lake into fury. Long, combing billows chased each other shoreward and broke with the noise of thunder on the smooth beach, dashing the spray high up on the steep cliffs. They had drawn their boats up into a little creek, where they rested safely enough, whilst the men gathered near the edge of the cliff and looked out with awe at the wild waste of waters beneath. Any one who has

only seen Lake Erie in its calmer moods can scarcely realize what a big southwestern storm means on it. Shallower than any of other of the great lakes, it is by far the stormiest. When the wind, sweeping across eighty miles of comparatively shallow water, has been blowing for a few hours the waves seem to roll from its very bottom, and the force with which they hurl their muddy waters against the northern shore is something terrific, as witness the steady wearing away of the shore line.

For three days our little force was detained watching the fury of the storm, but the fourth morning the wind had gone down and the lake was calm again, though its waters were still discolored. Just as they were preparing to make a start they noticed another flotilla of boats swiftly coming up towards them, the water fairly curling away from the bows, such was the speed with which they were being propelled by the long, graceful swing of the oars. There were seven boats in all, filled with Indians, and standing up forward in the leading boat was a figure that none of them ever forgot again. He seemed to be directing the movements of the little fleet, but it was merely by a haughty inclination of the head from time to time. His magnificent proportions showed to good advantage as the boats shot quickly forward. His dusky face was surmounted by a rich head dress of brilliantly colored feathers, with one long, sweeping eagle's plume conspicuous above the rest. As he got in front of where the whites were, he raised his right hand and every paddle backed water at the same moment, the boats came to a halt like soldiers on parade, and there was nothing to indicate life except the restless rolling of fierce dark eyes, for not a word had been spoken yet.

"Where do my white brothers travel to?" the leader said in the purest of English, for he was none other than Tecum-eh, the most celebrated of his race. "To fight the Americans," came the answer. "Good," his stern features relaxed into a smile for an instant, "we will go together." It appeared that he had been down as far as the Grand river to enlist his brethren there to help the British cause. Though not of this tribe at all, yet his fame had spread so widely and his influence was so great that he was now returning with a force of over a hundred warriors to assist his own people in the west against the American forces. When the two flotillas had thus joined together they presented quite a formidable appearance as they moved up the lake, the red men leading, for they knew every wind and turn of the shore, knew

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too where the most abundant game could be secured for stopping places, and so they all arrived at Amherstburg in safety three days later on. There they found that General Hull had already crossed over to the Canadian shore with a considerable force, and the little garrison at Fort Malden were momentarily expecting an attack from him. Nothing could exceed the admiration and respect with which all seemed to regard the great Tecumseh. Wherever he went he inspired hope and courage amongst white and red, for all appeared to understand him as a born leader of men. Nothing appears more remarkable to one, who endeavors to burrow down into the dim records of those times by seeking for local traditions on the spot, than the positive unanimity of opinion on the greatness of Tecumseh himself. You will get all manner of opinions (which have been handed down from father to son) on the merits and demerits of the other commanders in this conflict, but all traditions concur in saying that head and shoulders above the others was the rare judgment, the calm courage and the shrewd strategy of the great Indian chief. His was a greatness that impressed itself deeply into the remembrance of all who met him.

Our little company from Maple Bend were soon called upon to go into action. Word came that the American force was moving toward Amherstburg, and it was determined to go out and meet them at River Canard. In the skirmish that ensued Ezra Stubbs had the misfortune to have a ball shatter his left wrist, but he insisted on remaining with his neighbors till the fight was over. During its progress the Indians kept up an incessant yelling, firing at the same time, whilst the Americans seemed to have a goodly dread of coming to too close quarters with their dusky foes. Perhaps they feared scalping. At any rate they soon retired, baffled completely, and in a short time re-crossed the Detroit river. John Ruthven and his little band had distinguished themselves in this affair. They had been instructed to hold at all hazards a point of land near where the little stream discharges into the Detroit river, and under his directions they scattered about the fringe of timber, taking careful aim at the advancing Americans. They did not attempt to fire in volleys, but each man selected his own mark, and so troublesome did they become and so deadly was their aim, that General Hull ordered a small battery up to clear them out. The men crouched low behind the fallen trees as the solid shot tore its way through and through. John Ruthven himself was almost covered over from one shot, that buried itself in the soft earth directly in front

of him, and slightly injured too by the flying pieces of wood. They dare not raise their heads, so close was the range, and their position would soon have been untenable had not the armed British sloop "Queen Charlotte" come to their rescue. She had been cruising near the mouth of the river, and her crew had noticed the persistent and deadly firing of the settlers, though not a man of them could be seen. Then they noticed the galloping up of the battery as it took position, and noted the sudden cessation of the settlers' fire as the cannon balls went tearing through the little wood, sending trees flying in the air in all directions. Getting closer in shore the "Queen Charlotte" opened fire with her twenty-four pounders and soon silenced the opposing battery, which slowly withdrew, as the American line of battle was now falling back all along. Climbing up in the tree-tops, our little band of settlers from Maple Bend waved their thanks to the sloop, which responded by sending a broadside after the retreating enemy. It was found, that with the exception of Ezra Stubbs, no one among the settlers was seriously injured, though all had narrow escapes to tell, and scarcely one but had slight flesh wounds from flying splinters, but they had driven the invaders back for the time being and all were satisfied with the day's work. Ezra Stubbs, much against his will, after having his wrist bound up, was forced to return home, whilst the others went along with the British forces, that were preparing for an attack on Detroit.

As this is not a history, but only a modest story of the early settler's times, it will not be necessary to follow them through the changing fortunes of the war of 1812—15. Suffice to say, that they took part in the bloodless siege of Detroit, where twenty-five hundred men fully provisioned and equipped, surrendered to half their number without firing a shot or even sinking a boat, though the attackers had first to cross a wide and swift river. Then the next year (1813), our Maple Bend settlers took part in the disastrous battle at Moraviantown, saw Tecumseh mounted on a black charger and standing under a noble *beech tree, pass his six hundred Indians in review before him and then, as the glitter of the advancing American arms could be seen up the river among the trees, they saw him ride out in plain sight and waving his cap of eagle feathers defiantly at the foe, they heard him shout "We will wait for you up the river." True to his word, they saw

*The tree is still pointed out near the southern shore of the Thames River, among the most beautiful rural scenery of Ontario.

this peerless Indian mass his warriors at the point sure to be attacked by the Americans, after he had at last induced the faint-hearted Proctor to make a stand. Though hotly engaged themselves in the battle, our settler band did not fail to carry back to Maple Bend as treasure-stories to be recounted again and again, how they saw Tecumseh, when he knew the day was going against him largely through Proctor's weakness, push boldly forward among the fierce, Kentucky horsemen, and single them out one by one for mortal combat. Years afterwards, when a settler would take his boy on his knee in the evening by the firelight, the little fellow's eyes would grow big with admiration and wonder, as his father would tell how he himself saw this magnificently formed Indian strike horseman after horseman out of his saddle with sweeping blows of his glittering tomahawk, till at last he went down before superior numbers.

“By tenfold odds oppressed at length,
 Despite his struggles and his strength
 He took a hundred mortal wounds
 As mute as fox 'mongst mangling hounds ;
 And when he died, his parting groan
 Had more of laughter than of moan !
 They gazed, as when a lion dies
 And hunters scarcely trust their eyes,
 But bend their weapons on the slain
 Lest the grim king should rouse again.”

With the passing away of Tecumseh — the ideal Indian warrior as Fenimore Cooper has painted him — the sole, remaining barrier to the advance of the Americans in the west was removed, and thenceforward, during nearly the whole of the remainder of the war, they ranged through the western peninsula of Upper Canada, driving away cattle to replenish their own scanty stores, burning mills and creating mischief generally. Detached bands of settlers from time to time, hung on the rear of these marauders and worried them greatly, though of course they (the settlers) were too weak in numbers to ever engage in a set battle.

On New Year's day, 1815, word was passed around that a party of three hundred Americans had come up the Thames river, crossed over to Rond Eau and were then engaged in killing two hundred cattle which the settlers had collected there to winter, on account of the excellent hay in that section of country. Again the little company of Maple Bend settlers were called upon to leave their homes. Without a murmur

each man got his rifle and accoutrements down, and the small squad, along with others, swung out from Port Talbot in the teeth of a blinding snow storm for their long, dreary march up the lake on the ice. To try to sleep meant freezing to death, so all day and all night they tramped on through the deep snow, only to find when they did at last get there that they were too late, for the Americans had left, carrying away every pound of beef and even the hides of the slaughtered cattle. So they had their dismal tramp for naught and were compelled to wheel about and face another long, snowy march home. This was the last time they were called out, peace having been declared though they did not know it, and thus this needless and unprovoked war came to an end with neither side gainers, but both heavy losers. Of all the foolish and unnecessary wars ever recorded in history — and there are many of them — that of 1812-15 between the United States and Great Britain is easily first.



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CHAPTER VI.

THE HOME MAKING RESUMED.

"I'll ask Him for strength when my time comes to die
To go out in the clover and tell it good-bye,
And cheerfully nestle my head in its bloom,
While my soul wafts away in a breath of perfume."

—James Whitcomb Riley.

We will pass lightly over several years that followed the war of 1812-15. When the settlers at Maple Bend returned to their homes they found that no harm had befallen those left behind. Their colony being so new and isolated, the American forces probably knew nothing about its existence, or if they did they reflected that this young settlement would be too poor to have catt'e or anything worth carrying away, which was literally true. During the war the women and the few men who had been left behind as a home-guard, or who had been sent home wounded, worked hard to make a success of the settlement. They cultivated the common plot of ground, they reaped the wheat laboriously by hand and ground it into a coarse flour in their home-made mortars, which were made by burning a bowl-shaped concavity in a log. In this rude way they pounded out a flour, which while it was not as white as the present roller-made product, yet it made excellent bread and they did not grumble at their lot at all.

When at last the men returned home the real work of clearing off the forest began again, and so earnestly was this work pursued, that thirty years or so after when we look in at them again, prosperous farms have taken the place of the woods, a little village has grown up where the creek made its long bend and John Ruthven is ageing just a trifle, for he has turned the corner of fifty. He and his wife, for she did not disdain helping in the logging-up, had day by day with infinite toil cleared up the farm, excepting about twenty acres reserved for firewood. One child alone, a daughter, had been born to them

and as she grew up into girlhood she gave promise of much beauty. Since the neighbors were few and far between in her early childhood, Mary Ruthven was left much to amuse herself and thus was developed a romantic, brooding disposition, which often cast a false glamor over the commonplace affairs of life. Night after night she used to sit outside their log home and watch the figure of her father as he gathered in the brush to the burning heaps. Her mother had read Robinson Crusoe to her in the evenings by the roaring fireplace during the winter months, and now in the early autumn nights as she watched her father pile on the brush, sending up showers of sparks heavenward, it seemed to Mary that she could see the cannibals dancing around the fire preparatory to eating their victims; or the dark outlines of a stump just outside the circle of light was Crusoe stealing down on them. These habits of introspection and imagination gave to Mary's features a repose and thoughtfulness somewhat beyond her years. By the time she had reached twenty she had several offers of marriage from the young farmers of her acquaintance, but she, like too many other country girls, had conceived a notion that farming was hum drum and slavish; that farmers' wives were looked down on by their city cousins and that any other suitor was preferable to a young farmer. No milking of cows or feeding dirty calves for her. She had already in her highly-wrought imagination constructed an ideal future husband. A delightfully romantic fellow he must be with an ample fortune and hands unstained by the plow, one who would do gallant deeds to make the world ring with his name. He came along one day, a strolling artist with his brushes and easel, one of those wandering Bohemians, who partly because their work is not up to the standard of the town and partly because they like the open air, take to the country roads in the summer hoping to get odd jobs. His dress was faultless, his manners had a courtly grace and poor, untutored Mary thought never an artist had painted such a glorious picture as the ill-finished daub of herself which he presented to her. She was not interested alone, she was fascinated. And in truth Harry Scott had many loveable traits. Of a sunny disposition, too indolent to be accurate, too easy-going to be economical, he just managed not to be a good artist and not to have a bank account, whilst he was a most charming companion. Neither he nor Mary knew well why they got married, but married they got and that without her parents' consent. Her father was one of those placid, Scotch dispositions, which not easily aroused, are extremely difficult to

lay once they are stirred deeply. When the news of Mary's marriage to young Scott reached him he declared that he never would go near her again during her life. Therefore when he received a letter that Mary was dying in Toronto, he refused at first to go, but when his wife, her motherly instincts touched, begged of him he relented, and as quickly as the method of travelling — the old stage coach — would admit they were bending over the shabby bed on which lay their only child, dead. Death, let it come in what guise it may, is sorrowful, but no grief is comparable to that of parents for an only child, and more especially an estranged one. The sense of past alienation, the remembrance of worse than wasted years of heart hatred, assumed or real, that awful Nemesis of recalled lost opportunities come thronging in like so many avenging demons. A maiden mourns for her dead sweetheart, a husband or wife mourns for the trusted companion of many years of joint toil, but neither is the same as the mourning of a mother for her stray lamb.

With every disposition to make matters comfortable for his young wife, Harry Scott had simply been unable to do so. Directly after their marriage he had given up his summer ramblings and he and Mary had taken up their residence in Toronto, where he hoped to succeed in making a living by his brush, but the skill required in painting a medium landscape and the skill required in order sell to town patrons are two entirely different matters. Poor Harry soon found that the few people who dropped in made light of his work, for they plainly told him so. Now and then a chance acquaintance, whom he had met in his wanderings and who was attracted by his cheery, good nature, purchased a picture more through good nature than anything else, but these little helps made small impression on his heavy rent and other expenses which were steadily mounting up. At last one day he found his "Emporium of Art," as he called his studio, closed in his face and the landlord in possession. Still, beneath Harry's indolent exterior there was a strong undercurrent of persistency and with this reverse he did not sit down and wring his hands in despair. He applied in turn to every other artist in the town for chance work, but as he was known among the fraternity as an indifferent worker no one wanted him. Besides as Toronto was then only a small town there was really no room for him. Then he advertised in the papers for any kind of clerical work, as he was a good penman, but he waited in vain for a

single answer. All the editions were eagerly scanned for comfort, only to find when he hurried to the few addresses given that the places were filled. In a rapidly descending scale of gentility, he applied for work everywhere — anywhere. In vain, nobody wanted him. At last, in very desperation, like the last throw of the gambler's dice, he spent his last quarter in the following advertisement. "Is there no one in this town who will give any kind of work for almost any wages to a young married man? Address 'Harry,' this office." To this odd notice he got but one answer, a livery-stable keeper wrote him that if he was good with horses, faithful and did not get drunk he would give him work in his stable at twenty-five dollars a month. No one would have recognized the gay, careless Harry Scott of a few months before in the grave, quiet man who had to be on duty at the livery stable from six in the morning to almost any hour at night. But he did not shirk his humble duties nor take to drink, as a weaker man would have done and he was invariably kind to Mary. "I married Mary in good faith, knowing that neither of us had aught but love, and now is not the time to falter," he used to say to himself. His employer found him respectful to customers, anxious to please, and attentive to all the petty details of the stable. But when winter came, Harry in spite of his unflinching cheeriness, found his load growing more burdensome daily. Fuel was dear, his rent took nearly a quarter of his little monthly wage, and do what he would debts began to accumulate. It seemed as if the dark cloud, hanging over these young lives, could not get blacker, but it did nevertheless. Mary was taken sick and from the first she felt that she could not live. Her mind went rapidly back to the old farm, again she was a child watching the burning log heaps in the evening, or chasing the golden butterflies among the stumps of the clearing. Again she heard her dear mother's kindly voice as she read to her of Crusoe and his wondrous Isle; again she was in the old wooden cradle and heard it rocked back and forth on the pine floor of the old log house. Or she was again in her blushing girlhood days, picking up the russets and pippins in the golden autumn, under the orchard trees which her father had planted years before on the hill overlooking the little creek. Now she was bent over the bubbling spring at the foot of the hill, modestly admiring the charming face which the water gave back again. As she recalled those happier days it seemed to her that she *must* see her father and mother before she died. And yet she had not much hope of again seeing them. "For Harry" she whispered to

her husband "don't you remember father's set face, when he said that he would never go near me again in life, and I never knew him to break his word." But you'll write to him, won't you Harry? Tell him that I am dying and that I want to kiss him and mother before I die. Oh Harry! you have been good and kind to me and I love you, but I can't help but think of the old home, where there was no landlord waiting for pay-day, nor no fuel bills and dunning, angry men. And Harry, if I don't see father and mother before I die, and I know I won't, will you tell them that I am sorry they were angry at you and me, and that I should like to be buried on the dear old farm. I hate the bustle of the town, now that I am dying, though I used to think it would be nice, but I hate it now, and should not like to stay here even in death. Ask them to bury me under the big apple tree near the spring, where I used to play. Then maybe, I can hear again the birds singing overhead in June, and the murmur of the bees hunting among the blossoms for honey. But write to them at once, will you Harry, for I feel that death is not far off? The letter was sent and received, but as we have seen, was too late to be of any use, for Mary was dead before her parents reached her, having first given birth to a fine baby boy, whom she insisted should be named Norman. It was decided to remove the body back to the old farm as she had wished, and as for the child, both grandparents were determined to take it back with them to their now lonely home. They would gladly have had Harry accompany them also, for they were now friends with him—their common grief had drawn them together. He declined however and said that he intended to push his fortunes in New York but hoped to visit his child each year. Thus it came that we found Mr. and Mrs. Ruthven at the opening of our story being driven home through the storm on that blustery night in midwinter with the infant well wrapped up from the cold, whilst Donald Gordon waited impatiently for their arrival.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOME BURYING.

“Take the wings
 Of morning — and the Barcan desert pierce,
 Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
 Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound
 Save his own dashings, yet — the dead are there.”

—*Bryant.*

The present day traveller, who is whirled through almost any section of Ontario by fast express train, must have caught glimpses here and there of quaint, little burial places, with their white, gleaming headstones, on some of the older settled farms. If he is driving — much the preferable way if he wants to really understand and appreciate the country folk and their home traditions — he will find on closer examination that these tiny graveyards usually consist of not more than three or four graves, enclosed by a plain, picket fence. It will also be almost invariably found too that in the selection of sites rare good taste has been shown — poetical taste in fact. The early settler, whose daily companion was his dog and who lived almost constantly out in the open air, did not talk of poetry very much, it is true, but what was better, he practiced it. Thus it comes, that you will find these little home cemeteries on the sunny, sloping hillsides, or on a high, grassy knoll near running streams, or just along the edge of a field of golden, waving wheat, but rarely if ever, near a swamp or low ground. “Don’t bury me there,” a young Canadian girl said recently (upon whom consumption had laid its clammy hands) and pointing to the public cemetery, “because it has quicksands and I hate to think of being consigned to their wet, clinging embraces, but bury me out there among the sweet-smelling clover on father’s farm.”

So it was with the body of Mary Ruthven. The next morning Donald Gordon was astir bright and early clearing away the snow

drifts from under the big apple tree, so that Mary's dying wish might be carried out of enjoying her long sleep under its protecting branches. The day was one of those perfect ones which usually follow on the heels of a snow storm and make our Canadian winters not only endurable, but positively enjoyable. The sun was shining brightly, though the air was keen and crisp, and the snowy fields in the sunlight danced and sparkled with millions of diamonds. Out in the orchard a little flock of snow birds chattered away to each other as they watched the digging of the grave, and it seemed almost as if even in winter time the birds had not forgotten her, who loved them so well. They hovered around under the apple trees and when Donald Gordon, near noon, had completed Mary's narrow bed in the hard, frozen ground and was gone to dinner, the tiny creatures fluttered down into the grave itself and chirped in their own sweet bird fashion.

It was a sad group that gathered in the big, square log house of the Ruthvens that winter afternoon. Mary had seemed so close to all the settlement, her modest beauty and quiet dignity had won all hearts, the pitiful story of her struggle against want in the town had become noised around and if the Ruthvens had apparently forgiven her husband's failings their neighbors had not. In little knots of three and four they stood around outside the house before the services began and bitterly denounced Harry Scott and his failure to provide for his wife. Nothing can excuse such in the opinion of country people. Knowing little of the intense struggle for bread in the town, and accustomed to having their daily wants supplied without question, they conclude at once without seeking further information that a man who does not supply his family with food is "a poor lazy lout," and undeserving of sympathy. They do not realize that in the towns there are thousands who with the keenest desire to obtain work cannot do so, but this argument does not count with the average countryman, for he will tell you that such people "should get out to the fields and earn a living from the ground." Even the minister's eyes had a suspicious moisture in them when he began the services over the dead woman. His name was Rev. James Cunningham, he was the Presbyterian minister at Maple Bend and had attended school with Mary. He remembered her as a sweet, winsome little girl full of merry fun and frolic, rather than the toil-worn face, which now was asleep before him in the coffin, with many of the hard lines softened, but still painfully apparent. To him, like to all

the rest of the neighbors, she was once more Mary Ruthven and not Mrs. Scott at all.

"We are met together this beautiful winter afternoon," he began, "to consign to mother earth again, one whom we all loved. I intend to depart from the usual custom to-day and instead of taking out a formal text I will speak to you as a neighbor to other neighbors. We are all living together in this new land, we do not come into direct contact a great deal with the outside world, not even with those in the remote sections of our own country and so we see but little of that misery, which seems incidental to life. But the sorrow of this home to-day is our common sorrow. Each of us feels that the dark clouds of grief which have rolled over this house, have cast their shadow over our own homes, for she was very dear to us all. The time may and certainly will come, when we will all laugh and jest again, as it is but human to not take life too seriously. Nor do I quarrel with this virtue — for such it is. But this I do say, that none of us will remember this day without a sigh for her, the lovely flower so early nipped by death's untimely frosts. I have not spoken of religion to-day, because my own heart is too full of thronging memories of what this dead girl was to all of us. We can remember her as the golden-haired little tot, who strayed out to the woods to watch her father chop down the trees, we can see her sweet face, as she regarded the birds and bees with intense childish interest and found something new to admire each day, and then we can see her as the full-grown woman, moving in an atmosphere of purity and love all her own. All this we can see, but much there is hidden from us. No one on earth but her own parents — no, I will narrow that down to her mother alone — can know of the thousand and one little kindnesses, the unbought and unheralded touches of nature (which do so much to make life livable) which this dead girl manifested in her daily walk and conversation. Hers was a nature in which petty bitterness had no part, she sweetened and smoothed the ordinary frictions and jars of life without appearing to do so. May the memory of Mary Ruthven long remain in this small community of Maple Bend, the symbol of a humble but beautiful life well lived and may each of us so live, that at last we will all gather at her present home — the New Jerusalem. Amen."

There was not a dry eye in the house as the minister concluded. Even old Ezra Stubbs himself was wiping away the tears from one eye

with the sleeve of his coat and watching out of the other eye that no one saw him. "I tell you this," he whispered to his neighbor, "the next painter fellow that comes around here trying to steal our girls will get so full of shot that he will think himself an arsenal. I'm sorry now that I didn't take a shot at that beggar anyhow just for luck. I offered one day when he came around first to pump a charge or two of shot into him, but Ruthven said not to, that Mary liked him. But I tell you the next one gets it without asking anybody's consent or I'm not acquainted with Ezra Stubbs." Very tenderly the six young men, who had been selected from among Mary's former schoolmates as pall-bearers, lifted the coffin up and bore it away down the snowy path, which Donald had shovelled out to the grave in the orchard. There in a hushed silence the form of Mary Ruthven was lowered into the ground, and most carefully unfrozen earth was selected at first to fill in around the coffin itself. Then the snowy clods were tumbled in on top, but it was not till the next spring that a neat headstone marked the spot thus :

"MARY RUTHVEN.
Born June 16th, 1822.
Died January 7th, 1844.
Her life was pure."



CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOME SCHOOLING.

“O for boyhood’s painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor’s rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools;
Of the wild bee’s morning chase,
Of the wild flower’s time and place;
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood.”

—From “*The Barefoot Boy.*”

There are, no days like our school life when looked back at. Those of us who are over or just going over the crest of life’s hill gaze back with a tinge of sadness at the merry groups of laughing, sporting children playing in the old school-yard during noon or recess. We reflect with regret that those happy days have gone by forever with us—that henceforth only the homage due to ripening old age is ours. This homage, hateful at first, we regard after a time with equanimity and thus we are enabled to take a tolerably clear retrospect of the past, but there may be after all a false coloring imparted. The little crosses borne—the petty persecutions from comrades—the minor jealousies—for every school life has its jealousies, quite as real but not as formidable as later life—the unjust punishments at which our young spirits rebelled—are mostly forgotten and only a delightful haze of unclouded happiness enshrouds the whole scene. The unpleasant is partly forgotten and the pleasant probably exaggerated.

The infant, whom we last saw carried into the house by his grandmother, is now a boy of sixteen or so attending the rural school near his grandfather’s farm, and is known as Norman Scott. He has grown into a strong, athletic youth with much of the beauty of both parents. He has not all of his father’s languor, but has much of his persistency,



THE OLD SWIMMING HOLE.
From an amateur photograph by Geo. Brown.

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and this he has at all times, not like his father, when forced to by actual want. His blue eyes, calm and fearless, with just a trace of dreaminess, his rosy cheeks and proud poise of the head are undoubtedly derived from the mother, whilst the easy, confident swing of his gait indicates the father. That father he has never seen, nor have his grandparents ever heard from the man, who promised years before that he would come to see his boy every year at least, but he came not — nor trace of him. Mr. Ruthven wrote to the landlady in Toronto, where he had gone to board after Mary's death, and received an answer that two weeks after his wife's death, Harry Scott had bought a ticket for New York and she knew nothing more of him. The great city had swallowed him up like it has scores of others. Gradually, as Norman grew into boyhood and learned the sad story of his parents' marriage and subsequent desertion of himself by his father he began to hate that father's memory. His grandmother endeavored to change that feeling by recalling the good traits of his father, but his grandfather on the other hand dwelt on the meanness of a man who never tried to find out whether his infant son had lived or died. "Even a wild beast," the old man used to tell the boy, "never deserts its young." The truth was, that Mr. Ruthven never fully forgave Harry Scott for stealing away his only child, on whom his whole heart was set. The privations which Mary had to undergo afterwards, the struggle for bare existence, their shabby life was all put down on the debit side against the missing man. Even at the moment of apparent reconciliation at the bedside of the dead wife and mother, Mr. Ruthven only forgave the husband with a mental reservation. This reservation was, that Harry Scott should devote his life to the son whom Mary had left him, not in the way of raising or educating him, for he was quite willing to assume that himself in conjunction with his wife, but to furnish a living example of fatherly solicitude and effort. Now that he had failed to do that but instead had gone away and never even written back the old Scotchman returned to his first dislike and communicated it to his grandson. A man is not lenient towards another man's failings, nor a woman towards another woman's, but a woman is usually willing to cast the broad mantle of charity over a man's misdeeds. Mrs. Ruthven often remonstrated with her husband when she heard him railing to the boy about the absent man. "Don't be too hard on poor Harry, dead; he may be dead too, for all we know," she said. "No nor he never thinks nor cares about his child, and we might be dead too

for all that precious scamp cares," the old man answered. "Well, Mary always wrote, you remember, husband, that he was good and kind to her. Even after you refused to allow me to answer her letters, she still wrote and every letter spoke of Harry's kindness and consideration towards herself." But the old man was set in his views and refused to budge an inch from his position, that Harry was an unfeeling scamp and totally oblivious of all parental responsibility. As the boy grew older he also came to share this conviction with his grandfather.

The school where Norman attended was built on the top of a high hill, which, during the winter season afforded a splendid opportunity for coasting, or as it was known locally, "riding down hill." The school-house itself was built in a burst of extravagance which overtook the trustees about ten years before, and ever since had been a bone of contention. A formidable minority, consisting of the very old settlers, was in favor of building a log one as being cheaper, for lumber was scarce and high, but the younger people carried the day and a square prison-like frame one was erected. The minority though always stoutly contended that this result was attained by a snap vote and that a poll of all the ratepayers would have shown a majority for the log building. The consequence of these contests was that the school section was sharply divided into two parties, known as the "Log Party," and the "Frame Party." After the school-house was boarded in and before it was finished another battle took place over the problem, whether the windows should be put in high or low. The Log party insisted that if the windows were put in low down, the pupils would spend most of their time looking out to see who was passing on the road, whilst the Frame party retorted that that was what a window was for — to look out. The only effectual way to settle a rural school difficulty is to call a special meeting of the ratepayers to discuss the matter. The trustees are supposed to exercise their own judgment in all questions whatsoever pertaining to the school, and some headstrong board of trustees here and there do so, but the usual way out of a snarl is to summon the ratepayers to a special meeting. When the night for the meeting to settle this knotty problem at last came around, it looked at first as if the Frame party was in the ascendant. Their candidate for chairman was elected after a sharp struggle and this was looked on as half the battle already won, for on the chairman depended much. He could, when an opponent was getting too annoying, call him to order and effectually squelch him by talking learnedly of parliamentary practice.

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precedents, etc. Or he could call for a vote at any time he deemed a favorable opportunity to catch the opposite party napping. The chairman chosen was Captain Leekey, J. P., as he always signed himself in hotel registers, when visiting the city. He was a big man with a very impressive air. No one around knew exactly why he was called captain, but captain he was in some way. Some claimed that the title was sort of an hereditary one—that his father was a captain of a company during the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Others maintained that he simply assumed the title to which he had no claim at all. When Captain Leekey himself was appealed to he oracularly declared that his title of captain was honorably won by gallant services in "the war," but did not deign to specify the particular war. He had learned well somewhere, and carefully practiced the adage, "speech is silver, but silence is golden," for he was one of the most economical men about language. Those, who claimed that this arose mostly from barrenness of ideas, probably knew nothing about it. Certain it is, he made an excellent chairman. His figure had that element of command so essential in the chair and his face was a very study of repose. Just before the vote was taken several adherents of the Log party came in and this threw the advantage on the side of the high windows, so much so that despite Captain Leekey's attempts to control the opposition they carried their point. Accordingly the school-house was built with windows the lower sashes of which were six feet from the floor, presenting a most odd appearance from the inside the light streaming in overhead and leaving a darkened zone along the sides. From the outside the effect was somewhat similar to a jail and one involuntarily looked around for a high stone wall surrounding the yard. But he looked in vain. Indeed there was no play yards, as the trustees decided grounds could not be purchased, especially after building a frame school-house house. From the same motives of economy the school has never been painted and was now a dull grey color. The door opened out directly on the road, and as there was no such a thing as a cow by-law it often happened in the summer time that a stray animal, loudly jingling its bell, came to the open door and looked in at the humming school, to the infinite amusement of the pupils and the disgust of their teacher.

But if the school officials had done little to aid the love of the beautiful in the children, Dame Nature herself had not been so stingy. Across the road a thick woods stretched away towards a lovely ravine, famous for its wild flowers. In the early spring, long before they had

peeped through the ground anywhere else, groups of merry children could be seen along the slopes, gathering Mayflowers, the adder tongue and wood violet. Later on in the season the wild cherry trees put forth their fragrant blossoms, succeeded in time by its glossy fruit, on which the children daily feasted. In the golden autumn days along the creek bottom at each noon hour, adventurous boys climbed high up into the tops of the butternut or walnut trees and shook down their rich treasures to the ground, to be gathered up into the opened aprons of the waiting girls beneath. Or mayhap the boys imitating the squirrels, whose habits they know well, crawled away out on the giant limbs of a hoary elm tree to gather the luscious bunches of wild grapes, which vine seems to nearly always select an elm tree to clamber upon. Or the dark woods rang with their merry shouts, as they played "fox and hounds" from one huge tree trunk to another. Across the ravine was a thinner woods bordering on a field planted with corn from year to year and this was a favorite resort for squirrels both red and black, as well as the little burrowing chipmunk. The smaller boys chased the latter to his home in a hollow log, but the larger boys disdaining such petty games, hunted the squirrels from the tree-tops in which they took refuge or chased them along the fences, bordering on the cornfield. To do this one section armed themselves with stout clubs, cut from the neighboring woods, and thus armed they waited along the fences to strike the squirrels off as they ran swiftly for the woods, whilst the others beat the cornfield up for the hiding ones. In the Indian summer, just before the earth had put on her winter dress the teacher often took the girls in excursions through the rich carpet of fallen leaves to gather specimens of gold, bronze and scarlet beauties to press, and thus, practical botany was being taught them without being conscious of it.

Then when winter at last came what glorious sport there was to be sure! The younger boys and girls formed long lines and swung around serpentine fashion in the boisterous game of "crack-the-whip," the unfortunate ones who formed the end or "cracker" of the living whip being pitched headlong in the snow banks, unharmed and laughing. But the steep hill near the school-house was the chief field for sport. A number of the boys, who could not get sleighs to ride down hill, had with engineer-like ingenuity improvised another plan. Down the long hill they had dug underneath the deep snow a tunnel just large enough to nicely admit the body. Throughout this tunnel they

had poured water, which freezing inside made from top to bottom of the hill an icy tube down which they slid head first with lightning-like speed through inky darkness and made the snow fly at the bottom as they shot up into the light again. Nervous boys were rather afraid of this exciting sport, but it had the advantage of forcing unwilling parents to buy sleighs in order to save clothes, for it was ruinous to even the coarsest home-made garments. What a variety of sleighs the childish needs brought forth! From the autocratic steel-shod, painted sleigh to the plain, oak boards turned-up at one end, there were all gradations. One could gauge exactly the degree of wealth or liberality of each parent by the style of sleigh their children possessed.

The travelled road, which ran in front of the school-house and wound gradually along the hill to the bottom, was the favorite place for coasting both because it was smoother and gave a longer ride. After the first snow this hill speedily became all but impassable for teams, but scarcely any one complained because nearly all who used the road had children relatives who wanted to use the hill. The few strangers who protested against it did not count with the local authorities and so it became sanctioned by long usage and given entirely over to the boys and girls during the snow months. Thus it will be seen that whilst no costly gymnasium was fitted up for the pupils use, no beautiful, level expanse, carefully sodded for base-ball diamond or foot-ball field, was provided them by those in authority, yet nature, the most bountiful provider, all had placed at their very doors, her own gymnasium and playground of field and forest. In these grand resorts, they had drunk at nature's fountain the precious draughts of glorious health and unhampered freedom. The country boy trained in this school might not be able to tell you his exact chest measurement or what was considered good form in table etiquette, but he could run a mile without puffing, or he could tell you where you could find a spanking bumble bee's nest. Or the country girl, educated (the proper word in this connection) here could pronounce a better opinion on the habits of the wood-thrush than on the costumes worn at the last ball. Side by side with their book information, which was not neglected, they cultivated a love for the beautiful in all her varying moods, they took up the study of books during school hours with the same eagerness with which they rushed forth at noon to gather thorn apples off the great bushy tree at the edge of the woods.

In all these sports of country school life none excelled Norman

Scott. When he was selected as one of the hounds in the healthy game of "fox and hounds," it was only a question of a few moments when Reynard would be run to earth. Often his merry, ringing laugh could be heard from the tree-tops as he shook down the prickly chestnut burrs, ripened by the early frosts. At the old swimming hole in the creek, no boy could dive farther or remain longer under water than Norman, and what was better no trace of selfishness entered into his composition. The fruits and nuts plucked from the woods he distributed with a prodigal's hand among the younger and weaker children, whilst he invariably championed the weakling's wrongs against his stronger brother. One fault he had but it was a bad one and that was his ungovernable temper. Once let this be aroused and he was no longer the generous hearted Norman Scott, he was a raging demon. All traces of reason or judgment were swept away in the mad swirl of passion's torrent. Always after one of these outbursts the natural reaction came. Often at such times, he wandered away through the orchard to the brow of the hill overlooking the gushing spring, and throwing open the little picket gate leading into the enclosure surrounding his mother's grave, he flung himself down and wept bitterly. "Oh my darling mother whom I have never seen" he would passionately exclaim, "come back to earth again and help your boy to fight against his own bad temper. Had you not died I would have been better because I know you were good, and would have checked my temper before it became master." Subdued and softened by these bitter experiences, Norman was gradually getting a part control of his fierce nature, but it was only the outward calm of the slumbering volcano. His grandparents were responsible for much of this infirmity. In his infancy they had humored his every wish and did one venture to set bounds, beyond which Norman must not go on pain of punishment, the other grandparent never failed to protest often in the presence of the boy himself. As often happens, excess of kindness proved to be positive cruelty.

But now the stern winter king held sway once more, much as it did years before when Norman was brought home through the storm. Never had the school-house hill been better for coasting. A very heavy rain had turned to a cold sleet, and this in turn had been followed by a heavy fall of snow, thus giving a good slippery bottom. Scarcely would school be dismissed at noon before the sleighs, loaded down with boys and girls, would be swiftly flying down the frozen hill and even

part way up the opposite one so great was the speed attained. Midway between the two hills was a little bridge some fifteen feet high over the frozen creek. Those returning after riding down met the flying sleighs on this bridge, and it needed extreme caution on the part of those steering to avoid dangerous collisions, for not even a railing protected the bridge. Hitherto the supremacy of Norman Scott's sleigh had been undisputed. Its long tapering runners, smoothly shod with steel, had sped away from the others so often that it was now looked on as a matter of course and Norman usually allowed several seconds to elapse before starting down after an opposing sleigh. Then when they imagined pursuit was useless he came with a rush and sailed past victorious, making the snow fly defiantly with his steering foot. We have said that he was generous towards his companions, but this did not apply as far as beating them fairly in any manner of sport was concerned.

One person there was who almost constantly accompanied Norman down the hill, and that was Holly Venning—a born coquette, true as steel at heart, but one who took to flirting as naturally as a duck takes to water. No thought of deceit entered her mind; she flirted simply because it was her nature to flirt. Her father, a neighboring farmer, was accustomed to relate with great glee how Holly as a child loved to make much of one kitten so as to bother the others. "She is a born tease," he used to declare. Yet this same teasing spirit is one that kills, for it grows and develops with age till it becomes a second nature. Because it does not worry the teaser is no indication that the other party is unruffled. Holly had scarcely noticed that Norman's manner was different with her from his treatment of her companions. She only knew or cared that his sleigh was the swiftest, his guidance the firmest and that she experienced a delightful exhilaration of victory in swiftly speeding by all others. Norman for his part was in love. His strong, earnest, fierce nature even as a boy was deeply stirred, for Holly Venning had nearly as large a place in this boy's dreams and thoughts as that mother sleeping out in the orchard under the snow.

It is the fashion among modern authors to sneer at school affections as "calf love" or "moon love," but no genuine emotion of the heart should be so treated. If those emotions are worth recording at all they are worth recording truthfully and nothing is more certain than that the electric spark of love which sets at defiance all canons,

is lit very early in some lives. Perhaps no one has analyzed this phase of the human heart better than Robbie Burns, the plowman poet, in speaking of his personal experience. "In my fifteenth autumn, my partner was a bewitching creature a year younger than myself. In short, she altogether, unwillingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion which in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be first of human joys our dearest blessing here below." But some indignant *pater familias* will exclaim, "Surely you would not have our boys and girls falling in love during their school days. Such a monstrous doctrine would preclude co-education of the sexes." To this the present author makes answer in the famous words of Grover Cleveland, "It is a condition which confronts us, not a theory." That real attachments are formed during school life, aye and often life-long attachments too, may not be palatable to some squeamish minds, but it is a truth nevertheless. Nor is this to be wondered at. Their young minds are more impressible than in later years, when the cark and care of actual life — the bitter disappointments of false friends — have brushed away the romantic cobwebs of innocent youth.

Call it what you will, Norman Scott was only perfectly happy in the company of Holly Venning. It gave him a sharp pang of regret when the little minx would choose another boy's sleigh to ride on, something which she delighted to do in order to tease poor Norman. At such times, mingled with his regret, was a touch of the old feeling, which he was striving to subdue, the feeling which prompted him to attack whoever might be her companion. Unconsciously therefore, Holly was cultivating a dangerous devil in her school-boy lover's make-up. One day a new boy appeared at school with a sleigh of an entirely novel build to them. It was of a lighter style with extremely long, low runners and not at all handsome in build. The boy himself was a sallow complexioned youth with jet black hair, framing in a face which was not a pleasant one to study. His black eyes wavered under a steady look, but even when not looking at you directly, the disagreeable impression remained, that your every motion was watched. His name was George Craig, and he was spending the winter months at the farm of his uncle, whom we have met before.

This uncle lived next farm to the Ruthven's. Formerly they used to change work at threshing times and even during harvest,



WINTER SPORT AT SCHOOL.

From the original water-color by R. R. Osgood.

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but Mr. Ruthven found out at the end of each season, that the Craig's had managed in some way to get the better of him. Sometimes it was alleged sickness which prevented repayment of time, sometimes one thing and sometimes another, but always the balance stood in their favor. Taciturn to a degree, Mr. Ruthven said nothing to anybody but one spring he refused longer to exchange work. No quarrel followed, but each side maintained a reserved attitude and thenceforward each felt that only an armed truce separated them. A coolness between neighbors in the city and country are quite different matters. Your next door neighbor in the city may be your deadly enemy and yet that fact may cause you no inconvenience. You seldom, if ever, are thrown into his company—your social connections may be altogether different—your life may in fact be entirely apart from his, but in the country such cannot be the case. Every member of the community is known to all the others, and in their daily lives are constantly associated together. You cannot, if you would, ignore the existence of a neighbor, whose work is in an adjacent field, who has to help you to repair the line fence at times, or sit at the same table at a logging bee or barn raising. Strange to say, this forced companionship usually produces the most bitter and lasting feuds. The enemies who drop as it were out of our lives, are thought of after the lapse of time with mellowed feelings, but not so with those hated ones, whom we are in a measure forced to associate with.

Norman had not failed to catch the spirit of his grandfather's aversion to the Craig's, an aversion which he himself heartily shared. The very first noon hour he and the new boy were not long coming into collision. Norman's anger was furious when he saw the city boy coolly go up to a group of laughing girls, and invite Holly Venning to take a ride down hill on his sleigh. With a merry nod she accepted and together they started down. Quick as a flash Norman asked one of her companions to accompany him and sped after to pass them, but to his mortification he discovered that the head sleigh was slowly but surely drawing away from his. It was in vain that he exerted every artifice known to a good steerer to increase his speed. The other sleigh, lighter in construction than his, increased the lead all the way down, and he was deeply humiliated to hear at the bottom, shouts from the other boys of "Norman Scott's sleigh is beaten." A crowd gathered admiringly around the victor, but poor Norman drew his defeated sleigh moodily up hill alone, his heart sore

and a dangerous light shining in his bright blue eyes. He haughtily declined Holly's proffered company for the next ride and said he would ride alone. Meantime George Craig had chosen Norman's partner in the first ride and away they went down the hill. Norman deliberately waited till they had reached the bottom, and was returning before he set out. He timed his starting, so that he met them on the bridge, and just when meeting with one quick turn of his steering he drove his heavy sleigh with crushing force against George's lighter one. There was a sound of splintering timber, and the city boy's swift sleigh was a confused, broken mass. "You'll have to pay for that sleigh because I believe you did that on purpose," George hotly exclaimed. "Of course I did it on purpose, like I do this," Norman said fiercely, at the same time giving George a blow in the face. The blow staggered him back one step, but one step was sufficient. The next moment he lay a motionless form on the hard ice fifteen feet beneath, and the whitened, scared children, who peered over the bridge, pronounced him dead.



CHAPTER IX.

THE HOME BOOMING.

"And I shall sleep — and on thy side,
 As ages after ages glide,
 Children their early sports shall try
 And pass to hoary age and die.
 But thou, unchanged from year to year,
 Gayly shalt play and glitter here ;
 Amid young flowers and tender grass
 Thy endless infancy shalt pass ;
 And, singing down thy narrow glen,
 Shalt mock the fading race of men."

—From the *Rivulet*.

But George Craig was not dead. The vitality of youth is so great the power of recuperation so strong that injuries fatal to old people give only a temporary setback to the young. Partially stunned by the blow received, George's body in falling became limp, instead of rigid, and thus no bones were broken, but still he was hurt and hurt badly. Not over strong, the shock to his nervous system was very severe, and as he was carried home to his uncle's house by four boys his pale face was almost ghostly in its whiteness and gave no indication of life. As for Norman, no sooner had he seen the consequence of his rashness than he bitterly regretted again and again that temper, over which he thought he had gained a final victory. "I have hurt that boy and for what?" he asked himself; "for nothing in the world but to please my own bad temper." Sore and sorrowful, he started directly for home without asking the master's permission. Both of his grandparents were deeply grieved at his recital of the affair, especially as it would but add fuel to the feud existing between the families. They agreed that Norman should be sent next morning over to Craig's to apologize and ask after George's condition. But when Norman, shame-faced and repentant, knocked at Craig's door next morning he was repulsed, though he started as well as he was able to repeat the apology told him by his grandmother. "Get away

from this, you young ruffian," Mr. Craig roughly exclaimed, "and never set your cowardly feet on my farm again." "I'm not a coward and the man lies who says so," Norman replied, all his bad blood up again in an instant. It was well for the boy that the man did not have on his boots for he was thoroughly angry. As it was he dashed out in his stocking feet through the deep snow, but desisted when he saw Norman at some distance crossing the snow-clad wheat field towards his home. The boy's heart was rebellious as he wended his way homeward, for his well-meant advances had been repulsed and there was a complete overturn of his good resolutions. "Old man Craig is the first man I ever went to to apologize and I'll bet he'll be the last one too." Thus does human nature testify daily to these old truths, "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." Mr. Ruthven received the account of Norman's mission philosophically, merely saying, "An honest man's duty is always to apologize for a wrong done, let that apology be accepted or not."

About half a mile from the Ruthven homestead was the village itself, which to the younger people seemed to have had its origin away back in the misty past. But its history did not run so far back either, for Mr. Ruthven and the other old settlers could well remember of course when its site was covered with a dense underbrush, being a favorite hunting ground for partridge. Tradition also said that a bear and her two cubs had been killed years ago on the spot where Morgan's store now stood, but Mr. Ruthven always shook his head doubtfully when this story was told in his presence. "That must have been before my time then, or at least I never heard of it, though of course bears were plentiful in those days," he used to say. At one time it looked as if the village had a brilliant future before it. A staff of railway surveyors came along and began staking out a line and incidentally pricing farm property. When questioned as to their intentions, they said their directions were to survey the line and report on the grades, etc., but beyond that they knew nothing. Still, their oracular manner indicated that they knew more if they only liked to tell, and their presence caused a decided flutter, for in the early days of the railway, its importance was very generally over-estimated. Mr. Morgan the store-keeper—a solid, undemonstrative man, but with a keen, open eye for the main chance—wrote to the house in Toronto from whom he usually purchased his goods to look up a good land surveyor and send him on at once. The next week a beautiful field of growing barley adjoining the store was

disfigured by an ugly sign, "Building lots for sale." The great, wavy, bearded heads of barley seemed to almost smile in derision at this strange and unwelcome intruder, but it was not long before other fields in the neighborhood were similarly insulted, for Mr. Morgan had the reputation of never making a false move and the larger part of the surrounding community usually took its cue from him. He was one of those strong, self-contained natures that, with a real fund of worldly wisdom, add enormously to the prestige, which such wisdom naturally brings, by preserving a discreet silence, except on rare occasions. No one could look wiser or shake his head more sagely than Mr. Morgan. Even the shaking of that large and fairly well-formed head was a carefully studied effort, for no man could decisively say afterwards whether it was intended for approval or disapproval on the arguments advanced. With him, like with Captain Leekey, silence was indeed golden. But, did two disputants come to him for adjudication of their conflicting views — a not by any means rare occurrence? Unmeaning shakes of the head would plainly not answer in such cases, so Mr. Morgan had recourse to a practice, borrowed probably from the proceedings in parliament, that is to say, he insisted on notice being given of question, in advance. Meantime he consulted his two authorities — the Revised Statutes and Chambers' Encyclopædia — and if findable, he delivered his decision in an authoritative tone which admitted of no appeal and left the unfortunate one, against whom the decision was rendered, feeling sorry for his presumption. In case neither the Statutes nor Chambers' were definite on the point at issue, Mr. Morgan simply summed up in a few terse sentences the arguments pro and con and dismissed the contestants in a blissful state of uncertainty as to which side he considered the correct one. He ought to have been a magistrate, but it was understood that he was not striped right politically, though even his politics were not certainly known. In any case he virtually exercised magisterial functions and was in every sense the one unquestioned authority of the village. When therefore it was seen by the sign in his barley-field — for he very prudently disclosed his plans to no one — that Mr. Morgan believed in the great future of the village through the projected railway, all near-by property owners made haste to follow in his footsteps. Instead of discussing live stock and the growing crops, the surrounding farmers discussed town lots and the real estate market. Noah Campbell the blacksmith, whose shop stood directly opposite Mr. Morgan's store, and who might be seen any week

day during the past fifteen years through the always open door as he shod the farmers horses or repaired their farm implements, now stood around the street corner, hands in pockets and cigar in mouth, talking glibly of land values, whilst a helper—hired through an advertisement—attended in an unsatisfactory manner to the work of the shop. Noah had already got out a license as an auctioneer and was only waiting for the excitement to increase so that an auction sale of town lots would be in order. But these matters always sooner or later adjust themselves, the pendulum will not stay swung to one side very long. It was announced one day in the weekly paper that the railway scheme was abandoned for the present, the farmers resumed their harvesting, the ugly signs were removed from the fields of billowy grain, Noah Campbell put on his leather apron once more and took his place beside the flaming forge and the village dropped back into its usual round of life. So that when golden autumn came around again, mellowing the apples on the loaded trees, no one could have told by any outward sign that anything unusual had stirred the quiet of that country place. One reputation though had suffered somewhat and that was Mr. Morgan's. If his sign "Building lots for sale" was the first to appear, it was also the first one removed at the earliest symptoms of the inevitable reaction. But this timely action did not altogether save his fame for probity and he made the matter worse, if possible, by stating that he was only playing on his neighbors' gullibility. They knew too well that he was not the style of man who experiments for experiment's sake, and it took many years to rub off the edge of this short boom and many sagacious moves of Mr. Morgan to rehabilitate himself in the good opinions of the people. This he eventually succeeded in doing, largely through the influence of "The Checker Club," which met in his store six nights a week during the winter months and at irregular intervals during the summer. The composition and aims—if such they can be called—of this club will need further explanation.

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CHAPTER X

THE HOME GOSSIPING.

“Low lies that house where nut brown draughts inspired,
Where greybeard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound
And news much older than their ale went round.”

—*Goldsmith.*

The sum total of population in Maple Bend was not great, but it had more than its share of “characters,” drawn from its leisure class, of which there was an undue and constantly growing majority. Being a cheap place to live in and property low-priced, the population was year by year being added to by retired farmers taking up their residence therein. It cannot be said that these newcomers were looked on with great favor by the original residents, many of whom themselves were once farmers, but apparently it was a matter of entire unconcern to the newcomers whether they were welcome or not; they simply bought the cheapest available house or erected an unpretentious one for themselves and settled down for the rest of their days. Those who disliked their intrusion would have to grin and bear it as best they could. The main objection to these very respectable and well conducted people was that they brought no “life” to the village. Most of them had all their children married off before giving up the farm and so it came about that whilst the village was slowly increasing in population—for the movers-in slightly exceeded the deaths and removals—the number of young people was steadily decreasing, and it was only a question of years when it would be a village of old people solely. “Among the ruins of time,” Donald Gordon used to facetiously predict. In addition, it was urged against the incoming population that they were too tight in money matters. Accustomed to the strictest economy on the farm and opposed to unnecessary excitement as a drain on their waning energies, these old people rarely attended the church and other entertainments gotten up by the few remaining young people.

But the Checker Club was their one centre of amusement. Here evening after evening, those old and middle-aged men would meet and discuss politics, home gossip or any other topic, and incidentally play checkers. This game offers peculiar advantages for those who have turned the slope of life's hill. It demands reflection, not haste, it seldom leads to gambling and it has no very exciting crises to send the blood tingling through the veins. They had thus established themselves in the rear part of Mr. Morgan's store, not by his expressed consent, because as usual he was much too cautious to go that far, but neither had he ever manifested disapprobation of their presence, so they continued, from year to year to occupy their old haunts undisturbed. A battered table with one very creaky leg, a pine checker board, and several empty packing cases instead of chairs, completed the furniture of this club-room. Carl Lutz, our slow-spoken, slow-smoking German, usually occupied the seat of honor at the head of the table and as he was considered the best player, all disputes in the game were usually referred to him. He was a hard-headed, obstinate man, taking care however to consider a question from all standpoints before deciding on its merits. But once his mind was made up nothing could move him. There was one view only — that one he had adopted. His seat had a backing of ready-made clothing piled up, which had accumulated ever since Mr. Morgan started store-keeping. Like the rings of growth by which a woodsman can tell the age of a tree, so the age of each garment could easily be traced by counting the layers of dust above it, for Mr. Morgan was never known to take stock, considering it superfluous and other business men who did it over nice. A costumer, who wished to reproduce the fashions of years ago, would have considered this a veritable palace of treasures, since here and there, despite the ravages of time and moths, a sound suit of our grandfather's time could easily be found. But Carl Lutz was not suffered to always hold this comfortable seat with its soft backing. Some winter evenings, after Donald Gordon got all his chores done early—the cows and horses fed and snugly bedded down for the night—he would slip away to the store before the rest had gathered and he never failed to take the old German's cosy seat by the blazing fire. He did this more to irritate Carl than because he really wanted the place and in this respect he never failed. Each time that he was thus dispossessed of his corner, the drowsy Teuton flared up more savagely till at last he was heard to declare that "some fine night he would drag the ugly Scotchman out of that seat by the neck."

However, as it was very hard to say from Donald's stocky build just how successful he might be in this job and as he well knew the immediate outcome of any row would be expulsion from their pleasant quarters altogether, he hesitated about carrying out his threat. Inwardly though, he cursed the very ship that had brought this disagreeable, acrid, old Scotchman to these shores. Once or twice he had remonstrated with Donald when he had found him in his seat, but the biting retorts he received did not encourage further attempts in that direction, so that gradually it had settled down to a mostly silent hostility on each side, though Donald still kept up a spattering, annoying fire of remarks, nominally to the others present but really directed at Carl, upon whom they had no perceptible effect save to hasten the puffings of his pipe a trifle. The other members of the "Checker Club" rather enjoyed the contest over the seat, since they felt rather restive at times with the self opinionative old German who trod their cherished beliefs underfoot even if he was usually right in his ideas. One does not care to have even their false idols ground to pieces by an iron heel before their very eyes. So Donald—though he was far from needing it—was secretly encouraged to thwart Carl's plans at every turn.

The subject up for discussion before the club, the first night we make their acquaintance, is Norman Scott and his late escapade at school. The checkers lie untouched on the dingy table for too important business is before the club to admit of any games. Checkers can wait until another night but this dreadful occurrence at school must be settled at once. It does not take much to stir up a small community. Happenings that would be forgotten in an hour amid the city's whirl furnish a country place material for a week's gossip. This is necessarily so by reason of the comparative dearth of news in the country as compared with the city and not because the country is more prone to gossip than the town. Where men or women congregate together they must have subjects of conversation, if large subjects are not to hand the smaller ones will usurp their places. Consequently the throwing of George Craig over the bridge by Norman had excited the liveliest talk. Most people were inclined to look leniently on the affair, more because of their respect for Mr. Ruthven than of love for Norman as he was not by any means a general favorite. He was too sensitively proud and too careless of people's good opinion to be generally liked and much too passionate. All at the "Checker Club" were naturally anxious to learn Donald's opinion but rather shrank

from asking him directly. He had often been heard to condemn Norman's hasty temper in the past and had often chided him himself but it was quite a different matter when others took up the cudgels. All his family pride—for he considered himself one of the Rùthvens—was roused at hearing censures, or anything approaching such, passed on Norman. If he needed scolding his own family were the ones to administer it. Besides Donald had come in late that night to the club. One of his cows had wandered away up the ravine and he had lost a good half hour hunting her up, whilst his rather surly disposition was not softened by seeing Carl Lutz comfortably seated in the easy corner, puffing away at his pipe and traces of a cunning leer on his broad face.

Mark Dundas—a shy, diffident member of the club, who timidly advanced his opinions and anxiously watched for the earliest symptom of opposition to withdraw them—was tacitly selected to draw out Donald on the prevailing sensation. "I saw you at the blacksmith shop this morning with your team. Were you getting them shod?" he ventured as a starter. "Of course I was getting them shod," Donald drily answered. "Do people take horses to blacksmith's shops to get them groomed, or cured of heaves? Would you take a doctor's prescription to a harness shop to have filled?" There was a general laugh at Mark's expense, even Carl Lutz chuckling to himself hoarsely. "I only asked," Mark continued in an apologetic tone, "because the roads are so slippery now that a team cannot go unshod. Now take that school house hill for example. It has become——" but he was fiercely interrupted by Donald with, "If you want to talk about the school-house hill, why not come to the point like a man, instead of clumsily leading up to it. I can easily see that you all would like to learn what I think about an incident that lately happened on that same hill, though you sit there as glum as oysters and smoke your pipes." As no one was smoking but Carl this hit was obviously intended for him, still he gave no sign of reply and Donald continued: "For once I intend satisfying your gaping curiosity and telling you what I think of this matter. Norman Scott did wrong—very wrong—in allowing his temper to get the start of him and in throwing George Craig from the bridge. He did right—perfectly right—in going to old Craig and expressing his regret for that wrong. I doubt if any of you would have had the manliness to apologize as that boy did. But old man Craig did a wrong for which he could not—was he willing—atone the whole of the

rest of his life, when he refused to accept that apology. He has hardened that boy's heart just when he was trying to do better. I have nothing but contempt for old Craig and so I mean to tell him. Now you have my ideas, what do you think of them?" No one answered this question at once—if it was really intended to elicit an answer—and Mark Dundas hitched uneasily in his seat, as if he felt that he would be blamed for being the cause of all this indignation. At last Carl Lutz, seeing by the abashed looks of those around him, that all were more or less cowed by Donald's violence, resolved not to let the matter drop so easily even if he had to take up the question himself. Here was an opportunity which might never occur again of humbling this haughty old Scotchman, for he saw from Donald's manner that he was determined to make the boy's case his own. It would never do though to be too personal in his remarks, else they might provoke a fiercer onslaught than ever. As a preparatory measure he changed legs, that is he put the right leg over the left instead of his usual position, cleared his throat noisily, re-adjusted his pipe firmly in his mouth and gave a few short vigorous puffs until a perfect cloud of smoke enveloped him and then addressing the club generally, said sententiously: "A bad temper is an infernal poor master." "Yes a bad temper is a poor master, but I have known people so stupid that they had no temper, bad or otherwise," answered Donald quickly but looking at Billy Morris—a volatile little fellow who had a perfect stream of language when he could find a listener. Billy nodded his head good-naturedly and conceiving the remark addressed to him as an invitation to join in the conversation, he chipped in cheerfully: "Very true, Donald, very true. Now I have an aunt over in York State—a fine old lady only a little deaf—and you couldn't make that woman mad. I used to steal her glasses from her and she would go groping around the house like a stray bat, but all the time with the most heavenly smile on her face. Mad! No sir, you couldn't coax her to get mad! Why say, we've put salt in her tea instead of sugar and that angelic old lady just sipped away at it without making a face and then pass her cup back for a second filling just as if she enjoyed it. Now how do you account for that? Why, stupidity of course! Yes sir, downright, goose stupidity and nothing else." He stopped for breath and Donald grimly asked: "Is your aunt of German descent?" "She is not," Billy answered volubly, "both her parents came from Scotland." The laugh that followed shook the store and called Mr.

Morgan from the front where he was waiting on a customer to see what the trouble was. Even Donald's cackle could be heard like a raven's croak, joining in with the rest, though the fun was at his own expense. As for Carl Lutz he simply rolled from side to side in an uncontrollable fit of laughter, till his cherished pipe escaped from him and rolled under the table. It was hard to say when the fun would have subsided, had not the pile of ready-made clothing—loosened by the stamping of feet—come tumbling down on their heads covering all with the dust of years, so much so that Fred. Parsons—the wag of the club—averred that his garments had a distinct odor thereafter of the time of Marlborough.

This incident broke up their meeting for that night, but before they dispersed to their homes Carl Lutz got in a parting shot at Donald by declaring that "young Scott's bad temper would bring him yet to the gallows," to which Donald responded that "if it did, no spiritual or legal comfort would be sought for from any sauer kraut German."



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CHAPTER XI.

THE HOME MUSING.

All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod —
Made to tread the mills of toil
Up and down in ceaseless moil."

—From *The Barefoot Boy*.

In spite of the doleful prophecy in the preceding chapter Norman Scott was fast growing into a fine young fellow. He had no father confessor to pour out his sins and frailties to, he had no religious enthusiasm to absorb and hold his deep feelings of self aspirations, for his grandparents were of those quiet, unemotional natures that respect the Sabbath and the moralities of life, but do not find vent in aggressive demonstrations of religious zeal. Every Sunday morning, rain or shine, they could be found in the little Presbyterian church, which crowned the top of a gentle slope a half a mile or so past the village. Nothing but serious illness was held as a valid excuse for either themselves or Norman being absent from morning service. Family worship was held in the Ruthven household daily, grace was said before meals, the big family Bible held the place of honor on the centre table, but a deep religious fervor could not be said to pervade that home. The religion was more solemn than burning but none the less sincere. One would never expect such conditions to produce a Whitefield or a Knox, though they would almost certainly produce a deep respect for religion and a personal, undemonstrative religion. In such a solemn atmosphere then Norman was fast ripening into manhood. He attended every winter the revival services of the Free Methodist church just across the road from his own church, but they produced no impression on him. Many of the young farmer boys went to these meetings more for fun than anything else, to see who went forward to the "penitent

bench," to hear the loud "amens," and to get a chance to go home with their best girls. When Tom Winters, the most mischievous boy in school, went forward and bowed his head in prayer at one of these meetings, Mrs. McLarty, who lived near the school-house and who was sorely troubled by the boys stoning her hens, said fervently in a stage whisper to those sitting around her, "Thank goodness ; our chickens will have a rest now."

In Norman Scott's mind there was no disposition to ridicule these meetings. He could not agree it is true with some of the outbursts of fiery language employed, but his was too earnest a nature not to see that their meaning was good and that the net result was making for a higher standard. The beautiful singing touched him much more than the sometimes overheated speaking, because with all his quiet earnestness there was still a trace of picturesque sentiment to which music strongly appealed. In fact Norman Scott had learned to love nature in all her moods on his grandfather's farm. As he drove the cows home from their pasture-field on summer evenings, he was accustomed to watch the varying tints of the western sky and revel in boyish fancies of who dwelt amid those cloud pictures. Or he made a bed of leafy branches in the shady ravine and there extended at full length caught glimpses through the foliage of the blue vault overhead and learned to distinguish the various choruses of the different birds. Or he assisted Nero the house dog in digging deep into the sandy sidehill to try and catch the shifty groundhog, often to find after hours of hard work that the cunning fellow's hole bore away in another direction altogether. In a word he was day by day being instructed in nature's own laboratory of field and forest, hill and valley, but among all the wealth of nature in which he rioted there was the one spot more sacred than all the rest and that spot was his mother's grave. The earliest wild flowers he could find in sunny nooks known only to himself, where the first spring sunbeams found lodgment, were brought and scattered reverently over that grave and from then till the latest fall asters transformed the hillsides into a blaze of color, there was no time that that spot lacked a flowery covering. Here Norman would sit and brood over the little he had ever known of his parents — the one lying here in her narrow bed under the apple tree, and the other no man knew where or whether indeed he was dead or alive. "If dead," Norman used to say to himself, "let his failings — whatever they might have been — lie buried with him, but if alive he is not worthy of his

boy's love or even respect since he never makes any effort to reveal himself." His mother's memory — on the other hand — was a hallowed trust growing greener and brighter as the swift years sped by. The few fragments of her sad history that he had been able to glean from his grandparents served but to intensify his interest. All the intervening gaps were filled in by himself with his glowing imagination and love for the romantic. His mother was no longer a simple, country maiden unhappily wedded to poverty, but a heroine martyred by unfortunate circumstances — an angel lent only to earth for a brief time. Over and over again he vowed at his mother's grave that he would be in every way worthy of her, that he would subdue his fierce temper, that he would gain the mastery over himself. From these communings with the spirit of his mother he invariably came forth stronger and purer, if somewhat sterner appearing. Gradually the boyish glee for which he had been distinguished was giving way to an unusual degree of soberness for one so young. Norman Scott was thinking out the stern lessons of life in advance — a knowledge which usually comes to one only through experience's hard school. His lack of young comrades at home was bringing out by unusual chances for reflection manly qualities while yet a boy and was fast developing him into a mature habit of thought quite unlooked for at his age. These changes in their grandson's nature were not unnoticed by the Ruthvens, who were naturally pleased to see that he had apparently conquered himself. "The greatest victory one can achieve in this world is to become master of himself," Mrs. Ruthven had often told Norman and now he seemed to have learned this lesson.

Side by side with this remarkable change in his nature, Norman's affection for Holly Venning continued to grow, with scarcely an answering sign from her that his love was reciprocated. Now and again the little witch would give him an arch smile which he interpreted for himself exclusively, but her other actions gave no indication of such a preference and he was often left in ugly doubts whether indeed he had not gilded her manner with a coloring of his own. After the affair with George Craig she had given him a lecture in which she seemed to be more in earnest than he had ever noticed her before. "Don't you know any better Norman" she said "than to act like that? Suppose you had killed poor George what then? Why you would have been hanged for murder and people would have said that I was to blame for it all. I nearly cried my eyes out thinking over it even as it was."

As she spoke, her bright mischievous eyes gave no indication of hard usage and he was left undecided whether her tears were shed for George's injuries or for his own imagined death by hanging. One summer day at the noon hour he had wandered away from his school mates to a cool glen overlooking the valley—a glen down which leaped and sparkled a little rivulet fed by a spring far back in the woods beyond. The water made a pleasing murmur as it descended by a series of tiny cascades into the noisier creek, which flowed past the hill where the school house was built. It was such a scene as all true lovers of nature delight to dwell on and Norman—since deep reflection had sobered him—was accustomed to steal away from the play ground and eat his lunch here. Often as he watched the little stream—its tiny current half choked here and there by last year's leaves—it seemed to him that it was a type of his own life, its past enveloped in half mystery, its present noisy and impatient of restraint and its future soon to be merged in the larger stream and whirled away to the great ocean beyond. "I wish I could see my own future as far ahead even as I can mark the course of that little brook," he would say to himself. "I wonder will my life become lost in the general current even as this rill is lost in that swift creek down below me, or will the impulses of my career be so strong as to make an individuality of their own." His musings were cut short this day by a merry burst of laughter, and looking quickly around he saw Holly Venning and a half score of companions seated on a bank of moss farther up the stream and looking down at him with merry laughing faces. Each one had a garland of wild flowers resting coquettishly on her head instead of a hat and a string of huge tiger lilies over the shoulder, making a brilliant sash. They had followed the little stream down through the glen gathering wild flowers and arranging them till they had noticed him. Seating themselves on the mossy bank they watched for some moments his attitude of deep thought till Holly whispered "why say girls, he looks older than Donald Gordon." The peal of laughter that followed this sally was what startled him from his reveries. Coming forward, his eye taking in at one glance the whole beauty of the fair, young, laughing group before him, he said gallantly "why girls, I never knew before that rare and beautiful flowers grew on moss. Our botany says nothing about it." "Those who admire beautiful flowers must search for them as we did," answered Holly, with a twinkling glance at her companions, and holding up at the same time a large bunch of very rare wood orchids. "Those are intended for me

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of course" he said carelessly, as if such presents were an every day affair with him. "Of course they are not then, Sir Solitary, they are for the teacher. People who spend their time staring down a ravine and dreaming in the middle of the day need never expect such favors from me" said Holly, with an emphatic shake of the head, but her manner was not nearly as severe as her words. "If you have a few moments to spare I should like to tell those day dreams" he said and his manner had lost all of its carelessness. "Well hurry up then" Holly answered "for the school bell will soon ring." The rest of the girls had strolled on in their search for flowers, and Holly and Norman were alone. "I was dreaming Holly" he continued "as you girls came up, about my future life and what I would do when I became a man." "For you know" he added gravely "I am getting along an age now when I must soon leave school." "And what was your decision Sir Solitary?" questioned Holly her voice indicating an interest despite her banter. "I had reached no decision; could you not aid me in arriving at one?" came his direct question. "Not at all, not at all, every one must settle those matters for themselves" she said seriously; but if you want my opinion I say that I can see no reason why you should not do like other boys—that is stay at home, work on the old farm, nothing can be or is more honorable or independent." "Would that satisfy my aspirations, do you think?" His voice had a doubting tone but there was no indecision in the clear, ringing notes of Holly's answer. "I cannot answer for that Norman, but it ought to satisfy the aspirations of any good and honest man. To live clear of the city's clamor, dust and abominable wickedness, to breathe the pure fresh air of God's fields and not the stifling fumes of man's dark alleyways, to be awakened in the morning by the birds' songs instead of the dull roll of traffic, to be the moving force in a community of neighbors instead of an atom in the city's crowd are aims noble enough for anyone." She had risen to her feet with the excitement of her language and he thought nothing could be more beautiful than her lithe, supple form, flashing eye and heightened color. "One more question Holly" he said impetuously "would you yourself be satisfied to be a farmer's wife when you grow up?" "Wait till I grow up" she answered evasively "besides the bell is ringing for school and we had better hurry up else we may get punished for our nonsense." She was the same gay, trifling Holly as before and he reluctantly, for he would have liked to prolong the interview, hurried away with her to the school house.

The boy, fast emerging into manhood, thought long and seriously on the problem of the future which had often puzzled older heads before. He could not—lover of nature and all as he was—bring himself to see the ordinary farmer's life as any other than a commonplace one spite of Holly's ringing words. The great outside world, its bustle and life had an irresistible attraction for him. He wanted to get beyond the village views of life, their petty gossip and ambitions. Bright and studious at school, an omnivorous reader and reflective observer, he soon passed for a teacher's certificate—the first from that school—and two years after his conversation with Holly on his future career we find Norman Scott installed as teacher in another country school at a distance of about three miles from home. This, whilst not meeting his full ambition, he considered a step in the direction of independence at least and that the next move might be cityward, towards which the bent of his mind was strongly tending.



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CHAPTER XII.

— THE HOME FINDING.

“ All night a wave had travelled o'er the main,
And in the morning kiss'd the scarlet shore ;
The broken waters backward roll'd again,
To meet or mingle in that wave no more.”

—*McCaig.*

One of the most marvellous things in life is the easy manner in which we forget old associations and scenes. “Out of sight, out of mind” is as true as it is old. All natures are not so constituted—the grown man looks back with regret and longing on childhood's memories, the old person turns naturally towards the spot where the best part of life was spent, but the acquaintances made, the ties formed after manhood is reached are almost inevitably forgotten when distance intervenes its chilling shadow. How often it happens that a person comes into our lives, whom we fancy almost essential to life itself, and yet after the fine edges of grief at parting have become blunted we discover that there is no real void. A few letters pass backwards and forward—the intervals between each becoming longer—till some fine day we decide that there really is no need of answering the last one and thus they drop out of our memory. Years after we meet that person and with a guilty start we recall the half-forgotten memories and—saddest of all—we feel a certain, vague aversion to him as if he was solely responsible for the sundered relations. The truth is that each is equally responsible for the forgetfulness, that Time has passed his blessed smoothing-iron over the creases and hollows in each memory and rubbed them all out in the most natural way in the world.

While Norman is preparing to open up a new chapter in his life by assuming the management of a country school, let us glance back over the years and see what has become of his father meantime. When Harry Scott promised Mr. Ruthven nineteen years ago that he

would return regularly to see his only child, he was thoroughly sincere at the time. He had really loved his wife and her sad death had produced a genuine impression on his plastic nature. In the same way he felt a fatherly interest in the son she had borne him. But, like all emotional natures that love easily and forget easily, those impressions soon faded with the lapse of time. Let us do justice to him and add, that the struggle for bare existence had much to do with this forgetfulness at first. When a man cannot say where the next meal is to be had his mind can be excused somewhat if it does not dwell long on even those who should be near and dear to him, more especially when he feels satisfied that they are well provided for. The first few weeks after reaching New York, he had no sympathy to spare on his infant son in Canada. All his care was needed for his own pressing necessities, to keep out of the charitable institutions if possible. Those who preach at the present day as if poverty was a new thing on this continent and the unemployed of the great cities an entirely novel factor in our midst cannot surely have looked up the records. Forty or fifty years ago the problem of what to do with the cities' destitute was then as now one of the puzzles of life. It may have grown more insoluble since, it certainly has, but it baffled the wisest even then. New York City was then not such a giant octopus stretching out its arms to draw in the best blood of smiling villages to its unhealthy embrace as it does now, nor was its tenement houses such densely crowded furnaces in summer as they are now, but vice and misery stalked abroad then too. For some time Harry could absolutely get no employment. He went through the same dreary round of asking for work as he had once before in a much smaller place, Toronto. Nobody seemed to want him. Still he was very careful to make his little store of money go as far as possible and to keep his clothes well-brushed and neat. He ate at the very cheapest restaurants, where a plate of good soup could be had for three cents, and slept at cheap lodging houses, but he got his linen laundered nicely. "For," argued he, "if a stranger loses his neat appearance in this great city he is lost." He had tried the lower walks in life for employment so long in vain that one day he boldly resolved to strike higher. "Every one asks at those places, I will try a new field," he said. With this purpose he entered broker's offices and regardless of the condescending glances of the clerks he resolutely asked for a place from a member of the firm, when not rebuffed before reaching his desk.

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No use—every place was filled already—most of the busy men never even looked up at the modest looking, handsome man in black who applied for employment. At night he returned to his lodgings, tired and almost discouraged. The next day no better luck and night found him almost desperate. A good night's sleep brought back his lost energy and much of his former cheeriness of manner, he indulged in the unusual luxury of a regular breakfast at a fairly good restaurant. The second office he applied at that morning was a quietly fitted up one with the firm's name in modest letters on the door, instead of the gorgeously gilded window signs of many others on the same street. A thin, fragile man, dark and angular, with a scarf wrapped tightly around his throat though the room was warm, was writing at a heavy, walnut desk. In answer to Harry's request for work he twisted sharply around on his pivot chair and said petulantly: "I can't give you any work, do you hear?" His thin, squeaky voice was pitched in an unnaturally high key and seemed to be thus raised with an effort but his black, beady eyes fairly blazed with passion—the nervous passion of a man made irritable by disease. "I beg your pardon sir," Harry answered, in a mild, deprecatory tone, "but I had no intention of angering you, nor can I see any good reason why you should get so angry. I but used the privilege of a needy, unemployed man and asked you for work. There is neither sin nor crime in that, I trust." "Every confounded beggar, that comes tramping along this street, considers it his especial business to come in here and nag, nag me for work," the thin, dark man fairly screamed back in answer, taking a couple of steps nearer Harry as if to strike him. "If I did employ you, it would only be on condition that you keep away every other wandering rascal out of this office. Now listen young man, while I——" he got no farther for his mouth was filled with blood and a thin stream oozed down over his chin, falling on the tightly wrapped scarf. Slowly the fierce passion faded out from his black eyes and was succeeded by the most mournful, beseeching look, like a wild animal that has fought viciously against the closing in folds of the hunter's net, but beaten at last it turns in mute appeal to its conqueror for mercy. Yes, Alonzo Deane, Esq., for that was the name he was known by in New York's great world of finance, was at last fast in the swiftly closing net of Death from which there is no escape. Long and persistently he had fought off the demon Consumption, comforting himself with the vain belief that it was only a bad cold and would wear away. Instead it had worn

him away till he was but a frail shell ready to be crushed at any moment. The unusual excitement of the passion into which he had worked himself was too much for him and had precipitated the crisis. Indeed he would have fallen forward on the floor had Harry not reached a helping hand and assisted him to a lounge where he lay, pale and motionless apparently dead save for his faintly beating pulse. The position was not by any means a pleasant one though for Harry. Here he was a stranger in the city alone in a private office with a well-known moneyed man likely to die at any moment; in which case explanations would be extremely difficult. Not knowing what to do he ended by doing exactly the right thing. He touched a swinging bell, which he noticed on the wall beside the desk at which the now prostrate man was sitting when he first entered. In response a stylishly-dressed woman of thirty or so entered the room from a side door. Her manner was mannish almost to boldness, though she bore distinct traces of beauty which even her masculine air could not hide. There was that about her whole appearance which denoted the cold business woman, when every vestige of sentiment has been effaced from the countenance by schemes of money-getting or social ambition. Her quick, comprehensive glance took in all the surroundings in a moment—the half-written letter on the desk—the still figure on the lounge and the agitated but handsome face of the stranger before her. “My husband,” she said with a steady look at the pale features on the lounge, her voice betraying not a sign of emotion, “and you” she added, turning so quickly and almost fiercely on Harry that he quailed, for the voice had more of the ring of a slave driver than a woman. “Oh I came into the office looking for work and during our conversation this gentleman had an attack of illness, so suddenly that I rang for assistance.” “Very well, consider yourself engaged and your first duty will be to assist me to carry my husband to his room” she said in a decided tone as if each word had been carefully weighed before uttering. “He has often had these bad spells before.” So saying she calmly took hold of the prostrate man’s shoulders and lifted him to a sitting posture, at the same time directing Harry urgently “to be lively.” Between them they carried the limp form through a long hall opening into a reception room up one flight of stairs to another hall. At the extreme end of this second hall they entered a broad, airy room and here they deposited their burden on a narrow brass bed—the covers of which were snowy white. Harry was panting from the unusual exertion, but the

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tall, masculine lady was still coldly calm and looked on his fatigue with a slightly derisive smile—so he thought at least. But she gave him no time to ponder on the why or the wherefore. "Go down at once to the office and stay there" she directed. "Tell any callers that Mr. Deane is ill and cannot be seen till to-morrow. And mind you" she added menacingly "don't disturb any of the papers. Mr. Deane has his papers always in order and he does not want that order disturbed." It was at the end of Harry's tongue to resent this dictation, couched in such an offensive form, but he resisted. "She apparently takes me for a slave or a dog and so orders me" he savagely thought. "But after all, I am only a poor fellow looking for employment and beggars can't very well be choosers." Without a word of reply, he descended to the office, noticing as he went through the different apartments the richness and beauty of the furnishings and wondering at the absence of servants and family. Seated in the office again he took a mental survey of his position. Here he was an absolute stranger in temporary charge of a broker's office in this great city, ten minutes after entering the door. "Many would have been afraid to put a total stranger in even temporary charge of these valuable papers" he said to himself as he glanced around at the neat little piles of documents—the usual adjuncts of a broker's office. Then as he thought of the keen, eagle look with which Mrs. Deane had sized him up, he knew that she had read him through and through and he knew also that no corner of the earth would be secure to him, who had once betrayed the confidence of that masculine woman. He instinctively felt already that a stronger mind than his own had him in charge and that he was but as clay to the potter. "Anyhow, I will wait and see how matters turn out" he concluded. "Maybe Mr. Deane, when he recovers, will suit me better than his masterful wife.

But Alonzo Dean, Esq., did not come down to his office the next day nor the next after that. Instead it was announced that this clever man in finance had only a few days to live, there was no avenue of escape from his fateful disease. The next morning after his arrival and installation in the Deane household, Harry was called into Mrs. Deane's presence and questioned as to his past life. "I have not yet learned your name even though I trusted your honesty" was her first salutation, spoken in a shade kindlier tone than that of yesterday and he thought he could detect traces of even grief on that strong determined face. One of those impulses, which all the rest of our lives we vainly strive to

self-explain, came over him not to give his real name. "Why should this aggressive woman know my real name when the chances are that I will never see her again after a few days or weeks of employment." So he argued and turning around he calmly announced: "My name is James S. Johnston." "Were you ever married?" came the next question sharp and clear. "Never," answered Harry in the same composed way for he was now fairly in the path of falsehood. "Might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb" he grimly muttered to himself. "What has been your occupation?" Mrs. Deane next asked. "Bookkeeper," he answered and his white hands and air of gentility corroborated his story. "Very well Mr. Johnston, now listen carefully to what I have to say for much of your future depends on it. My husband is very ill indeed—may never recover—and I have decided to give you an insight into his business for I myself have always assisted him. But mind you, this quick confidence placed in you also brings heavy responsibilities. If I trust you it is because I think I can read your character. Betray that trust and—well—I will have you hunted down if you are alive." Her voice had the hard ring again. "But," she resumed, "pay close attention to the small details and you may become if not wealthy at least in a fair way to make money. My husband has no business intimates, he is simply what he professes to be, a broker in a small but safe way," then turning quickly to the desk she ran over the methods of that business, quoting and handling the papers with a swift celerity that amazed and almost frightened Harry, for he began to doubt his own ability to grasp their full meaning at once. But he was more than astonished to find that Mrs. Deane, when he ventured to ask a question here and there, went back and traversed the ground again without a shade of displeasure. Indeed, she seemed to take a pleasure in showing him exactly how the business stood and her ready grasp of all the details made this a comparatively easy matter. The truth was, that Mrs. Deane was more man than woman, her mind naturally delighted in business, in buying and selling stocks, in watching the rise and fall of the markets rather than in those other things so dear to feminine minds. She could tell you what securities were gilt-edged much better than she could what the latest society novel said. She belonged to no womens' temperance unions or ladies' guilds, but where hard-headed business men met to discuss the fluctuations in wheat Mrs. Deane's opinions were quoted with respect.

For many years her husband had been regarded as a mere figure head, the power behind the throne being the masculine wife. Under her shrewd guidance the name of Alonzo Deane on a business check became recognized as a guarantee of its reliability, for she never allowed him to touch anything that was not eminently sound and conservative first and foremost. Wildcat schemes might and did find backers among the other brokers but Alonzo Deane would have nothing to do with such. It would be mockery to call their marriage a union of hearts, "union of interests" would describe it more truthfully for Mr. Deane had a little money left to him by his father and Mrs. Deane had the business capacity. Between them they made a strong team and though there was no pretense of love on either side they managed to live together for years, if not happily at least quietly as far as the outside world could see. They had no children and perhaps it was better so, since the children of those loveless marriages usually grow up wanting in many of the finer emotions, for thus does nature exact her heavy price by visiting the shortcomings of the parents on their innocent offspring. The Deanes lived modestly, owned their own place, kept but one old woman servant and consequently were wealthy even as wealth goes in New York. Mrs. Deane in her quick fashion had seen in Harry Scott—or James S. Johnston as she knew him—the making of an excellent confidential clerk and perhaps too the womanly side of her nature, if indeed she had such, was touched by the quiet deference paid to her commands by this handsome stranger. Anyhow she took to him from the first and very shortly after Mr. Deane's death, which took place about two weeks after Harry's advent, she installed him in charge of the entire business, she retaining virtual control as before. Very characteristic was her conduct the day of the funeral. She evidently regarded it as a strictly business incident—disagreeable but inevitable—and made all arrangements herself with the closest economy consistent with a proper display due to their station in life, for she believed in doing everything in proper form. Then immediately after the funeral she made out checks for the different items, had Harry enter them up in the correct account and the matter was closed without a tear being shed or a heart string stretched. To do her justice she was no hypocrite and feeling no grief she made no display of it. Better that possibly than the unmeasured and unmeaning sorrow, characteristic of the modern swell funeral with its flowers and fuss. It would save a good deal of forced distress to the relatives of some of

these affairs if the mourners too could be hired as they are in some eastern countries.

Harry Scott was now, as usual, merely drifting with the stream or perhaps a better illustration would be to say that he was first mate on board a vessel which had a stronger hand than his at the helm. He felt that he had found a pleasant home, his work was agreeable for in some way it seemed to fit in with his indolent nature and in a measure he was content—a low, animal sort of contentment. But not always. For now and again the sadly pathetic face of his dead wife, longing oh so pitifully for the quiet and peace of her country home, would come up or he would remember with a start that he was no longer Harry Scott but James S. Johnston, that he had come into this home with lies on his lips. Time and again he resolved to start over, to tell Mrs. Deane the truth and as often he hesitated. "With what fine scorn she would hear my explanations" he used to say to himself. "I can see her stern face now as she utters that stinging word 'liar.'" Time and again also he made up his mind to write to the Ruthvens but here again lions were in the pathway. "For if I write to them the time will come when they will want to visit here and then my jig is up." So it went on from month to month, all the time getting more difficult to break the ties that were closing around him for now a new phase presented itself. Mrs. Deane was certainly getting to admire her dark, handsome clerk and like all her other emotions she did not try to conceal it. Yes there could be no doubt of it, the cold business woman into whose life it did not seem possible that love could ever enter, whose heart chambers seemed to be forever walled up, softened her manner now when speaking to Harry and even went out of her way to bestow little attentions that he could not fail to understand. He on his part did not take the trouble to dissect his own feelings. The inglorious policy of drift still dominated him, his indolent disposition was fast letting slip all memories of former associations, his lot seemed cast in pleasant places and so it came about that when Mrs. Deane, about a year after her husband's death, hinted at marriage he was not averse and the union was consummated, though he was several years younger than she.

After their marriage Mrs Deane—or rather Mrs. Deane-Johnston as she now called herself—changed her manner of life completely. Whether this arose through love for and pride in her distinguished looking husband or merely because she was satisfied with her gathered

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wealth and wanted now to enjoy life, it would be hard to say, but certain it is that she made a perfect right about face. From the plain business block where the money had been amassed, they moved down town to the swell residential quarter and then began a systematic campaign—conducted like she used to manage any other business transaction—to get into society. Day by day her carriage could be seen in the park, a very stylish turnout, with a footman and all the other trimmings, whilst the parties that Mrs. Deane-Johnston gave were considered most brilliant if not particularly select. This latter drawback was gradually being eliminated too, for of course she quickly dropped from the list of invitations all those whose place she could fill with more desirable people, or rather with people whom she considered higher up in society. It is highly improbable that any such campaign conducted by wealth and persistence ever was or could be unsuccessful. In any case this one was not, for Mrs. Deane-Johnston made her way into the charmed circle of society with much greater ease than she had hitherto into the merely wealthy ranks, since the doors of fashion yield readily to a key of gold. Her functions were now readily attended by all the self-styled genteel people who put in a butterfly sort of existence which they call living. Mr. Deane-Johnston, the man of fashion, driving his little daughter Ethel (for they now had a daughter) along the promenade in New York was quite another person from Harry Scott the livery stable drudge in Toronto of a few years before. If he ever gave a thought to his son in Canada, his placid, handsome face gave no indication of it and apparently those memories had entirely faded away. But let us return to that son's fortunes again.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HOME VENEERING.

“And shall we own such judgment?—No— as soon
 Seek roses in December—ice in June,
 Hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff;
 Believe a woman or an epitaph,
 Or any other thing that's false, before
 You trust in critics, who themselves are sore.”

—Byron.

The teacher in a Canadian country school has no sinecure. There are those who imagine that duties which only take up five hours and a half per day for five days in the week must necessarily be light but such people do not grasp all the truth. They know nothing of the intense mental strain of having forty or fifty bright, active minds pitted against your own for several hours a day, nor of the numberless little vexations of school life, the unappreciated efforts to brighten up the young lives, or worse still, the positive misjudgments passed on the teacher's work. They scarcely know that the teacher leaves the school-room — if he is a conscientious teacher, and there is no room for others — at four o'clock fagged out; energy pumped dry by constantly giving off and receiving none in return. Nor do they consider that to be a successful teacher one must give up 'most of their evenings to preparation for the next day's lessons, must read up constantly to keep abreast of the times, must in fact be a martyr to his profession. But teaching has its pleasant side as well. The personal consciousness of duty well done, the honest pride that comes from the kindly word of parental appreciation (ah! what treasures such parents are), the unaffected, simple conversations with the country folk, the long, delightful tramps over the hills or through the rich, autumn woods, the plain, homely but substantial fare of the rural home, in which you are more a welcome visitor than a boarder, are joys which once tasted are

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never forgotten. The present writer knows whereof he speaks, for some of the happiest years of his life were spent teaching in little, wayside, country school-houses where if life had its ills to bear it also had its glorious compensations with sometimes an amusing turn thrown in. Perhaps one of the latter may not be amiss just now. In an adjoining section from where he taught there was employed an old man, one of the relics of the earlier days. In his younger days he likely had been a good teacher but that was long ago. Latterly on account of his failing grasp of the subjects to be taught, the attendance at his school had fallen off so that he was obliged to resort to a novel plan to keep up appearances, for it would never do to allow the trustees to know the actual attendance. Around the school-house was a favorite resort for pigs and sheep in order to get away from the intolerable heat of the sun's rays. This old teacher accordingly got into a custom of entering these animals up in the school record as "pupils," the sheep in the girl's column and the pigs in the boy's. Being discovered in this deception he was asked why he made the distinction. "Well" he answered "I have always noticed that men are like pigs, stubborn to drive and each one going in his own direction but women are like sheep, they follow their leader." However, this characteristic answer did not avail him since he was incontinently dismissed from his position for 'fraudulent conduct unbecoming a teacher.'

Norman Scott's first few days as teacher were discouraging to him. Naturally sympathetic himself he had expected a ready flow of sympathy from his pupils but he was disappointed to find that they evidently had him on trial with the school-room as proving ground. The situation was a puzzling one at first, each bright, little face was looking up to him for direction, each had their own distinct personality plainly stamped on their countenances, but how could they ever be arranged in classes was the problem without doing hurt to their differing characteristics. Gradually though as there comes to every born teacher a plan slowly evolved itself, the children were formed into natural classes or rather groups, the school began to struggle to its feet, then got bodily up, and before the noon hour was reached our young teacher knew by his own sense of mastery that he was not alone the virtual, but the real commander and leader of the tiny host. There came the natural reaction of course after this his thrill of triumph, and he had many blue moments before the first week was over, so that Friday evening was not unwelcome at all. But the inspiration he received at home, the kindly words

of encouragement and advice from Mrs. Ruthven nerved him to his task, and Monday morning found Norman again at his post in the school, confident and eager to begin work. By the middle of the week, he was beginning to feel that he had the school fairly well in hand, and when Friday came around again, it brought a share of regret at parting with his pupils for even that brief time.—He had crossed the Rubicon, he was thoroughly in touch with the children, and thenceforward all was plain sailing as far as the school itself was concerned.

But, from the very first he felt that a hostile influence was at work against him outside the school. He could not it is true, point out the exact persons, nor could he indicate clearly the direction this adverse weight might take but that it existed he could have no manner of doubt. The real trouble was that he was not aristocratic enough for a faction in the community, for even some of the country districts have their local aristocracy — “codfish aristocracy” as some one has well said. There was Mrs. Townsend for example, a widow, fat and forty but decidedly not fair. She lived on a farm like the rest of the people but her farming was of the most restricted type since she let out on shares the most of her fields, retaining one small plot around the farm house. In this limited area she raised enough vegetables to supply her table and on the rest of the farm she managed to make out a careful living. None of the neighbors could say exactly what business her husband carried on during his life time, seeing that he only visited home occasionally and was scarcely known by sight to those in the vicinity. When he died some years before it was generally supposed that he had left her some money but this was not known certainly. She had no children — hated children in fact — and had for companions at home an English servant girl, half a dozen cats in different stages of growth and a fluffy, woolly terrier, which she called “Solomon,” probably by the rule of contraries because Solomon was about as idiotic a dog as you would see in a year’s travel, knowing just enough to chew a bone in the corner or lazily snap at house flies out in the wood-shed. Still, there was just one redeeming feature in Solomon’s make-up, one useful END which prevented him from being altogether a barren fig-tree, and that was his tail. It was an unfailing barometer, that season in and out told the Townsend household what kind of weather to expect. If Solomon’s tail hung at half mast, the English girl got the rain barrels out, for rain it would be, but if Solomon went around with a cocky air and tail erect then fine weather might be confidently expected. In

time all the neighbors got to consulting this dog barometer, so that if a man wanted to draw in his oats on a certain day or start stacking his pea-crop, the question was always asked "How does Solomon's tail hang?" But, if Solomon was essentially a democratic dog, his mistress on the other hand was distinctly aristocratic, there could be no doubt of that. In fact she was the leader of the local swell society but why it should be so no one could say. In some inscrutable way she had managed to get herself recognized as such and now no one seriously questioned her title, so that it was a very grave matter for a newcomer to be put under her ban and Norman unfortunately found himself in that position almost from the start. He first became certain of that fact by not receiving an invitation into the church choir, this being an infallible test in that rural section. Mrs. Townsend herself was the ostensible leader of the choir, though she could not sing a note correctly and knew as much about music in general as a South Sea Islander does about cathedral architecture. She might be friendly to you when she met you, that was an un failing indication that you were just along the border land of the choir but not sufficiently advanced in her good graces to be yet invited into the holy of holies. So that it can easily be seen that there were rings and inner rings in this local society and poor Norman was not yet even admitted into the outermost ring for Mrs. Townsend blankly stared at him when she met him as if he belonged to a different order of creatures altogether. This rebuff did not trouble him much since he was quite happy in the love and respect of the pupils. He boarded at a very pleasant place — a Mr. Joseph Rochester's, whose wife was a sister of Mrs. Venning — and quite often he had the pleasure of accompanying Holly herself home in the evenings from visiting her aunt. What delightful evenings those were too! Years afterwards when Norman's life was darkened over with the ugly, lowering clouds of unquiet and unrest, when life seemed scarcely worth the living, he was accustomed to look back on those happy talks and strolls with Holly under the bright moonlight as the very essence of bliss. She, like himself, was a keen lover of nature with just enough of implied independence and originality of thought to be piquant. In any of these rambles he never mentioned their former conversation in the woody ravine two years before, and each seemed to understand, that it was a subject to be allowed to sleep for the present. One evening though they drifted around to past matters when she archly said:

"Do you know Norman, I was talking to George Craig the other day and he asked about you." "Did he really?" Norman replied dryly. "I guess he has no pleasant words to say about me."

"Indeed, you do him an injustice when you say so. You are altogether too hard on him, for I assure you he does not speak thus of you." She spoke sharply as if back of her words there was a slight shade of anger.

"I don't wish to be unjust to him or anybody else, but I tell you that I cannot believe any of his smooth speeches. He is a dissembler, first, last and always and I would not believe him on oath. He hates me and would do anything he could to injure me."

"Your language sounds as if you hated him too."

"No, I can't say that I hate him for one would destroy those whom they hate if it were in their power to do so and I would not turn aside a hair breadth to injure him even if I had an opportunity."

"Well then" she said slowly and very gravely "if he hates you as you say he does he has now a splendid chance to work you harm."

"Why what do you mean?" Norman's tone was grave now too.

"Why don't you know that Mrs. Townsend dislikes you and that George is a special favorite of hers."

"Yes, I knew those two facts before but where does the injury to myself come in?"

"Why stupid, don't you know that that woman has driven other teachers out of that school before and if she and George combine forces, do you think you could withstand them?"

"Well Holly, I had not thought of it in that way before, but there may be much in what you have said. Of this woman and her influence I had never heard until I came here to teach, though doubtless you know her past actions much better than I do through your aunt. With Mrs. Townsend herself I have no quarrel as yet nor will I seek one. Her ostracism of myself does not trouble me at all as I like my pupils and I am entirely engrossed in their aims and aspirations. Nor could there be more delightful people than the parents of this section. But let George Craig beware" his voice was raised high and angry unmindful of the fact that they were passing the lane which led up to Mr. Craig's house. "If he crosses my path again I'll give him worse than a broken sleigh this time." "Oh hush" she said reprovingly "somebody else may hear you." Neither of them noticed two dark figures standing in the shadow of the maples which lined the Craig's lane, but they were

there and had overheard the remark too. It was George Craig himself and his uncle's hired man, Ben Davis. They were just returning from putting the work horses away for the night in the pasture fields across the roads, when they heard Holly and Norman coming. Drawing Ben in close to the fence George had heard Norman's passionate warning, not a syllable escaping him, his beady eyes glittering in the moonbeams which penetrated through the thick foliage of the trees. "Did you hear that threat young man?" Ben said, turning to him. "Of course I did" was the surly answer. "Well you had better remember it too, for that young Scott is not one of the sort who bark without biting." "I will remember it, and I want you to remember it as well" he said meaningly. As Norman and Holly went on their way homeward she was chiding him gently for his violence. "I wish you would not get so angry Norman. As an old schoolmate of yours and as a sincere friend I ask you to repress your temper. It will, sooner or later get you into serious trouble and you know we all would be sorry to know that."

"Would you be sorry particularly?" he asked in a tone of anxious sadness.

"Certainly did I not say we would all be sorry?"

"Yes but you yourself," he asked again eagerly.

"Well — yes, I would be VERY sorry" emphasizing her words before she was hardly aware of it herself. The next moment he had thrown one arm around her and was pouring out his surging thoughts thick and fast.

"Holly I love you and there is nothing in the world I would not give up for you. For your sweet sake I will try again and curb this demon of a temper. I have tried already and failed but if I fail again I renounce all my hopes of winning you for a wife—and He, who is looking down at us from those unclouded heavens knows how hard that would be—since I could not think of asking you to share the lot of one who was not master of himself. If I fail in this battle with my own bad temper, let us be strangers to each other, let all our past companionship—and may I also say 'love'—be as a blank."

They had now reached her father's gate and as he bent over to kiss her ripe, red lips, she whispered "remember now Norman, I shall hold you to your words—be as a blank." He bowed his head in silence and rapidly walked away scarcely knowing which way he went, so delirious was he over his great joy that at last—she had manifested her love for him.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOME CONSPIRING.

"Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men
May read strange matters : To beguile the time,
Look like the time ; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue ; look like the innocent flower,
But be he serpent under it."

—From "*Macbeth*."

Nothing is more surprising to a student of country life than the fact that there are crimes and criminals there at all. The clear, healthy air, the absence of vicious surroundings, the uplifting influences of tree and wood and field, the close companionship with nature all tend to eliminate the evil in man and reduce crime to a minimum. But nothing is more certain than that there are often grave crimes committed in remote rural districts — crimes which shock the moral senses and lead us to ask, "Why is this?" The usual answer is that the farmer's mode of life his solitary work in the fields, his sense of isolation all make for brooding, and that brooding is next door neighbor to crime. But this logic works both ways. If solitude sometimes leads to brooding and brooding to crime, it very much oftener leads to purer lives, to ennobling thoughts, to higher intellectual levels. Its tendency in the main is rather to humanize than to debase, so that an explanation must be sought elsewhere. It will be found, if the individual cases of rural crime are traced back that quite often — probably in the majority of cases — they have their source in the city after all. For example, there is no member of country society more useless — another name for criminal-tending — than the farm-raised boy who while still professedly living in the country, spends his evenings in the town. He comes in time to have neither the innocence of the genuine rustic nor the business alacrity of the town-bred man. He is a hermaphrodite in short, neither fish, flesh nor good red herring. If he does not end up in crime he at least gets accustomed to regarding it with composure and is altogether an undesirable citizen. Many of the rural crimes have their origin in this debatable territory — the border land of town and country. Like the

smoke which befalls the sky in a wide circle, the influence morally of the city takes in a very broad sweep.

Matters continued to run very smoothly with Norman and his school during the glorious autumn days and for most of the winter as well. If the hostile element had any intention of making a decided move they disguised their plans well. It is true that at Christmas time he, by a slight incident, had embittered if possible his relations with Mrs. Townsend. For some weeks prior she had been making advances looking to a more friendly status and at last had gone the length of sending him an invitation to assist in getting up a Christmas Eve entertainment which she had taken in hand. To this she received the following laconic refusal :

MRS. TOWNSEND—

As you have hitherto conducted your entertainments without my assistance and I have managed my own affairs without your intervention in my behalf, we will continue to do so in future as well.

Yours respectfully, NORMAN SCOTT.

To say that she was angry would but half express it. She was furious. "To think that an ordinary school teacher should ever have had the chance to flout an invitation of mine. Oh why did I ever send it to him at all! I am humiliated beyond measure. But I'll try and teach him better manners before I'm through with him," she said angrily. He would neither have cared for nor heeded her threats even if he had heard them. He had answered her invitation thus, not hastily but deliberately, because his native independence—the Ruthven side of him—prompted him to do so, and his answer correctly expressed his sober judgment. She and her little set had antagonized him from the start, for no reason whatever; he was under no debt of gratitude to her for his success in the school, and he did not propose to placate where he had not offended. He was not angry, he was only firm set.

One afternoon, as he returned to his boarding place, happy as a lark, for it was Friday and Holly had said that she was coming to visit her aunt and that he could walk home with her again, he found a note on the table addressed to himself. Opening it he read :

DEAR SIR,—

Maple Bend, March 11th, 1866.

I do not wish to disclose my identity any more than to say that I know you and your grandparents well, and that I should not like to see any ill come to you. There is some sort of a plot afoot to destroy your

influence in the school, by injuring your reputation. I cannot say any more because I know no more, and that little I picked up by overhearing scraps of conversation between people whom I do not care to mention now.

Signed, WELL WISHER.

The writing was a firm, manly hand with no disguise, apparently written with as much sincerity of purpose as it was clearly expressed. He crumpled the note up in one hand, his face expressed deep concern but he resolved to say nothing to Holly concerning the matter. Why should he trouble her joyous, springy, young life with something that probably would turn out to be a needless scare? Could he not bear his own life crosses? So as they walked briskly up the snowy road that winter evening their conversation turned in another direction. The big drifts on each side of the road almost hid the fences, the air was frosty but it had that energy-giving property, peculiar to Northern climates, that property which makes you feel as if you could run at full speed for hours together and never tire. The scientific explanation is of course that you are drinking in pure ozone, that your lungs are absorbing and appropriating it and that its effects reach the outermost tissues of the body but the subject himself is inclined to let science go to the dogs. All that he cares to know is that he could scale the loftiest mountain peaks, or thinks he could, that the cares of age have been lifted and boyhood's unwearied vigor is with him again. Beyond that he does not care to investigate.

"Are you liking your school work better now," she asked, after they had walked along in silence for some time, for both had been admiring the wonderful star-studded sky above them—a clear, cold, winter night is the time of all times to see the heavens at their very best. "Oh much better indeed, I may say that I am delighted with it. Now that I understand my pupil's wants they seem to appreciate each little point and teaching instead of being a duty for which I am paid so much a month, is a real pleasure. The noon hour and four o'clock come around altogether too quick for me, as I get absorbed in the cheery faces before me. Then what evenings we do put in at my boarding place! Mr. Rochester you know can tell such delightful stories of the early days. When he draws his own chair up near the fireplace, lets his specks drop down on the bridge of his nose, and looks over them at you with those keen old eyes of his, you can depend something good is coming."

"What does he talk about Norman?"

"Oh about Lundy's Lane and '37, and other stirring times. He was present at many of the battles and has not forgotten an incident, the local color is as distinct as if you were actually there I sometimes think. Shall I tell you some of his tales?"

"Not to night, not to night, as I want to ask you a question," her manner had grown earnest now.

"All right, any question you ask will be frankly answered for you know no one has a better right to ask" he said looking down at her grave, upturned face.

"Well Norman my question is this, have you settled your vocation in life yet?"

"Why didn't we decide that long ago in that ravine yonder. I am to be a farmer of course in the end because you wished it and what you wish is law." He spoke gaily as he felt.

"Do you mean that?"

"Of course I mean it. But you know Holly" he was sobering too now, "I want to get out first and see some of the outside world, to get a whiff of the inspiration of crowded, bustling places, to rub up against my fellowmen, to jostle and be jostled. "Maybe, you will forget though our poor, little, restricted life here then. You are clever, the big world will grab you up eagerly for it is always ready to applaud cleverness and in years to come you may forget your country friends, forget — everybody" her voice faltered and she was looking out sadly across the snowy fields. "I may forget it is true my country friends, I may even forget my happy, country school days, but Holly there is one sweet face there I can never forget. Can you guess whose it is? Come, let us write our names down so that neither of us can ever forget our conversation to-night." He drew a small diary from his pocket and underneath the date they wrote by the soft light of the moon, she standing inside her father's gate and he outside,

NORMAN SCOTT.

HOLLY VENNING.

"Now, which one of us will carry this little reminder?" he said leaning over the gate and touching her arm. "Oh you of course" she replied with a trace of her former roguish self. "And why of course" he queried. "Let me whisper my answer in your ear" and reaching up she pulled his head down but instead of whispering she almost shouted "Because you are most likely to forget, because men are false and women true." He could see by her manner that she was the flirting, teasing

Holly once more but still he could not be sure that she was not half in earnest too. His embarrassment was plain and there was just the faintest suspicion of stiffness in his tones when he said "Very well, just as you say." "Now don't get angry Norman there's a good boy, farewell" she was gone and he could see her waving one hand saucily back at him as she hurried up the snowy path that led to the house. He turned and retraced his steps, till he reached the long lane in front of his grandfather's home and as he slowly walked up toward the bright light, that streamed from its cheerful windows, he was thinking deeply, thinking of the little madcap he had just left and how she managed to be so serious at times and the moment after so nonsensical. Then her question came up again "Have you settled your vocation in life yet?" Had he? Or was he only drifting he knew not whither? A light snow was falling for the moon had now become obscured, but he heeded not as he paced up and down the lane revolving over many subjects, in all of which Holly was the central figure. He hesitated about entering the house till he had thought out clearly his plans for he did not care to meet his grandparents with a clouded brow. As he thus walked slowly back and forth a gradual calm settled over him; blessed, tired nature reasserted itself and he was on the point of opening the side door, when a bright light shot up across in the direction of Craig's.

Gradually, as the flames mounted higher and higher, he saw that they enwrapped a tall stack of oat straw which had been threshed out in one of the back fields to serve as fodder for some of the cattle that could not be housed in the barn. The animals themselves could be seen moving back from the fiery mass which burned with great fury and looking across the snowy fields the sight was a grand one. He hesitated a moment, thrilled and fascinated, then he opened the door quickly and announced that "Craig's oat stack was on fire." Ben Davis had come in to have an evening's chat with Donald, for the hired men were friends even if the families themselves were not. Both came forward at once followed by Mr. and Mrs. Ruthven, and all stood gazing in silent wonder at the unusual spectacle, for be it remembered a fire in the country is not the comparatively commonplace event that a similar visitation is in town. "If there is anything we can do to save Mr. Craig's property we will gladly do so Ben" Mr. Ruthven said, "otherwise we prefer of course not to go nearer." "Nothing can be done that I know of, the cattle all appear to be keeping

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out of harm's way but I wonder how that stack ever got on fire. It beats me completely. I tell you it must have been set on fire." Nothing more was said and he hurried away home leaving the little group at Ruthven's admiring the scene, as the wind which was now rising drove the burning straw in long trains of fire, whirling over the crust of snow, higher and higher in fantastic eddies and currents. But a very few moments sufficed to edstroy the huge stack which represented the yield of straw from more than twenty acres and then the Ruthven household retired to bed, little knowing that a storm was soon to burst around them, a storm not of their own making nor much to their liking.

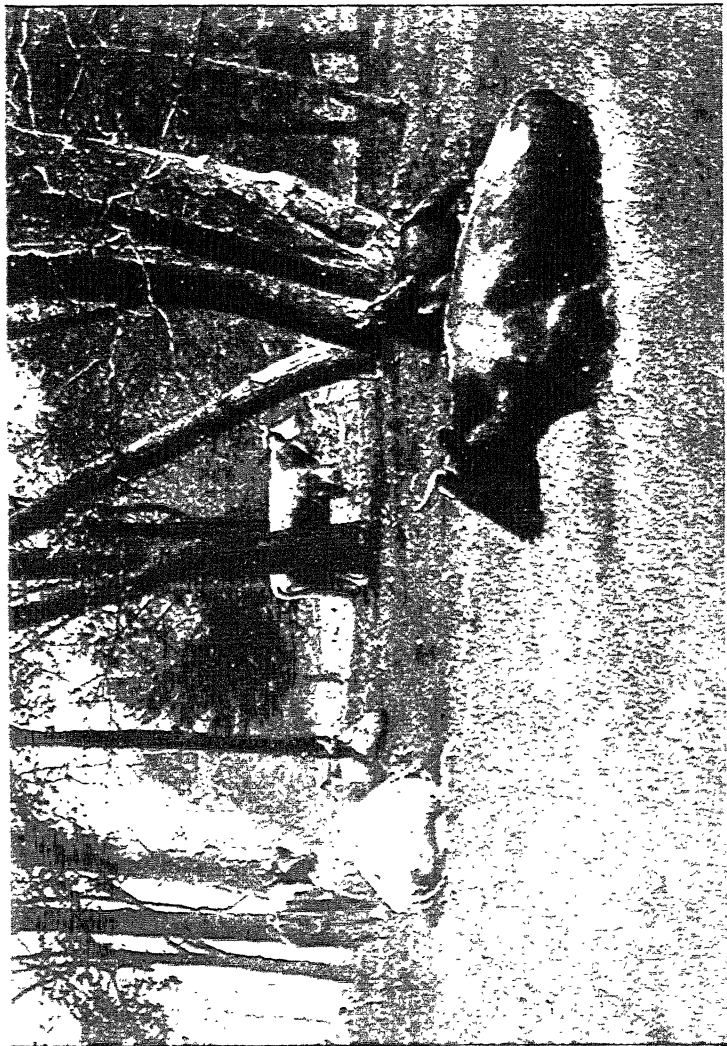
The Craig fire was the sole topic of conversation next morning around Maple Bend. Every little incident in connection with it, every scrap of information was snapped up eagerly and even what this one and that one said when the fire broke out. Had there been several lives lost the interest could not have been more general. That the fire had been started by some one there could be no doubt for there was no other way to explain its origin. But by whom? All Maple Bend was asking itself that question. Tramps were almost unknown at any season but a tramp in winter time was a clear impossibility. The tramp theory found not a single adherent. Then Maple Bend began looking around for enemies of the Craigs. The family it is true had no very warm friends in the community but none were accounted actual enemies but the Ruthvens. John Ruthven never took any pains to conceal his dislike of the Craigs. Honest in everything, he detested them and he knew no reason why he should conceal it. They, on their part, were too sly to come right out and so it came about that there were neighbors, who imagined that the Ruthvens were more to blame for the long standing feud than were the other family. There were not many of this way of thinking but there were enough to gossip away and shake their heads meaningly at just such a juncture as the present. Among themselves they recalled, with knowing looks, how Norman had pitched George Craig over the bridge years before, how he was still sullen towards him, presumably on account of the latter's attention toward Holly, and above all Norman's fierce, revengeful temper was emphasized over and over. It was not very clear of course how he expected to get even with George by burning his uncle's stack but such gossip-loving bodies do not usually stop to argue logically in times of excitement. If there is a

link missing here and there in their chain of evidence they do not stop to weld it up but leave that to the imagination purely. Then when Ben Davis happened to tell how Norman had come home excited a few minutes after the fire started their suspicions were confirmed. No foot tracks could be traced across the fields towards the Ruthven's because it had snowed and drifted during the night, so that no proof of guilt could be established in that way but none was needed. Before the next night it was settled in the minds of a small section of Maple Bend's people that Norman Scott had fired Mr. Craig's straw stack. If we are looking for evil motives it is so easy to find them and we can always fit the known facts so readily into theories of our own suspicions.

Norman himself went back to school on Monday more light hearted than usual because he had settled the question, he thought, of his future career, settled it in the way that Holly wished him. He would be a farmer, he would resign his school at the end of the term, he would go back to his grandfather and tell him that he would help to till his broad acres, that he would content himself on the farm, to live an humble, useful citizen, fearing nobody and owing nobody, last and best of all he would ask his grandparents' permission to bring Holly home as his wife. He hummed softly to himself an old love song as he went about his daily tasks, the class in history had never seemed so bright and interesting before and the pupils in reading wondered at the added emphasis which their teacher put into these lines from Pope :

“What's fame? a fancied life in other's breath,
A thing beyond us, even before our death.
All that we feel of it begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes or friends;
To all beside, as much an empty sage
An Eugene living, as a Caesar dead;
Alike, or where, or when, they shone or shine,
Or on the Rubicon or on the Rhine.
A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod;
An honest man's the noblest work of God.”

A sense of contentment with his restricted lot settled down on Norman, he cast fame behind him and when he dismissed school at four o'clock he went to his boarding-place in a calmer mood than he had felt for many a day.



A GRABY CORNER IN THE PICTURE
From a Photograph by Pollard & Son.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE HOME EPISODING.

“Thou unrelenting past !
Strong are the barriers round thy dark domain,
And fetters, sure and fast,
Hold all that enter thy unbreathing reign.”

—*Bryant.*

Will the twentieth century old man be able to look back on the days of his early manhood with as much pleasure and fond regret as the generation who have just passed away did? It looks unlike it now and yet who can forecast with any degree of certainty at all? Fifty years from now the trolley car and swift express train may stand, not for the very demons of unrestfulness, but rather for the good, old, peaceful agents — that is comparing them with the then means of transit, which will probably be through the air. We are just between times now. The marvellous discoveries of the last dozen years have opened to our vision a new area, which we can only dimly discern as yet. We have not yet got our proper bearings in this new land. Wonderful mechanisms have taken the places of scores of workmen and thus new conditions have been thrust on them, for which they are not yet prepared. There can be little doubt that changed modes of life will eventually adapt themselves to the new order of things, for man is a pliable animal ever, but meantime the distress is very real and pressing and it would need only a half clever agitator to bring about a repetition of the machine burning riots of the early part of the century. But let us return to our story.

Joseph Rochester, with whom Norman boarded, was a good type of an Englishman well-to-do and contented. He and his good wife had emigrated from their native Yorkshire and pushed their way into this quarter of Upper Canada a few years before even the settlers at Maple Bend. They had no children in their home “too busy to raise children when we were clearing up the land” he laughingly told his

friends. But if one missed the childish prattle around that neat log house it had fascinating details of its own. In summer time the morning glories clambered all over the wide porch and out in the front yard a gnarled, old, chestnut stump was completely hidden by golden rayed nasturtiums, which feeding on the strong, new earth, showed by their rich luxuriance that they appreciated their treatment. Besides these there was at the side of the house a big circular bed of old English flowers, holly hocks, sweet William and larkspurs. Mrs. Rochester was a thrifty housewife, her cooking was famous for miles around, but like most women from the English middle classes she carefully avoided waste in everything. Her row of tin pans outside the little milk house glittered like burnished silver for were they not scoured every morning by her own hands? At the village store her butter usually brought an extra cent or so more than many of her neighbors' for all buyers wanted to get it. In short she was one of a type of women who hold and practice that home is the true woman's kingdom and that a tidy house is more to be desired than platform fame.

With the onrush of years the Rochesters had gradually acquired modest wealth and it was more on account of his bright, young company than for anything else that they took Norman in with them to board. They had little learning of their own and it was a peculiar delight of theirs to sit around the big, roaring fireplace in the long winter evenings and listen to him as he read to them stories of travel and adventure in distant lands. Unconsciously too he put into these tales his own romantic rendering and thus it came about that the sturdy, old couple on the other side of the glancing firelight actually suffered and joyed and triumphed with the heroes and heroines. In time they almost worshipped the young teacher whilst he felt drawn to them no less strongly. There were other evenings though when he laid aside his book and listened in turn whilst Mr. Rochester brought back again the old settler days. Norman of course had heard his grandfather give glimpses into this life, but Mr. Ruthven's nature was more taciturn, and besides Mr. Rochester's experience da'ed somewhat beyond his. These accounts of pioneer Canada seemed to him most fascinating than any tale of adventure in other lands read from books, since here before him was an actual participator in these scenes.

"Yes young man" he said one evening, glancing at the old house dog who was snoring away on a sheepskin mat in front of the fireplace,

“those were times to bring out whatever was strong in our natures as you say. We scarcely ever spoke of that side of it to each other but I think we all felt it. Mind you though it was not only us men who had to be brave and hopeful but our women as well. Many a time have I started away from home in the middle of the winter to take a grist to the Norwich Mills, more than sixty miles away. Not with a spanking team of fine horses on a smooth gravel road either, but a lazy pair of oxen over a rough road, which followed an old Indian trail and most of the way led through the mazes of the forest. Every few rods the little sleigh on which I had the bags would get caught against a tree trunk and a stoppage would have to be made whilst I effected a release. Thus I would be away from home at such times about five or six days, according to the way I got on and during that time my wife would be left alone except for the grandfather of that old dog yonder. You can scarcely imagine what that meant unless you remember that the nearest neighbor's house was a mile and a half away through the dark forest.”

“And were you not afraid to stay alone like that?” Norman said turning to Mrs. Rochester. “Yes I was afraid but it had to be faced and I did the best I could.”

“Tell the teacher about your fright over the darkey, Martha” Mr. Rochester said, “you are a better talker than I am” and the old lady put away the sock she was knitting, carefully wiped her spectacles and began:

“It is a long time since I told this story for it is not a pleasant remembrance even now, though more than fifty years have elapsed since. I am very old now and have seen many good negroes since but a colored face never fails yet to make my blood chill a bit. My husband there was forced to go to Long Point for household supplies. We had been out of tea and sugar since spring and now in July our flour was running low also. We could not borrow from the neighbors for they had little like ourselves. Our nearest neighbor was Thomas Jenkins who lived on the other side of the creek and about a mile up it. He was also nearly out of supplies and it was agreed that the men should borrow a boat at the lake shore somewhere, coast along in it to the Point, get their supplies and return in the same manner. In this way they could run the boat up nearly to where the school-house now stands in which you teach. Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins—both died years ago—came to our place to stay the night before so that the men

might have an early start. Well do I remember the next morning. There are certain stages — landmarks — in one's life that seem almost as if mile posts were put down there, so easily does the mind recall them. You have seen trees blazed to show the way through the forest. Well that hot July morning was one of the blazed trees in my life. We were astir early, I can see my husband there still as he washed the black off his face for he had been logging up the night before in order to get a field ready for fall wheat. It was one of those half hazy July mornings that always indicate a hot day, but it was delightfully balmy and sweet as yet and I almost envied the men their tramp through the cool woods to the lake. They could not tell how long they would be away but expected to be back in about eight or ten days. The arrangement was that we should sleep in our house because Nero our dog — the Jenkins had no dog — was our sole defender and he absolutely refused to stay away from home at nights. Besides our stock of provisions was greater than they had for you know in those days it was share and share alike. Well we went a good half mile or so with the men on their way and it was with heavy hearts we turned back and waved them good-bye through the trees.

Reports had reached us from the settlements near Rond Eau of a huge negro who made his appearance now and again at the settlers' homes and demanded food. He was supposed to have come or to have been put ashore from an American vessel which put in there some time before and his presence was causing no end of anxiety in that district. Lately we heard that concerted action on the part of the men there had resulted in his disappearance and we were now fearful that he would turn up here in our husbands' absence. You see we were not so accustomed to tramps then as now, in fact this negro is the only one I can remember hearing of. We were as brave as the ordinary women — and as the sequel will show a trifle braver. Still it was not without apprehension that we saw darkness creep in over the little clearing each evening and though there were but few hours between nightfall and dawn in July yet those few hours were filled with fears. All went well till the sixth day and we were beginning to laugh at our anxieties, but that very day an incident took place which redoubled our alarm. We made it a point to go each day through the woods to Jenkins' house to see that all was right there and Nero the dog usually accompanied us. I say "usually" because he did pretty much as he liked and nobody had any control over him, though I could manage

him much better than my husband. "He was the ugliest brute by all odds" Mr. Rochester interrupted, "that I ever had anything to do with. I felt like killing him every day." "Yes Joseph" his wife resumed "I know you did, but he was not all bad as we shall see. I think the trouble was that you tried to drive him to mind you and I tried to coax him. Anyhow he seemed attached to me and I fed him well if we had it in the house for ourselves, so that at last he would mind me occasionally. "We got him from an Indian" Mr. Rochester interrupted again, "who had dinner with us one day in passing West. He was a part bull-dog I think, a square-set powerful brute with fangs on him like a lynx. But you never can tell how an Indian dog will act, for they seem to have a wild strain in them like their masters. Why I tried to tie him up one day, as he had a bad habit of roaming off through the woods by himself for hours at a time and he sank his teeth in my hand so deeply that I was laid up for a week. After that I let my wife boss him as well as she could by herself. But go on with the story wife."

"When we returned to our house that day from Jenkins" Mrs. Rochester resumed, "we found that some fresh baked biscuits which we had left in a little summer kitchen were gone. If Nero had not been with us I would put him down as the thief for he knew how to steal as well as any Indian, but he had been with us all the time until we got near the clearing coming back, when he had bounded away in pursuit of a fox, which we had started up in crossing the ravine. Besides, to add to our terror we discovered the print of an immense human foot in a moist place near the well. There were crumbs also strewn around and evidently our unwelcome visitor had eaten the biscuits here and had then drawn a fresh draught of water in order to get a drink, for the half-empty bucket stood just where it was left. Robinson Crusoe's fears when he discovered the imprint of the bare savage foot in the sand on that lonely island were nothing compared with ours now, two unprotected women and the nearest settler miles away. In all probability the negro—we were sure by this time that it could be no other—was hiding along the edge of the clearing and watching our every movement. We had no firearms but settlers' wives had faced too many dangers to be entirely dismayed. My husband's keen axe was there and I cut a stout cudgel for Mrs. Jenkins to use. Thus prepared we awaited nightfall, not exactly with composure but with a fair degree of courage at least. Our idea was that the heavy door

would offer a stout resistance should it be attacked and in case it was forced we could wield our weapons. Nero the Indian dog, we did not take into serious consideration at all as he was too unreliable. He came slouching back shortly after dark looking tired out, as if he had pursued the chase for miles, and immediately laid down in a far corner and went to sleep. There was a certain amount of satisfaction in having him there even if he was useless, he was a living creature at least and made one more in the house.

We barred the door and windows as well as we could and without undressing laid down on the bed, but not to sleep. Hour after hour we heard the hoarse hooting of an owl from the tree tops and once we heard the tread of some wild animal, but as that was an ordinary occurrence we paid no attention. It was not wild animals of the forest we feared but rather a wild human animal. Finally we both dozed off to sleep, from which we were aroused by what seemed a weight of something thrown with force against the door, then a hoarse voice shouted "Open the door." Both of us were out on the floor in an instant, I with the axe and she with the club. All was intense darkness—deep gloom just before dawn. I cannot remember that I was specially frightened. You see we had been calculating on the attack so long that now it was actually here we were not to say surprised. I can only remember that I had a wild, mad desire to swing that axe on the head of any intruder. So I answered back boldly "No we will not open the door." "You have money in the house and I want it," the rough voice answered back, "open the door or I will break it in. I watched this place all day and I know there are only two women in the house. Open the door and I will not harm you if you give me the money." "We have no money and we will not open it" I shouted back. "Then I will smash it in." The voice was savage and shrill now. "Smash it in" I yelled defiantly, "but look out your own skull don't get smashed in too." Not another sound could be heard for some time and the first faint rays of the coming day were beginning to creep in through the chinks of the logs and overhead between the layers of elm bark, when there came a savage rush against the door that shook it but did not drive it in. Calmly we awaited the next onrush, standing to one side each with weapon uplifted. When it did come at last the door and attacker both went down together, so fierce had been the onset. Aiming as well as we could in the half darkness, both axe and club came down together but my blow fell short, though Mrs Jenkin's heavy

bludgeon found the mark. Scrambling to his feet the negro—for it was he and I can see his giant frame now, as he stood crouching like a wild beast sharply outlined against the dawning morning—seemed undecided for a moment what to do. I had the axe uplifted again prepared to strike if he made a movement towards us, Mrs. Jenkins in the same attitude.

It is hard to say what the outcome would have been had not a new antagonist entered the contest. I heard a savage yelp behind me and the next moment saw the supple form of the Indian dog hurl itself on the negro. Then ensued a struggle, the horrible features of which have never been forgotten by me. There was fierce strength on each side. The dog at the first bound had fastened his fangs into the muscles of the negro's right arm, and with his left hand the negro was trying to strangle the dog. Once or twice as they rolled over and over outside on the ground, for the mad impact of the dog had carried the negro backward through the doorway, the man seemed about to succeed in his purpose, but each time with an uglier, crunching sound the dog got a fresh hold, all the time working up towards the negro's neck. Neither Mrs. Jenkins nor myself tried to interfere in the awful struggle, though we still held our weapons. At last with a dreadful, gasping sound the negro shouted "Take him off for God's sake, he's killing me" and indeed he was in a bad way. The dog thoroughly infuriated, the hair on his back standing up like bristles, had the negro down and with savage growls was fairly eating into one side of his neck. A more horrible sight it would be hard to imagine. The negro was barefoot and bareheaded, his shirt was almost torn off, his right arm was mangled frightfully and the dog, all his wild nature stirred up, seemed determined to finish the job there and then. "Lie still and don't struggle" I first commanded the negro and then putting my arms around the dog's neck, I said, "Come Nero, let go now that's a good dog," but he only growled and seemed inclined to turn on me at first. He looked for all the world like what my husband said—"a lynx"—and I was almost frightened of him myself. But by dint of coaxing and petting, he at last allowed the negro to arise and sit on the bench outside the door, though he still narrowly watched every movement. Well to make a long story short we dressed the negro's wounds as well as we could whilst he hung his head sheepishly and never opened his mouth. Then we gave him a good breakfast of such as we had and started him on his way east. "I shan't bother you folks any more"

he said at parting "and if I had known you kept a young wolf here, I wouldn't have come near you as it was, I tell you I don't want anything more to do with that fellow" pointing at Nero who growled in return. The dog followed him right to the edge of the clearing but never offered to touch him. Then he turned back and took up his usual place on that home-made mat yonder, but he remained the same surly dog right up to his death and my husband never could do much with him. "No" chimed in Mr. Rochester "I never could tell whether he would go out hunting with me or not, till I would try. But I am bound to say when he did go, that no dog could do better. Why he would work a flock of wild turkeys up towards you in a way I never saw any other dog do. And I think I never knew him to 'flush' a partridge in all our huntings."

"Was the game plentiful in those days?" Norman asked. "Was it" Mr. Rochester musingly interrogated, "Ah young man, I wish I could bring back so that you might be able to see some of the sights of those times. It would do your eyes good. You know how wild and scarce deer are now. Well in the early days this western country of stretching woods was the great breeding grounds of those lovely animals and it is no exaggeration to say that the forest fairly swarmed with them. I myself saw a drove of them once swimming in Lake Erie and I counted one hundred and thirty-two. It must have been a kind of a deer picnic for they stayed around there two or three days, and none of us had the heart to take a shot at them. You see what little shooting the Indians did was done with bow and arrow principally and the timid creatures were not so frightened as when guns were used. Many of the settlers had young deer for pets, but they invariably joined their wild mates as they grew up and got ranging farther and farther from the clearings. Still there was a comradeship grew up between the settlers and the wild animals. Many of us in hard winters fed flocks of quail and partridge that came huddling almost into our log houses. We had none too much to eat ourselves but we could not bear to see them perish. When the snow was not too deep altogether they could get plenty of red squaw-berries which grew all winter under the thick carpet of dark green vines. Often too when I had been piling up the fresh brush after felling the trees in winter, I have seen deer come up and browse off the brush piles with evident satisfaction. My two cows rather resented these proceedings for they looked on the clearing as their special reserve and time

and again I have seen them charge furiously at the deer when they were thus feeding. Those nimble creatures though did not mind them much for they just slipped to one side and resumed their browsing at another pile. But if you would see the deer at their best you should have seen them sporting along the warm hillsides of the many little creeks which flow southward into Lake Erie hereabouts. Here they would assemble the first fine days of March and race up and down through the sunny woods, as if to throw off the enforced laziness of the winter months and get into proper tone for their summer ramblings throughout the deep forests. They seemed like nothing so much as a lot of kittens at play as they sported back and forth leaping high over the fallen timbers and even over each others backs."

"Did the early settlers keep Christmas and other holidays as we do now?" Norman asked, "or were they too busy?"

"Yes we were a busy people" Mr. Rochester answered, "but still we found time to celebrate Christmas in right royal style too. Some settler's home was selected months before and there we all met Christmas morning, each with a well filled basket for the grand event of the day—the Christmas dinner. It was a sight of one's lifetime to see a sturdy settler tramping along through the deep snow towards the meeting-place, his rifle on one shoulder and a big wild gobbler which he had shot on the way thrown over the other, his wife trudging along behind carrying the basket of cooked victuals and the rugged little beggars of children bringing up the rear. Ah but those were the days of kindness and good cheer," the old man's eyes lit up as he talked on "such hearty handshakes without any polite reservations, such genuine joy at meeting each other again, for mind you many of those people had tramped ten and fifteen miles through the snowy forest to have this annual handshake and dinner together. Almost immediately preparations began for dinner, big logs were thrown in the wide fireplace till they roared up the chimney, the wild game was made ready for roasting, the women busied themselves back and forth all the time, telling each other little confidences which happened the past twelve months, whilst the men discussed hunting, fishing or crops suitable for the new land among the stumps. Maybe some one had a newspaper from the old land, which he had received since last Christmas and this was invariably read aloud and commented on item by item though the news might be more than a year old. "I remember" Mr. Rochester said laughingly, "that we were gravely discussing whether

Napoleon Bonaparte would succeed in his scheme of establishing a great Empire in Egypt long after he had left that country, in fact after he had come back to France, crossed the Alps and defeated the Austrians at Marengo, and Trafalgar had been fought and won before we knew that an actual invasion of England had been threatened. But the news was fresh to us in the backwoods and I tell you in all the British Empire there were no heartier cheers given, as we heard of victory after victory, than in those little log houses at these Christmas gatherings. You see, whilst they were fighting Britain's battles against her enemies by land and sea, we in the bits of clearing were fighting a no less stern battle to extend her civilization into the forests. They could make peace with their opponents by coming to terms but the only terms we could offer was unconditional surrender. They could gain advantages sometimes by strategy, but we had simply to hammer down opposition by hard blows of the axe. So we always felt that we were all marching under the common banner of Britain's civilization and freedom and cheered vociferously when we heard of our comrades successes.

About eleven o'clock the long tables of coarse slabs of wood were made ready, stretching from end to end of the room and on these were piled up the home-made bread and freshly churned rolls of butter and smoking wild turkeys and great flaky potatoes, such as only newly broken land will grow, and last of all the plum-pudding almost like a small mountain and steaming hot. We always had to go clear to Port Ryerse, which took nearly two weeks going and coming, for some of the ingredients for our annual plum-pudding but that only made it taste better when we did get it. And eat! Why it would give the ordinary person of the present day dyspepsia to see the way we fell to at those victuals, after the oldest settler present had asked the blessing. No appetizers needed there I tell you, for all had brought theirs along in the shape of good, healthy hungers. We usually took from an hour and a half to two hours at dinner, conversation ran back over the little happenings of the past year and all were happy.

We had a light lunch at nightfall again and then the few articles of furniture were pushed back against the wall, to make room for our annual dance. The oldest couple present always led off in the opening reel and I tell you, it was a sight to see the natural grace and courtesy with which the old man would offer his arm to his aged partner, who had fought the battle of life so long and well with him. Dancing usually stopped at midnight, but on extraordinary occasions such as a

Christmas wedding I have known it continue for two whole nights. Nobody was expected to leave for home and rough bunks, half filled with deer and bear skins were fitted up at each end of the big room, one for the women, the other for the men, whilst the fire was kept going all night in the wide fireplace heaped with dry logs, that cracked and sputtered right merrily. Then in the morning after breakfast we all started through the snow for our homes again, but not until we had all said goodbye to each other and arranged for the next annual dinner. Ah but those were the days of "deep and lasting friendships" and Mr. Rochester sighed as he thought of the times that never could come back to him again. And Norman he went to bed and dreamed of the golden days of which he had been hearing, when selfishness and "man's inhumanity to man" had not been allowed to raise their ugly, black faces, when all that is good in humankind had free play and nearly all that is bad was sternly repressed and in his dreams he imagined that those halcyon days would return to earth once more. May this and much more come true in good time, though it is not yet.



CHAPTER XVI.

THE HOME STORMING.

“Contending with the fretful elements :
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters above the main.”

—From “*King Lear.*”

It is said that an almost unnatural calm always precedes the destructive cyclone. The air grows hot and heavy but there is not a breath of wind abroad, the atmosphere seems dead. Then in the southwest a tiny speck of cloud appears, just along the horizon. It does not seem to be different from the other clouds, except that it is of a rather yellower gray tint than its fellows. But if you are watching it closely—and in cyclone-breeding countries such clouds are generally sharply scanned—you will notice that it has generally a peculiar, whirling motion and is gradually assuming a cylindrical form. The afternoon is a lovely one—cyclones are always afternoon visitors—the sun is shining brightly and all nature is decked in smiles, except where that ominous looking cloud is banking up away in the south west. Every moment it mounts higher and higher till now the sun is darkened, but still there is no wind. If you listen intently though, you can hear a sound like a hollow moan, increasing in volume until it becomes an angry roar and now the conical shaped cloud is speeding right toward you carrying death and terror in its train.

So it was with Norman. No week that he could remember of had passed more pleasantly and though it was nearly dusk, when he left the school house that Friday evening, for he had remained after four o'clock to correct the pupil's exercises, he looked forward with pleasure to his brisk walk of a few miles homeward, after he had supper at his boarding-place. Every step was taking him nearer Holly's home too and perhaps he might be lucky enough to see her, before returning to school duties Monday. He counted the lights of the

farm houses along the road and wondered when he and she would have a little farm of their own, for when did any man ever associate the idea of largeness of estate with his future wife. Even as he pondered he was astonished and pained to see again upcurling flames from another isolated stack on the Craig's farm. This time it was a haystack, not very far from the road, where he had to pass. It did not burn as fiercely as had the straw one a week before, but still there was enough flame to light up the surrounding fields almost as clear as day. He hesitated a moment whether to go over nearer the fire or not, but decided that as he could be of no assistance he had better stay away. Just as he turned in at his grandfather's gate, he noticed several people hurrying towards the burning stack, but he did not stop to speak to them. Both grandparents were extremely sorry to see this second disaster come on their neighbor and so expressed themselves, but old Donald who sat back among the shadows on the side of the fireplace had lost none of his native crabbiness and declared that "people as mean as the Craigs' were must expect to meet with losses sometimes" and he added with bitter emphasis "I wouldn't go near to help them if their house was afire let alone their stacks."

"Donald, Donald, that is no way to talk," Mr. Ruthven said sharply "don't you know that you should help your neighbor?"

"All depends on the kind of neighbor" answered Donald dryly.

"No it does not" Mr. Ruthven insisted "we should be readier if anything to assist a bad neighbor than a good one, for in addition to the ordinary ills that all have to bear, the bad man has to bear with himself always — the sorest affliction of all. No no, the golden rule of doing unto others as you would have others do to you has a special meaning when applied to our enemies. Mr. Craig has I admit done many small things in our dealings, man with man, but I would help him at any time as quickly as I would any other man.

"What reward did you ever get from him for all your little kindnesses," Donald sneered.

"I did not do them for reward," was the mild answer, "but because they were right."

"Well everyone can suit themselves" Donald retorted stubbornly, "And I am only speaking for myself when I say that I wouldn't help a Craig if it was to save him from fire and brimstone."

"And I say this" Mrs. Rnthven spoke up her eyes blazing with fire, "that I will not allow anyone, not even you Donald Gordon who

has sat around our hearthstone for years a welcome guest, to preach such abominable doctrines in my presence and go unrebuked. Now let us hear no more of it." There was a deep silence for the sturdy old Scotchwoman was mistress still in her own house though rarely had she ever felt called upon to assert her authority before.

The next night at the "Checker Club," Donald heard for the first time, that Norman was accused of setting fire to the stacks. Honest fellow that he was, he scarcely knew at first what to do. True as steel to the Ruthvens despite his late rebuff, he hesitated to mention the matter as he felt morally sure that there was not the slightest reason for connecting his name with the burnings. On the other hand, not to mention it meant that an unjust suspicion would deepen into conviction in many minds. He at last resolved to tell Norman himself and leave him to tell the old folks or not as he saw fit. Norman's face was set and white when the old retainer reached the end of his story, but his voice was steady when he spoke "Now I want to ask you one question. Do you think I had anything to do with the burning of those stacks?" The old man had half turned away when he was relating the gossips' tales, for he disliked the thought of watching the play of emotions on Norman's face. Now however he turned squarely around and taking one long stride forward he grasped him by the shoulder and spoke sternly at first. "Do I think so? Do I think that the little boy I carried around through the clearings gathering wild flowers, the little boy that I rocked to sleep so tenderly, because I saw in his innocent blue eyes the image of his dead mother, do I think that this boy, now, when he has grown to man's estate, turns out to be a sneaking firebug. No my boy, not if all the Craigs' in existence should swear to it. You might repel force with force and you might even give sharp blows where smooth words would answer better, but you could never be a sneak. You have too much good Ruthven blood in you for that style of business, your temper is none of the best, but no one can ever make me believe that you fired those stacks." He grasped the old retainer's hand warmly and his manner was softened as he replied, "Thank you Donald for your confidence in my innocence. I am indeed hasty sometimes, as you say, but I have made a promise to never again let my temper get the upper hand and I hope to keep that promise. I hope also to be able soon to discover who the real criminal is in these fires and I want you meantime to not mention the matter to my grandparents. Your little boy will come out

all right in the end." They parted on these terms, Donald half regretting that in the overflow of his real feelings he had forgotten his usual petulant, scolding manner altogether.

Norman did some hard thinking that night after going to bed. He knew of course that no proof could be brought forward against himself but he did not wish merely a verdict of "not proven" to be rendered by the community. What he wanted was the crime fastened on the guilty one so that there could be no appeal. "Always look carefully over the ground before deciding on action" his grandfather had often told him. This he now proceeded to do. "Let me see" he said to himself as he reflected, "each stack was burned on a Friday night about the same hour. Evidently the same person did both jobs. Now there are no more outlying stacks to fire on the Craig farm but there is one at the main barn. I'll watch there myself for the third fire." To have reached a decision was soothing, after the first turmoil of emotion had passed, and he rolled over and slept as soundly as if his good name was not being bandied around from mouth to mouth in an unpleasant fashion. Such are the capabilities of youth, good digestion and a clear conscience. All through the following week he thought he detected a slight strangeness among some of the pupils and he himself felt the loss of that perfect sympathy, which has characterized the former intercourse of teacher and pupils. We are such delicately constructed creatures, that without a word being spoken we know when there has been a jar, be it ever so slight. Call it mental telepathy or what you will, but there are messages, flashed back and forth, just as real if not as tangible as written words or spoken speech. The consequence was the school dragged just a trifle and he was not sorry when Friday evening came around again.

He got an earlier supper than usual and then hurried swiftly toward Maple Bend. Darkness had nicely settled when he was at last at Craig's barn, alert and watchful. Hour by hour, he watched but no one came and near midnight he stole away home. The next week school dragged worse than ever and again he watched around the barn and stack but to no purpose, nor did he meet with any better success the third Friday. Old Donald had kept him closely posted as to the veering opinions of the community and he now reported that there was a decided reaction in his favor. Many of those, who at first had not raised their voices in his defence till the storm had abated somewhat, now came forward and pointed out his record, outside of

his furious temper. Scores of generous little acts were remembered, grown men recalled how he had championed their rights in school with tongue and fist against larger boys, and slowly but surely, Maple Bend's native sense was reasserting itself, and deciding that he never could be guilty of such mean acts as firing a neighbor's stacks. Then too, when clear-headed men began to examine the foundation for all this gossip, they saw at a glance its flimsy character and wondered why anyone had ever credited such nonsense. All this and much more Donald duly reported to him with great glee, but still he was not altogether satisfied. He remembered the warning letter he received, and he could not be sure that evil influences were not against him still. The stack burnings and the implied charges against himself he could not help but think were part of a deliberate conspiracy to injure him. "Anyhow" he said to the old retainer "I'll watch another night and see what turns up."

As he took his place that night he scarcely expected anything unusual to happen. The cattle and pigs had burrowed a huge hole into the south side of the stack and here he was accustomed to take up his position, partly because it seemed a good point for a firebug to operate on and partly because it afforded a shelter from the cold north wind. Stooping down he crept far back into the shadows, the old sow in the far corner snorted angrily at him but did not attempt to leave her warm bed of straw. For a time he watched the scudding clouds and listened to the moaning March winds, as they eddied around the corner of the barn; then he began to turn back the pages of his life's book as he had often done before for he had his dead mother's habits of retrospection and introspection. An hour must have sped by and he was just preparing to leave, when he became conscious that another person was standing directly at the entrance of the hole. There was not enough light to tell who it was, but against the background of the horizon and from the deep shadows where he was crouching a figure could be plainly seen—the figure of a tallish man.

He was not frightened but his heart beat a little faster and without being aware of it he leaned forward until the dry straw crackled. He could see the figure turn sharply around and he knew that his hiding place was being closely scrutinized. Fortunately the old sow turned too and let out another angry grunt. Apparently the figure was satisfied, for it turned back again and he thought he could detect a fumbling of hands in the pockets of the overcoat. He had

removed his own overcoat as it was quite warm in the hole and had thrown it carelessly across his left arm. Yes he was right about the fumbling for the next moment the figure struck a match and holding it up between the sheltering hands to get it burning freely Norman got a fair side view of the man's face. It was George Craig his bitter enemy.

When the match was burning nicely he suddenly stooped to ignite the loose straw but a gust of wind blew it out. Another match was struck with no better success. With a savage oath match after match was lighted but the elements seemed to be against the attempt. Finally one was got to burn long enough to start the straw and a tiny flame shot up in the murky darkness. Now was Norman's chance to act. Stepping quickly forward he seized George in his strong grip at the same time treading out the fire before it had a chance to spread. He was taken so unawares, Norman's movements had been so rapid and noiseless and his hold such a firm one that there had been no attempt at escape. For a moment or so not a word was spoken. Then Norman, still retaining his grip said "Well George Craig I've caught you at last. What do you think of yourself now?" No answer, he was sullen. "Come now," he gave him a rough shake "you may as well use your tongue for of course I know who you are."

"Who set the other stacks on fire?" Norman asked.

"I don't know," he was getting sullen again.

"Look here George Craig" and his voice had a fierce, sharp ring to it, "I won't stand any nonsense, you know me and I know you. You know something about those other burnings your actions here to-night show that. Now I want you to tell."

"Will you promise not to do anything about to-night's work if I tell you all I know" he asked eagerly. "I will promise nothing till I hear your story" Norman said decidedly. "I have the whiphand now and I intend to hold it."

"Another was partly to blame" he pleaded.

"Tell all and I will judge for myself who is to blame" Norman answered sternly.

Gradually then while his powerful opponent never once relaxed his grasp he told how he and Mrs. Townsend mutually hated Norman but for a long time it seemed they could get nothing against him. In Mr. Morgan's store one night they had entered into a mutual compact to injure him in any way they could, though George was careful to say that he believed Mrs. Townsend had no thought of crime

at the time nor did he himself. All they intended to do as they talked it over that night was to try and put people against the young teacher and get him dismissed from the school. "Who was in the store at that time?" Norman interrupted the story for he thought he saw a chance of learning who his anonymous letter came from. "Nobody that I can remember of except Mr. Morgan himself, he was back and forth attending to his duties" he answered though he wondered why the question was asked. Norman on his part guessed that Mr. Morgan must have written him the note though it seemed hardly in keeping with his cautious character to stray so far from his usual policy of selfishly looking after his own interests first, last and all the time. He had never seemed either to take any particular notice of Norman but "he must have kindlier intentions than any of us gave him credit for" he said to himself as George resumed his story.

Some weeks elapsed according to George after he and Mrs. Townsend had put their heads together before any opportunity offered to do harm to him. They found that he was liked in his section by both parents and pupils and though the people listened courteously to their suggestions of inefficiency, etc., it was easy to see they were not a whit influenced. Their children were interested in their school work, the teacher had a kindly word for everybody and country folks are not mere echoes. They form their opinions deliberately at first hand and once formed they are difficult to change. Norman as a teacher as well as a man suited them and they knew it. But everything comes to those who wait. The two conspirators were on the point of giving up their machinations as an impossible task, when an accident seemed to open out a new vista to them. George Craig in his early life in the city had learned every kind of bad habit and among others smoking. In fact he could scarcely remember when he contracted this habit. When he came to the farm though, he was astonished to find out that his uncle would not allow a smoker around him at all. "Quit your smoking or go back to the city" were his peremptory alternatives but George secretly resolved that he would do neither. Instead he transferred his pipe to the outdoors, now here now there so as not to be caught for he knew his uncle meant what he had said. One night he crawled away in by the big straw stack to have a nice quiet smoke as he had often done before. He amused himself by blowing the smoke through his nose and wondering how he could injure Norman Scott's reputation, when he suddenly became

aware of the smell of other smoke besides that from his pipe. Looking languidly around—he was ever lazy—he sprang to his feet faster than ever before, for the stack was on fire and already a long serpent-like flame was creeping up beyond his reach. A spark had fallen out in some way when he had lighted his pipe, it had smouldered away for a while, then had suddenly leaped into flame. For a second or so he watched it mounting higher and higher and then abandoning pipe and all he fled homeward as fast as his legs could carry him.

Next day he was agreeably surprised to find that a gossip here and there blamed Norman in a loose way for the fire and it seemed as if fate had delivered him over into their hands at last. George then went on to tell in the most unconcerned way how both he and Mrs. Townsend had helped on this talk all they could and how he suggested firing another stack the following Friday night so as to deepen the suspicion that Norman was concerned in it. She demurred at first to becoming privy to any such crime, but eventually gave her permission. Both were mortified to find though that even after the second fire, the large majority of the people still refused to believe in Norman's guilt and he then broached the plan of burning the main barn itself. But Mrs. Townsend flatly refused to countenance this scheme even when he threatened to expose her connivance with the former crime. A stormy interview took place between them which ended by George being shown the door. Desperate, foiled, and doubly maddened by the reported engagement of Holly and Norman he resolved to carry it out anyhow like the gambler's last throw of the dice. "I have told you the true story so far" he concluded "and here I was when you caught me."

Norman had kept his firm hold on him all through the interview but now he released his arm and said quietly "Very well George Craig, I believe you have told me the truth but it was because I half suspected the truth. Had it been otherwise you would not have hesitated to make up a yarn of your own, besides you are afraid of me since you always were a coward. Now listen, I do not intend to have you punished for your wrong doing because I can afford to be generous. Only a small fraction of our neighbors believed the foolish suspicions which you and Mrs. Townsend have done so much to set in motion. You richly deserve punishment but it will not be inflicted through any word or act of mine. Go now and learn to do better."

Remember that crookedness is always caught up with sooner or later." Whilst he was speaking he did not notice in the darkness that George had stepped back a pace or two and reaching sideways to where the hired man usually left a pitchfork standing against the stack. He now held this formidable weapon in his right hand.

"Now you listen to me Norman Scott!" his thin voice sounded almost fiendlike, concentrated in its ferocity "and don't come any nearer or you'll get a stab with this fork. You've had your say and now I'll have mine. First I don't want any of your cursed generosity. I was afraid of you when you had hold of me or I wouldn't have been such a fool as to tell you the truth. But I don't fear you now with this pitchfork and I intend to tell you some more truth. You thought you had me but you haven't. To-morrow Maple Bend will hear from me how I came here watching for the firebug and discovered you in the act of setting fire to the stack. My word is as good as yours, besides you never can deny being here, you are too conscientious for that" George laughed softly to himself as he thought what a drag conscience was to one in such a case. "Go on with what you have to say" angrily interrupted Norman. "Well I don't know that there is very much more to say" he resumed "I might have kept this to myself too but I could not resist the satisfaction of telling you face to face because I hate you and always will." "You have not told it to me face to face fairly" sneered Norman bitterly "but from behind the shelter of an ugly weapon, still I warn you not to provoke me farther else even this shelter will not avail you. I feel a dangerous devil rising in me which I have been trying lately to conquer with some success. You remember to your cost George Craig what my temper is like when it gets the upper hand." "Yes I do remember and I have hated you ever since, but I do not fear your temper now and there is one thing more I want to tell you before we part, something for you to remember me by since I do not expect to meet you again very often. Our trouble then was over a school girl. Very well. I intend to see first that you go to jail for these burnings and then I intend going back to New York but not alone. When you are safely under sentence for arson then and not till then will I get wedded. No doubt you would like to know my prospective bride's name and I will gratify your curiosity, for I know you are just dying to know. She is a beautiful creature indeed, our former companion in school, in fact the cause of our first disagreement and her name is Holly Venning. I did not intend to tell this but"—

he got no farther for Norman at the sound of that name he loved, used in this connection, sprang forward like a tiger cat. He forgot his promise to Holly to subdue his temper, forgot his vows under the apple trees by the grave of his dead mother, forgot everything in fact, except that the one man on earth he hated stood facing him tauntingly; his fierce temper was uppermost once more.

George had half expected an attack and was prepared for it, but he thought that with such an advantage on his side Norman would be easily driven back. But he had scarcely counted on the fierceness of the man he had roused or if he had and it really came to a life or death rally he trusted to be able to kill his antagonist. Norman though was one of those rare natures that even in the very height of passion do not lose their presence of mind in regard to the action in hand at least.

Using his overcoat for a shield over his left arm and hanging loosely down he sprang in on his enemy. He felt a sharp twinge of pain, he knew the sharp prongs had pierced his temporary shield and had entered the arm thrown forward, but he also knew that his right fist had found George's face at the same moment, and before a second thrust could be made he had caught the handle of the fork. Then ensued a short struggle for possession of the weapon. Using all his reserve strength he twisted it around with a sharp wrench and George was forced to let go. "Now then" said Norman savagely as he tossed the fork to one side "I have taken that away from you and you must fight me fairly. There are times when nothing short of a sound thrashing will straighten up matters and the present is one of those times. Take off your coat and get ready for I mean to thrash you soundly here and now." Whilst he was speaking he was unbuttoning his own coat, but George who stood sullenly by never made a move in the direction ordered. Suddenly as Norman was busied in removing his coat, the coward swung around quickly and delivered a stunning blow full on his cheek and then immediately took to his heels, running in the direction of the house.

Our hero was dazed for a moment and then he was up and away after the flying man maddened and furious at the double trickery. Not until they were near the house did he overtake him and then George had just time to let out one pitiful roar for help before he was stretched out on the ground with a powerful blow. Norman never hesitated a moment now so thoroughly furious had he become — if it was even on the doorstep it was all the same to him. Blow after blow he hammered

down on George's upturned face till there was not even a shadow of resistance for the under man had collapsed entirely. Then all at once it came to him, the white face streaked with blood gleaming in the half darkness, the possibility of the people in the house having heard the scuffle, the breaking loose of his own bad temper again and what construction the community in general would put on the whole affair. Kneeling down beside George he gently raised his head, but met with no response, beyond a faint groan. Just then the door opened and Mr. Craig himself peered out uncertain at first in which direction the unusual sounds had come from. Norman boldly called to him and when he came forward attempted to explain, but he was cut short with "you can explain to the magistrate sir." Stooping down Mr. Craig assisted his bruised nephew to his feet, for he had now come to, and helping him to the house they closed the door in Norman's face, without another word being spoken.

Poor fellow! his feelings can be imagined as he turned homeward where the faithful old servant was still waiting up for him. Together they went over the different incidents of the night's work, but even Donald, friendly and all as he was, could scarcely see any encouraging features ahead. The first faint streaks of the coming day were just beginning to filter in through the half-turned shutters of his little bedroom when Norman at last found sleep and he did not waken till near noon. It was with a sad heart that he returned to his school duties Monday morning. He had not been able to see Holly and tell her all about his troubles and though no word had come from Craig's he knew well they were not the people to let such an incident pass quietly. But his pupils were so unusually bright that morning, their spirits so buoyant, that by the middle of the afternoon his depression had worn away entirely and when he walked out into the open air after school was dismissed, it seemed to him that he had caught a fresh inspiration in life. What then was his surprise, when a constable stepped up and said he had the disagreeable duty to perform of arresting "one Norman Scott, charged with arson and attempted murder." The cyclone which we saw gathering, at first no larger than a man's hand, had at last burst and our hero is in the toils of the law, whilst his pupils standing around ask each other by mute looks of amazement what the matter can be at all, for they were too young yet to understand that circumstances sometimes crowd even the innocent into the prisoner's dock.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HOME GOSSIPING RESUMED.

"Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home,
'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming, and look brighter when we come."

—*From Don Juan.*

Some one has said, that the true appreciation and friendship of those gathered around one's own hearth is worth more than the applause of millions. Never is this more true than in times of trouble. Then, when the fair weather friends begin to drop off one by one each with an excuse the real friends stand staunch and true, clinging closer by reason of the fierce storm beating around one's devoted head. Others may and probably will put the worst possible construction on the evidence offered, but the real friend will seek to put a charitable rendering on our acts and motives. Viewed in this light trouble is not an unmixed evil since it serves to unmask false friends and prove the sincere one.

Norman Scott was not long in finding this out. The preliminary inquiry was fixed before Captain Leekey, J. P., for the following Friday, and meantime he was allowed out on bail, George Criag claiming to be too ill to attend sooner. During that time scarcely one of his former associates came to offer a word of consolation or to say that they at least believed in his innocence. He had indeed bitter thoughts as he roamed around the old farm, not caring to go beyond its limits till he could face everybody without a stain on his name. But if he was mortified to find his fair weather friends falling away one by one, nothing could exceed the kindness and consideration shown him at his own home. Old Donald could not do enough for him and even his grandfather, departing from his usual reserve, assured him in answer to his question that he did not "think" of him as being innocent for he was "sure" of it. He was also determined that a lawyer should be sent for to defend him but Norman answered that he would conduct his own defense.

Of course the Checker Club had to discuss the matter. No such an opportunity would ever occur again in all probability and every member was in his place. Mr. Morgan anticipating such an attendance had provided a number of low, square boxes filled with sawdust so that there should be no extra spitting on the floor, for experience had taught him that just in proportion to the absorbing nature of the topic discussed, was the condition of the floor the next morning at sweeping up time. Even Donald Gordon was on hand. Carl Lutz who had come very early and seated himself comfortably in the seat of honor at the head of the little table announced with a gratified smile that "the snarling Scotchman will not be here to-night because he knows better than to come." He was in fact just about to introduce the topic they all had in their minds, the arrest of Norman Scott, when in walked Donald himself. His look was not a pleasant one, his rugged Scotch nature had been stirred to its very depths by the apparent acquiescence of the majority in Norman's guilt. He came prepared again to defend Norman's reputation, which he felt had been wronged by a dirty plot. He looked savage and he felt that way too. Often before he had grimly fenced with the conversation at the Checker Club but now he was in a mode to give ugly, actual thrusts.

As we saw once before, nobody cared to bring around the discussion to the real point though all were wishing that some one else would undertake it. "Everybody here" Carl Lutz queried as he looked around over the little group. "I guess so" answered Tom Winters, "for there don't seem to be anybody outside" he was giggling to himself at the thought of any one missing such a treat as this. "Has any person anything specially important to bring up this evening?" Carl went on not heeding Tom's sly thrust. Each one looked at his neighbor but no one spoke, and old Donald looked straight before him his face, like a sphinx in its gravity. "Because" Carl went on again "our club will soon have to break up as the spring work is coming on now and if there is anything important to discuss that will take several evenings, why we had better get at it. "Lets play checkers" Fred Parsons interjected, "aint that what we're here for?" They all looked at the poor checkers lying on the board untouched for weeks past, ever since the first stack was burned in fact. "Yes lets play checkers or else change our name" sly Mark Dundas observed. "I move that this club be hereafter known as the "Male Gossips' Club" Fred chimed in again, "and I wish to state my reasons with your permission Mr. President,"

he looked in Carl's direction who nodded his approval, thinking that he might as well let this foolishness go on for a while in the hope that they would at last stumble up against the real question. "Well," continued Fred, "in the first place the suggested name would be appropriate since we are all males I think," even Donald was smiling but Fred himself was as grave as an owl as he continued "and all being males we should, I submit be properly labeled so that the impression might not get abroad in the outside world that petticoats are admitted here at all. Then besides being all males, we are I take it all gossips too, with the possible exception of — myself." Old Carl rapped the club sharply to order with "Has anyone another topic to discuss now?" Tom Winters looking up innocently said, "I would like to hear the weather discussed as I cannot ever remember hearing it mentioned. Besides I was told to-day that Mrs. Townsend's dog Solomon has had his tail at half mast for nearly a week now and that means dirty weather ahead or I'm a nigger." "I guess you must be a nigger then Tom, for my almanac says "clearing weather" for all of next week" Mark timidly ventured. "Guess it was last year's almanac you looked at" Tom retorted.

* Thus the talk drifted on in light badinage till Carl Lutz was half desperate with anxiety, that the whole evening would be gone and the main issue not reached. Do what he could the conversation did not come around as he desired to the arrest and every moment was but making it clearer, that he himself would have to boldly speak out — or let it go by default. Donald Gordon had taken no part in the conversation so far, he simply sat and smoked and gloomed, but Carl knew him too well to imagine that he was missing track of anything. The tall old clock, that ticked away at the other end of the store had struck ten and some of the members were yawning and stretching themselves, preparatory to going home, when Carl finally worked himself up to the pitch of taking the bull by the horns as it were, and broaching the all important subject himself. First clearing his throat and spitting at but not into the box, prepared so carefully by Mr. Morgan and half turning to Donald he inquired "How is it Mr. Gordon that you are not talking to-night?" "Are there not enough fools chattering already without me?" Donald answered one question by asking another. "Oh yes, there has been enough talk of course, but you usually keep your end up pretty well" he replied, but as he made no answer to this compliment, if it was intended as such, the conversation seemed on the point of collapsing again. Then Carl in very desperation

blurted right out, after reflecting for a moment on what he should say "Has Norman Scott employed a lawyer yet?" "Don't know" stolidly came the answer "do you want the job?" The little crowd had stilled down now and all were watching the battle between the two leaders. "No, I don't want the job" Carl answered, speaking slowly and deliberately "but he ought to give somebody a job, for he'll need all the help he can get before this thing is through." "Will he indeed? An innocent man needs no help and he is such." "How do you know that he is innocent? Has he told you so." "No, he has not nor did I ask him. A child raised under John Ruthven's roof is simply incapable of crime. I have known Norman from boyhood up and I tell you, that I honor and respect him more to-night than I would you, seated on a throne" "Your ideas of honor cannot be very delicate then" sneered Carl." No, I confess they are not over delicate, but still they can distinguish between right and wrong. My learning is none of the best either, but it is enough to distinguish between a bright mind like Norman Scott's and a dull cloddish one like your's. You are a very good judge of the weight of a fat hog for market, but I would scorn to discuss the virtues and vices of that boy yonder with you." Donald's tone was so bitterly hostile and personal, that Carl winced under the fierceness of his attack. "Oh well, do not let us quarrel over it" he answered in a soothing tone. "I meant nothing against him in what I said. If it comes to a question of believing Norman Scott or George Craig, give me Norman every time. Outside of his savage temper he is a fine young man. There can be no question though of George being battered severely however it came about." "My only regret is that he was not battered worse. However, I am thankful for the justice you did to Norman's good name, even if it is rather late in coming. But I wish to say to you all to-night" turning to those around the table, "that he will have a good defence — the defence of an honest, innocent man — that he will plead his own cause and establish it in the minds of all right thinking people." There was a disposition even among these undemonstrative country people to cheer as Donald concluded and the Checker Club broke up that night in a more softened mood than it had for a long time. Carl Lutz himself was fully intending to shake hands with Donald, something which he had almost forgotten how to do. However, when he had rummaged through the stacks of readymade clothing and had at length found his hat underneath a pile that had toppled over, he was disappointed to find that Donald had already slipped away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HOME TRYING.

“ It doth appear you are a worthy Judge ;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound, I charge you by the law
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment.”
—From “*The Merchant of Venice*.”

It has been said, that history is but the record of the lives of great men but that is but half a truth. Great men do shed a wide influence, they to a large extent shape the destinies of their fellow men and the acquaintance of and contact with really great men is an education in part. But, when all this is said there yet remains much that goes to make up history. For history was made and is being made from day to day and week to week along the back lines and concessions of our own and every other country. The ordinary, plain citizen in russet brown, the school teacher in the little country cross-road school house, the local councillor in the musty township hall fighting his constituents' battles against all and striving to hold the scales of justice even between warring contestants over say a disputed drain, the more elevated county councillor spending a few days semi-annually at the county seat, anxious that his district's interests will not get jockeyed between the shrewd calculations of his fellow members, these all of them are making history just as truly and building up a nation and moulding its life just as certainly as the Bismarcks and Gladstones, because after all a nation's life can never become lofty unless its people first set the pace, nor can the most distinguished genius save a nation from downfall, if the mass of its citizens are actuated by ignoble motives. The orators and statesmen and brilliant soldiers of Old Rome did not and could not save her from extinction, once the people themselves became permeated with corruption and honeycombed with luxury's ravages. It is therefore most important that the early struggles of our people should be preserved from obscurity,

even though at the time they seemed barren of results, for time alone can disclose all these bearings.

“ What though the tired wave vainly breaking,
Seems here no anxious inch to gain ;
Far back through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent flooding in the main.”

That is the reason why the present author has endeavored to bring out some of the details of those past days. Details to which a carping critic might offer the objections that they are commonplace and unimportant, but to this criticism he makes answer that nothing can be commonplace or unimportant, which directly concerns the every day life of the common people and he is just enough of a stubborn democrat himself to hold fast that view, even if it should not happen to coincide with the polished critic's opinions. Life itself is made up of details and no life, has more of the element of romance in it than that of the ordinary dweller in rural Canada.

The morning of the preliminary inquiry was one of those lovely days that sometimes come in early April, as if to show us just what that much abused month can do in the way of fine weather, when it really tries. The old people had been shaking their heads ominously for over a week now, quoting and re quoting that ancient fable about “paying up for this fine weather,” just as if the good Lord was accustomed to dole out fine weather with a niggard's hand and, if per chance He allowed a number of lovely days to slip out of His hands, then a stern debt must be settled up to the letter. Who has not heard just such foolish expressions often? Mrs. Townsend's dog Solomon persisted too in going around with his tail drooping very much, but spite of the croakers and spite of Solomon, April continued right on dealing out the choicest kind of weather in stock. It seemed a cheering sign to Norman as he arose early and dressed, that the sun came dancing in through the little window of his bedroom, and his spirits rose accordingly. “To-night I will be entirely exonerated” he said to himself. One little speck of a cloud alone remained on the azure sky of his hopes and that was, that he had received no note or word from Holly. “She might at least have sent me a sentence or two to cheer me up” he said, and there was just a slight thread of bitterness running through his thoughts when they dwelt on her which was the greater part of the time. Outside, he could see little knots of the people gathered already, though the inquiry would not be called till

ten o'clock. The truth was that Maple Bend had other and even more startling news to talk about besides the inquiry itself. That very morning, when their weekly papers reached them, they were astonished to learn that Canada was threatened with invasion by a horde of misguided men calling themselves Fenians, and that Lord Monck, the Governor General, had immediately decided to call out ten thousand volunteers to guard the frontier. For the moment even the inquiry was forgotten, whilst all discussed the likelihood of their peaceful homes being molested by these invaders and much indignation was expressed, that Canada should be selected for invasion when she had nothing to do with Ireland's quarrels. "Old as I am" said Ezra Stubbs in a sturdy tone, "I will volunteer to march against those fellows and give them a taste of an old man's mettle. If they hate England, let them go there and Johnny Bull won't run away I'll warrant. They think we're easier to thrash than England, but we'll fool them too." It was finally agreed among them, that in the event of actual invasion an offer should be made to the government to raise a company in and around Maple Bend.

Meanwhile ten o'clock had arrived and with it Capt. Leeky, J. P., pompous and silent. He of course felt to his marrow bones, that such another day might never come again in his lifetime and came prepared to make the most of it. He had carefully shaved himself, had spent considerable time arranging his tie with a becoming dignity and had even gone the length of trying to polish his coarse cowhide boots, but after using up half a box of blacking, he had been unwillingly forced to give up this darling and daring project. However as a compromise he insisted on putting his trousers outside his boot tops, instead of thrusting them down inside, as on ordinary occasions. But as the said trousers were never designed to hide the brilliant red tops of his boots — for what sense would there be in making these handsome tops to blush unseen — they resolutely refused to remain pulled down and it bothered even Capt. Leeky, J. P., to keep up a proper sense of outward dignity, when he had to every now and again make a savage grab at his trouser legs and yank them down over his boots. So it is that even the greatest of us are forced to sometimes notice petty things and bend our minds to mere trivialities. In addition to the trouble with his trouser legs, Capt. Leeky, J. P., was slightly bothered that the people should take such an interest in the threatened Fenian invasion when the great inquiry itself was pending, for he looked on it as almost a world's drama, a national

issue at the very least with himself cast for the principal character, and when the people still insisted on anxiously discussing the threatened raid outside, even after he had entered the little courtroom, he regarded it almost as a personal slight and scarcely knew whether to be angry or to despise them for their supreme indifference and ignorance.

Sharp at ten o'clock he called order among the few attendants and the charge was read over to Norman very deliberately. Then George Craig was called and he told his story over, never once looking towards Norman, how he had gone to his uncle's barn to watch for the firebug who always selected Friday nights to do his mischief, how near midnight Norman had come stealing up and how he had interrupted him in the very act of setting fire to the stack. Then he described how he had tried to defend himself with a pitchfork against his savage onslaught on being discovered and how, finding himself overmatched he had attempted to run to the house, but was overtaken and pounded till unconscious. Asked as to whether there was any former feud between them, he related the incident at school when Norman had knocked him over the bridge. And then he told with well simulated emotion, how he was frightened that he would yet kill him, and concluded by asking that some adequate measure be taken to protect his life from future attacks of this kind. Then Ben Davis was called and he told very unwillingly, how he and George had overheard Norman one night make this remark to Holly "Let George Craig beware, if he crosses my path again I'll give him worse than a broken sleigh this time." Ben volunteered the statement though that he considered Norman a fine, manly fellow and such he had always found him. Being further questioned, he admitted having been at Ruthven's the night of the first stack burning and that Norman had come in exactly at fifteen minutes after ten and told them that the stack was on fire. Asked how he knew the time so exactly, he stated that he had just looked at the old clock in the hall and remarked to Donald Gordon that it was "time to go home."

Norman had sat unmoved whilst the two men were giving their evidence, his face a perfect study in calmness, but he looked around with one swift, keen glance when he heard Holly Veening's name called as the next witness. Then, with a strong effort he drew himself together and except for a bright flush on each cheek no one could tell by his sphinx face, that the one he loved dearer than life itself was helping to wind the net of evidence around him. Very slowly but distinctly, Holly, when questioned by Mr. Holcomb the County Crown

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Attorney, corroborated what Ben had said about the remark made to her by Norman in regard to George Craig. Asked as to his temper, she confessed that it might be better, but just here the lawyer made a mistake, for thinking he saw an opening to further damage Norman's case, he asked her if she thought his temper was bad enough to lead him to set fire to the stacks. She answered indignantly "No, nor to do anything else mean," whereupon old Donald and several others clapped their hands. Captain Leekey, J. P., looked down in surprise that any one had the temerity to actually applaud in his Court and ordered the constable to immediately arrest the offenders. That functionary though professed not to have seen those who applauded, but admitted having heard some noise that sounded like hand clapping. "Look a little closer in future then" the magistrate said severely to which reproof the constable nodded assent, but in an aside he winked at Donald as much as to say, "You didn't do any serious harm." Then Holly was questioned as to the hour when she parted with Norman at her own gate, the night of the first fire. She fixed the time at not less than fifteen or twenty minutes to ten, since she sat down by the open grate after getting home and read nearly the first canto of the "Lady of the Lake" throughout before the clock struck ten. Asked as to how long it would take a person to walk from her gate to Mr. Ruthven's, she answered not more than five minutes. Asked further, whether it was such a night as a person would choose to stroll around in, she answered, it depends on the person, but it was a trifle too cold for her fancy and besides it was snowing.

Mr. Craig himself was the last witness and he told how Norman always manifested hostility towards him and that he regarded him as "a dangerous young fellow." Mr. Ruthven too was unfriendly towards him, but the hate seemed to have culminated in the grandson and he firmly believed it was he who had set fire to his property. Capt. Leekey, J. P., at this point interposed to ask whether Mr. Ruthven had any cause to treat him unfriendly and the witness declared with emphasis, that he knew of no such cause. This closed the case for the prosecution and turning to Norman the magistrate asked if he had any witnesses. "Call Donald Gordon" he answered and Donald came forward, bearing himself like a prince of the blood royal, for he considered it a princely act to defend his young friend. He told his story without prompting throughout, how Norman had entrusted him with his plan of watching at the barn and how he related the whole circumstances after

getting back from his exciting vigil. The court-room had filled up before he concluded and all bent forward to listen when Mr. Holcomb rose to cross-question, for they well knew that Donald might prove a Tartar.

"You and the prisoner are very good friends, I believe" the lawyer began?

"Yes, very good and why shouldn't we?"

"And you couldn't believe a bad story about him?" the lawyer went on, not heeding Donald's interrogatory.

"Well" the witness answered slowly "it would need to be backed up by better men than we had here to-day before I would believe it."

"You don't mean to asperse the evidence of Mr. Craig and George do you?" the lawyer asked in amazement.

"Well, you can give it any name you like best, but I wouldn't believe either of them, any further than I could throw a bull by the tail." The crowd laughed so noisily, that even the constable's cries of "order" "order" were quite drowned out, the magistrate himself stooped down behind his desk and pretended to be picking up some papers. However, those who happened to be standing around the sides of the court-room, where they could see him, declared afterwards, that even Capt. Leekey, J. P., was nearly splitting his sides with laughter.

The lawyer looked and felt angry as he savagely turned toward Donald and asked "are you a truthful man yourself?"

"I guess so" in a drawling tone.

"How is it that you do not tell lies like other people?" the lawyer shouted in sarcastic tones.

"I might do so if I was a lawyer and paid to tell them" and again the people laughed.

"The witness may stand down" Mr. Holcomb said angrily "he doesn't seem to know anything but impertinence" and Donald, cap in hand, took a seat among the crowd again his face a perfect study in Scotch drollery.

Mr. Holcomb was about to plunge into his summing up of the case for the prosecution, as Norman had told the magistrate he had no more witnesses, when Mr. Morgan the storekeeper unexpectedly came forward and asked to be heard. Permission being granted, he related how he had overheard Mrs. Townsend and George Craig plotting against Norman in his store one evening, though the exact nature of their plans he did not catch, but they evidently meant to try and ruin the young teacher.

He remembered however overhearing the words "burn the stacks" used by George.

"Who asked you to come forward here?" Mr. Holcomb said, getting more savage all the time.

"Nobody at all" was the answer.

"You interfered in this trial though it was none of your business eh?"

"But it was my business."

"In what way?"

"It is or should be everybody's business, when an attempt is deliberately made to injure a young man's name or anybody else's name for that matter. It was my business, I made it my business and I am not ashamed of it either." Mr. Morgan was a quiet nature, but those quiet natures once roused are the most resolute in their attitude. The crowd simply could not be kept still now. Donald Gordon would have clapped his hands at Mr. Morgan's spirited utterance, if he knew he was to be hanged for it the next minute and he did not lack for followers either. In vain did the constable dash here and there among the crowd and threaten them with arrest, the clapping might stop just where he was for the time being but it was taken up with vigor at the other end of the room. When order was restored, Mr. Holcomb rose and made a savage remark or so about the bad breeding of country people and immediately commenced his argument. In a somewhat dramatic way he rapidly sketched the boyhood days of our hero, showed how from a feeling of jealousy he had made an attack on George Craig, "an attack which nearly took his life" as he described it. Then he noticed how savagely he had spoken to Mr. Craig himself, drew an ugly picture of how hostile the Ruthven's were to the Craig's at all times, and how even his sweetheart Miss Venning was forced to admit that his temper was none of the best and that he had made in her presence a bitter threat against his rival. "It is just such bad tempers" Mr. Holcomb said, turning around and pointing directly at Norman "as this young man possesses, that lead to half the crimes in this or any other country. You may say that he is a fine young man, when not led astray by temper, but I tell you that every criminal can make the same plea. It is not the good temper that society demands protection from, but the bad temper. I doubt not that even a murderer has good moments, when conscience is uppermost, but we hang him, because of his actions during his bad moments." Then he drew a picture of George Craig,

mindful of his uncle's interests, watching at the barn for the firebug to make his appearance, how Norman came stealing up stealthily, how he lighted the match and shaded it from the wind with his hands, how George had checked his bad design and then maddened at sight of his rival and furious at being balked, how he had savagely attacked him. "I tell you this young man" pointing at George, who sat as meek as a lamb "should be highly commended for his praiseworthy bravery in defending property, instead of being subject to bitter sneers as we heard here to-day. If respectable people are to be abused for standing up for their rights, then in God's name let us cease to prate about British liberty and British justice. Next the lawyer turned his attention to Donald Gordon. "Whom do we find giving evidence for the defence. A ne'er-do-well Scotch retainer of the family, a man who in this new land of unlimited opportunities has never had ambition enough to get a farm of his own or even a roof over his head. This man, this friend, comes here and tells a cock and bull story about this young man telling him in advance of his intention to watch for the firebug. Even if this story was true, and the probabilities are that it is pure fiction, it would but show the cunning of this young man, in thus preparing evidence in advance before he goes deliberately about the commission of his crime." "Then in addition to this retainer's unreliable evidence, we have the testimony of another and a very respectable man. But the best of us are liable to error and Mr. Morgan is simply mistaken. He overheard George Craig and Mrs. Townsend discussing this young man's arrogance and bad temper, directly he comes to the conclusion that they are plotting, hatching a scheme to ruin him. No class of citizens are as prone to gossip as country storekeepers. They are the gossip bins of their neighborhoods. Into their ears are poured all the little stories and small talk, motives are constantly warped in their hearing and false constructions put upon actions. Do you wonder then that in time their own minds become reflections of what they have so constantly heard, that they involuntarily attach wrong meanings to conversations and emphasise where emphasis was not intended? I ask therefore, that Mr. Morgan's volunteered statement be taken with considerable salt." "Again, I ask what possible reason can be adduced why George Craig should fire his uncle's property, for that is I understand the line of defence to be adopted by this young man? No, not a shadow of one. Instead, the promptings of ordinary sense would all tell us the contrary. He is a young man

with a generous turn of mind," here old Donald laughed out loud, was reproved by the magistrate and again warned, "and I was about to say when interrupted by this rude Scotch retainer," Mr. Holcomb went on "that ordinary gratitude, if no higher feeling, would tell him not to destroy the property of the relative who has given him a home, temporary it may be but in any case a pleasant one. Every instinct of our natures cries out against such absurd reasoning. I therefore ask that George Craig be left out of consideration altogether in deciding with whom the guilt may be, and this being done there only remains this young man. Therefore, with mingled feelings of sorrow and anger—sorrow, that such a promising young man should be such a slave to temper, and anger that an effort has been made to fasten the crime on another—I ask that Norman Scott be committed to the next court of jurisdiction, where he will have another opportunity to explain his strange actions prior to and including the nights of the different fires."

There was an intense silence in the little court-room as the lawyer concluded, till the magistrate arose and in an anxious voice, from which all pompousness had vanished, being swallowed up in the full tide of human interest, asked: "Do you wish to make any explanations now Norman Scott, or would you prefer to remain silent?" All eyes were fixed on the young teacher, his powerful frame quivered for a moment with suppressed rage, his cheeks were burning with an angry flush and he seemed on the point of another outburst of temper. Holly Venning, watching him, tried in vain to catch his eye but he looked out straight ahead—he was thinking of that mother's grave out there under the apple tree. His head drooped forward a bit, when he raised his face again it was shining with the calm light of resolution, "a countenance, brave and grand." Donald Gordon used to say afterwards: He rose up to his full height, displaying his magnificent physique to advantage, swept his eyes around till he fairly faced the audience.

"At the beginning of this trial," he said, "I made up my mind not to say one word in my own behalf, believing as I did that no considerable body of the people among whom I have moved and lived, could or would believe for one moment that I was guilty of the mean charges laid at my door. I have been in and out among you ever since I can remember and if you my fellow citizens, who know me best, consider me capable of these crimes, it is a far worse punishment than any the law could mete out." "But there is a duty owing to society, wider in many respects than merely a personal issue and in this sense I may be

allowed to appeal to you. Besides, statements have been made here to-day that I cannot and will not allow to pass unchallenged. Of our general quarrel with the Craigs' I have nothing to say. My grandfather had primarily to do with that and he is quite competent to do his own explaining, but I will just say this, that he distrusted the good intentions of that family for years and he is not the man to be mistaken in such matters. I believe I am quite safe in saying that he must have had good reasons for such distrust." "My own quarrel with George Craig dates back — as you have been told already — to our school days and I found him then, as I find him now a sneak and a coward. He was a bully then among boys smaller than himself, he would, did his cowardice permit, be a bully now among men. He sits over there' he pointed directly in George's direction "cringing down in his seat and would escape unobserved if he could, but I mean to point out his actions so plainly that none can misunderstand, not to injure him with his friends, for I doubt if in this community there can be found one person who does not feel a mistrust of him and his methods. This is not my trial, but that of my accuser." Then he went rapidly over his different night-watches at the stack, of his seizure of George and the subsequent events, including his own pummeling of the fleeing coward. "There he is" he again pointed scornfully at the cringing figure down in the audience; "the poor apology for manhood, who was a bully when he held the pitchfork and I was unarmed, but who bawled for mercy when we were on even terms and who ran away like a whipped cur before the anger he himself had stirred up. "There he is" he continued in scathing tones "and I want all his acquaintances to take a good look at him, for most assuredly his like will never be seen again. Thank Heaven though, he is a product of the city not of this innocent rural community." "To come to my own part in this unhappy affair. I am conscious of no wrong-doing in the matter whatever, I was unjustly suspicioned by some people and I knew of no better way to clear myself than by catching the real criminal as I did. One thing though I do regret, that I allowed my natural indignation to get the better of me and thus was led to punish the poor coward, who had tried to injure me every way his sorry wit could devise. Such creatures are hardly worth while for any honest man to turn aside to step on. I am done, I leave the matter in your hands, confident that innocence will not be overborne."

He had spoken with considerable heat, a personal issue was now before the magistrate and he did not take long to decide. "I have

listened carefully to the evidence adduced in this inquiry, I know of course as a local man all the attendant circumstances. There remains but for me to give an impartial decision regardless of whose interests may clash therewith. The crimes with which this young man is charged were done in our midst, they strike directly at the safety of property, one of the props of society and must be sternly repressed. But, whilst it is very important that crimes such as these should meet with their deserved punishment, it is even more important that no innocent one be unjustly punished therefor. Norman Scott is one of our own young men, his reputation is unstained and beyond being rather quick to anger, his career so far is creditable rather than otherwise. Under the circumstances it would need a pretty clear case to convince me that he should be committed for trial and I hold this has not been made out. In saying this I am expressing no opinion as to who did the burnings nor am I called upon to do so. My decision is this: that the evidence does not point to any probability even that Norman Scott was the incendiary."

A great roar of Scottish delight went up from old Donald for which, as he was warned before he was called back and fined. The bluff old man paid the fine without a murmur but he was scarcely clear of the door before he let out another and another yell until he was almost hoarse. "It's worth twice the fine to have such an occasion" he told Mrs. Ruthven when she objected to his shouting after reaching home. Even when he was doing the barn yard chores that evening he stopped occasionally in bedding down the cows to give a yell of triumph, and those patient animals, unused to such boyish pranks on Donald's part, ceased chewing the sweet sweet smelling hay for a moment and regarded him with wondering surprise.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HOME LEAVING.

"She could not fix the glass to suit her eye ;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous ;
She saw him not ; and while he stood on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel past."

—*Tennyson.*

In nearly every life there comes some time or other the parting of the ways. A turn in life's road reveals the fact that just here the hitherto parallel paths fork, never henceforth to run side by side again probably. From the summit of a high hill, as it were, we look back and see the windings of the several paths, the little school house on the brow of the hill, the broad woods through which we ranged care-free and happy to our very finger tips, the shady ravine with its clear bubbling spring, and then looking forward we see the different roads diverging to all the points of the compass, their ultimate destinations all swallowed up in a heavy mist. In every greeting there is an undertone of parting, in every reunion there is an element of separation, across the heartiest welcome is thrown the dark shadow of soon-to-be-sundered relations.

When the early April sun-beams came softly filtering into Norman's bed-room the morning after the inquiry, they lit up the anxious drawn face of the sleeper, for not even balmy sleep was sufficient to erase the heavy lines of care which had settled down on his young countenance. All night long he had tossed around heavily in bed thinking of his troubles, and the longer he thought the firmer grew his conviction that he must leave Maple Bend behind and strike out to blaze a path in a world unknown to him as yet. It was true he had been acquitted, but he could not help but feel that some would still say that "where there was so much smoke there must be some fire." Highly sensitive, he could not bear even this unmerited though slight reproach, he could not bear to think that even one of the people he must meet from day to day

should think that he might possibly have been guilty of these cowardly crimes after all, and regard him with a cold stare of indifference. His grandfather talked of living down these groundless accusations but his was not that nature. He could have faced an open accusation—very probably by bodily throttling the accuser—but he could not stand the accusing that said nothing, only looked it. His was too proud a nature for that. He awoke with a start about ten o'clock, the sun was shining brightly into his room and for a moment he could not recollect where he was. Then, as his eyes fell on the cheap prints with which his grandmother had ornamented the walls, and especially when he noticed the Lord's Prayer, done in plain round script by some distant relative in Scotland and much prized by the old folks, the whole flood of recent events came surging in and again he was in the midst of conflicts like the preceding night. "Would it be wise to go away from Maple Bend?" "And if so where would he go?" These and similar questions seemed to him as unsolvable as ever as he rapidly dressed himself. After breakfast he picked up the weekly family newspaper, which he had quit reading since his trouble, and he ran his eyes swiftly down its columns, more for the purpose of soothing his troubled feelings than anything else, till this item attracted his attention :

THE FENIAN SCARE.

CALLING OUT TEN THOUSAND MEN.

The following despatch from our Governor General, Lord Monck, to Mr. Cardwell, the Imperial Secretary of War, is published for the first time to-day and shows that in the opinion of those best informed on the subject, the danger of a Fenian invasion is real and pressing. Since this despatch was written last month the danger has grown more acute still, and now is the time for all Canadians to rise superior to the occasion. We are threatened with an unprovoked attack, let every citizen therefore resolve to give the unwelcome visitors a warm reception.

Montreal, March 9th., 1866.

SIR:—I have the honor for to transmit for your information a copy of an approved (7th March, 1866,) Minute of the Executive Council of this Province, calling out for duty ten thousand men of the volunteers of Canada.

You have been made aware by recent despatches from Sir John Michel and myself, that information has reached us from many quarters tending to show an intention on the part of the Fenians to make a raid on Canadian territory.

This information was further supported by Police reports announcing that parties of suspicious looking persons were observed entering Canada from the United States and were recognized in the streets of our large towns.

These reports taken in connection with the open avowals at their public meetings held in the United States, of the leaders of a portion of the Fenian Society that it was their intention to attack this Province, had induced a feeling of great uneasiness and insecurity amongst the people.

My advisers came to the conclusion, in which I entirely concur, that the time had arrived when it was necessary that the Government should adopt some decided course of proving to the people of the Province as well as to those who might entertain the notion of it, that substantial provision had been made for protecting the former and repelling any attack that might be attempted.

It will be satisfactory to you to learn, that the order calling out the force, was issued by telegraph from headquarters to the different stations, late in the afternoon of Wednesday, the 7th inst, and that by noon on Thursday, the 8th, answers had been received, shewing that at time about 8,000 men were mustered and prepared to move on any points where they might be required.

I may also mention, that offers of service continue to be received at headquarters to an extent far beyond the number of men required and I have no doubt should the occasion unfortunately arise, the supply of Volunteers, who would present themselves for the defence of the country, would be limited only by the numbers of the male population capable of bearing arms.

I have, etc.,

The Right Honorable Edward Cardwell, etc., etc.

MONCK.

Norman carried the newspaper containing this despatch over nearer the window and read it over again slowly. Then, after studying a minute or so, he turned to his grandmother who sat knitting near him, and said quietly :

“Mother” —he always called her so lately — “I am going away from Maple Bend.” The old lady before speaking, took off her spectacles very deliberately, wiped the glasses carefully, then replacing them and looking straight at her grandson, asked sharply “What did you say Norman?”

“That I was going away from Maple Bend.”

“And where are you going to?” she asked more tenderly.

“To fight the Fenians, to defend our country against the inroad of these invaders.”

She said nothing and he saw a big tear roll down that furrowed cheek he loved so well. Instantly he was by her side and asking anxiously :

"Does it distress you mother to hear me say so?" Mrs. Ruthven arose and throwing one arm over the brawny shoulder of her grandson, she answered through her tears and he thought never had he seen a more beautiful face, than the upturned and illumined countenance before him.

"Yes Norman, it does distress me and it does not. It distresses me, because I should like to have you near me during my lifetime, which cannot be lengthened out much longer. It does not distress me because I am proud" she reached up and kissed the manly face of her grandson "that my boy is not afraid to face the enemies of his country, even as he lately faced the enemies of his own neighborhood. No Norman, I will say nothing against your purpose, like your grandfather in those days long since past go forth to do a man's duty at the front. My little boy" she patted his powerful arm lovingly that was half thrown around her "is a worthy descendant of the Ruthvens and my own people the Gillies, who were never known to flinch in the old fighting days of Scotland. But" she turned half aside from Norman and with a trace of her former youthful winsomeness, said archly "what will Holly say to your going away? She ought to be interested or did the incidents at the inquiry cast a shade of coolness between you."

"No mother I think not. It is true that Holly's evidence bore somewhat against me, but she told the truth and no one should be blamed for that" he answered after musing a moment.

"Well now, let me advise you for I can see plainly that there is just a speck of a cloud in spite of your disclaimer. Holly is a good girl, in every way worthy of your love and that means a good deal from me. But you know we women like to be sought after, we like to be courted rather than to court, we like the men to do the pleading and we to do the refusing — and in rare cases the consenting — for you see a true woman's heart is not to be lightly won nor lightly scorned when won. Now you write her a note — a tender one — do not stand on your rights or supposed rights, but pen instead a manly letter of unrestricted forgiveness, if there is anything to forgive, and do not forget to mention that you intend enlisting. That will bring her, if nothing else will. Send it over and ask for a reply, you will get it never fear or else my old eyes deceive me sadly."

"I'll do just as you have said mother, for then I know I cannot go far astray" he said impetuously and hurried away up stairs to execute

his mission at once. At the noon hour one of the school children carried this note to her home :

DEAR HOLLY,—

I am going away from Maple Bend and I want to see you particularly. I have much to tell you, much to explain, which I cannot very well write. Do not let any recent event influence you unfavorably, but allow me to do my own explaining to yourself. Please send reply by bearer and oblige
NORMAN.

When the little boy delivered the note, she was busy washing up the dinner dishes. She hastily wiped off her hands, tore open the envelope and read its contents, her bright eyes snapping with pleasure for all day she had been thinking of Norman and wondering whether he was displeased or not. Then going to a desk in the sitting-room where some loose sheets of paper were lying she scribbled off this characteristic sentence :

Certainly, this evening at 7.30 will be pleased to hear Sir Knight's explanations at my own home.
HOLLY.

She looked through the pigeon-holes for an envelope but could find none, so being in a great hurry she decided to simply fold the note up and write his name on the back. "He will not be angry I am sure" she said to herself "for he knows already how unconventional I am." Saying this she turned the written sheet over, but as they were very thin she turned TWO SHEETS INSTEAD OF ONE. Across the upper one she wrote more carefully than before his address thus :

"MR. NORMAN SCOTT,
Maple Bend."

Then she quickly folded it up, leaving the address outside and handed it to the little boy, who was impatiently waiting for he could hear the shouts of the other children as they raced through the April woods, hunting the first wild flowers of spring.

Such an-influence have trifles light as air on our lives. The sheet of paper, which this child is hurrying away with to Norman, contained of course not a word but the address, whilst the real note, which would have cheered up his waiting heart is lying face down on that little desk — a simple, meaningless sentence to any other eyes — and fated later on in the day to be crumpled up and thrown in the fire by Holly's father, who wishing to make out a receipt for some money paid him and noticing that the first sheet was scribbled on though he did not waste time to read it, threw it into the fire, as stated. "Some of Holly's nonsense" he

thought to himself as he laboriously made out the receipt. "I declare half the time I can't make out that madcap's writing at all. Seems like as if they don't teach 'em to write plain now like they used to in my day," and he surveyed his own big round characters with unaffected pride. "But what a heap of sunshine she is though in the house with all her pranks" for just then he could hear her out in the kitchen bursting into song, every note trilling out clear and high like a forest bird's melody. She was thinking of Norman, how she would tease him that evening till he was half wild, then how she would come back to her real feelings and tell him how sorry she was that he was going away. Perhaps too she would plead with him not to go, but she had not quite made up her mind on that point yet. If he seemed the least bit stiff or formal she would be so too, but on one particular she made up her mind firmly, one point there was no reservation to, that was to have a complete reconciliation, a perfect understanding before he left her that evening. She was in love with him and she meant that he was to be kept on the ragged edge of uncertainty no longer in regard to her real feelings. Such are the depths and shadows of a woman's heart. They trip up all set rules, they defy analysis. When we attempt to classify, we discover that each individual case is a class to itself, and it is well that such is the case. Were it otherwise, this old earth would lose half the zest of living.

But Norman was in no mood to philosophize now. He received the note from the boy and carrying it up to his room opened it. A look of pained amazement came over his face. He could not understand it at all. He looked again at the address. Yes, it was Holly's well-remembered handwriting. "Mr. Norman Scott, Maple Bend." Rather formal to be sure but where was the answer? Like a revelation there came to him his own words to her that winter night under the gleaming stars. "If I fail in this battle with my own bad temper, let us be strangers to each other, let all our past companionship—and may I also say love—be as a blank." Slowly but too surely there came also to him her parting words that night "Remember now Norman, I shall hold you to your words—be as a blank." Then he glanced again at the blank sheet before him and smiled bitterly. "This then is her answer to my note for reconciliation—my address on one side, the other side a barren blank. She did well to thus remind me of my promise, though she might have waited to hear my side first. Oh Holly, Holly, if you but knew what sorrow you have brought on me, how ugly and hateful

that blank piece of paper is, you would pity me, even if you could not love a monster with my bad temper. However, there is one thing I can and will do." His manner was stern again. Next morning, his grandmother found this note on the bureau in his room, all his clothes were gone and the bed showed that it had had no occupant during the night.

DEAR MOTHER,—

I did as you said but the results were not satisfactory. Please say nothing to any one—especially Holly—about my absence or my reasons. You will tell grandfather of course but no one else please on my account. I will write you from time to time. Good-bye. From
NORMAN.

Our hero was well away on his tramp to Toronto, where he expected to get mustered into service, long before the first streaks of coming day were visible in the east. He had left Maple Bend behind, he seemed already to have entered on a new existence.



CHAPTER XX.

THE HOME DEFENDING AGAIN.

“Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching,
Cheer up, let the rabble come,
For beneath the Union Jack
We will drive the Fenians back.
And we'll fight for our beloved Canadian homes.”

—*Old Marching Song of 1866.*

Through the early morning fog rising from the river Niagara, a farmer's boy out on horseback after his strayed cows saw a most romantic and quixotic expedition setting out to conquer Canada, on June the 1st, 1866. Like the army that Peter the Hermit led into the sands of Palestine on the First Crusade, it was a motley one that this boy saw approaching the Canadian shore. Here could be seen the gorgeously brilliant uniforms of the Fenian Brotherhood—as they called themselves—bright green tunics with gold facings, dark pants and jaunty French military caps. This man with the slouch sombrero and waist belt marked C. S. A. (Confederate States of America) surrendered with Lee a few months ago at Richmond, whilst his comrade in a faded blue uniform and waist belt marked U. S. A. (United States of America) was with Grant hammering away for months at that fortress. An overdressed dandy from Buffalo, his plug hat showing here and there, signs of wear, his patent leather shoes badly soiled, is side by side with a barefooted urchin out for the fun there is in it. The Bowery thug of New York city, attracted by hope of plunder, is the messmate of the honest and enthusiastic Irish laborer from Black Rock. But, be it remembered all this invading force were not ruffians and half-grown boys as they have been sometimes painted. On the contrary, the great majority of the men were sincere enthusiasts, mistaken in the means adopted but thoroughly loyal to the flag and banner under which they had been enlisted, and in thus invading Canada they imagined they were striking a justifiable and potent blow for Ireland's freedom. Over this misguided force of crusaders there waved the

emblem of their national aspirations a green flag with rising sun and harp of gold. They came well armed too, each man carried a regular United States rifle and navy carbine slung at belt with plenty of ammunition, indeed too much for they were forced afterwards to destroy large stores of the latter as well as many rifles to prevent them falling into the hands of the Canadian forces. The extra rifles were intended to arm the deserters from Her Majesty's Service, but in this as in other particulars the Fenians were doomed to bitter disappointment. Still it must be confessed that they presented a formidable appearance as they marched off the scows in which they had come over company by company in perfect military order 1,200 strong. The first boat had not yet touched the shore before Colonel Starr from Kentucky, one of Mosby's famous guerilla raiders, leaped into the water and having safely reached shore he planted the green and gold emblem firmly in the sand and shouted "Ireland will be free." This action on his part was greeted with loud and prolonged cheers from the rest of the invading force and from across the river there came the answering cheers of their comrades left behind. The June sun was just tipping the tops of the highest trees with gold and glinting the dark blue waters of the swiftly flowing Niagara, the world was slowly awakening to life once more as the last man stepped on shore at a point called Lanigan's Dock, where the river makes an abrupt turn in its onward sweep; this point being about half a mile north of where the International bridge now spans the river. The farmer's boy waited to see or hear no more. He put whip to his horse, rode up the river to what was then called "Waterloo" and half an hour later the telegraph operator there wired to Toronto "The Fenians have landed."

For several days previously it had been suspected all along the Niagara frontier that something unusual was afoot. There were many indications of unusual activity in and around Buffalo, which for the time being was the storm centre. For instance a strange advertisement had appeared lately in one of the city papers (the *Courier*). It read thus:

P. O'DAY—AUCTIONEER.

Peremptory sale of muskets, rifles and commissariat stores.

By P. O'DAY.

At his auction and commission house, Nos. 20-22 Pearl street, Friday morning June 1st at 10 o'clock, will be sold on account of whom it may concern without reserve. Muskets, rifles, carbines, knapsacks, haversacks, tents, white blankets, U. S. grey blankets, 23 halters, bridles, 50 horse collars and 400 army overcoats. Terms cash.

A reporter from the *Courier* office visited Mr. O'Day's place of business and found the rooms piled full of heavy boxes, but was told that they would positively not be opened till Friday morning June 1st. It turned out afterwards that this was the date selected for the invasion and the advertisement was only a ruse to account for such a quantity of war material at one point. On Thursday morning the trains coming into Buffalo were loaded with mysterious men, who whilst not conversing much with each other seemed to be acquainted and to be moving as if directed by one common head. Each one carried a long black bag, they got off the train about a mile and a half out of the city and separated into little bands of a dozen or so. Gradually they moved toward the city and seemed to have no difficulty in finding places of concealment for such seemed their purpose. Buffalo was mystified. What could it mean? Already there must have arrived four or five hundred of these strangers and every train added fresh numbers. Thursday night's *Courier* special issue said: "This evening as it began to grow dark, the strangers were to be seen issuing from their quarters in various parts of the city. They were dressed in every imaginable costume, the only approach to uniformity being the fact that most of them wore black felt army hats. No signs of arms were to be seen but from what happened later on in the evening it is inferred that many of them carried pistols and knives. Their demeanor was very civil generally but as the evening wore on several affrays were reported from the lower quarters of the city, the strangers in some cases drawing weapons, but no serious harm is yet reported. The Lake Shore train arriving here at ten o'clock last night, brought reinforcements to the extent of four car loads of men. As in the morning these mysterious visitors were quietly dropped from the train outside the city. Thence they marched, in grim silence up Swan Street, not forming a continuous procession but trailing along in successive squads as if not to attract notice."

Next morning the early city riser could see the newsboys fairly tearing through the streets shouting "morning paper, the Fenians have taken Canada." Let us look over this man's shoulder as he reads.

CANADA INVADED.

THE FENIANS CROSS THE RIVER.

Last evening the Fenians in town commenced moving in squads of about fifty men each toward Black Rock. At ten p. m. one canal boat load of men was drawn across the river from a dock a little below Pratt's Rolling Mill. At 3½ this morning the main body was towed across by two of Kingman's tugs, filling four canal boats. They crossed from the rolling mill and landed on the other side at Stephens. There were about 2000 men with four stands of colors. Seven wagon loads of Springfield muskets and ammunition went with them. The men landed with loud cheers and met with no opposition. The green flag now waves in Canada." The same issue contained the following fiery appeal to arms locally.

"Grand Mass Meeting of the Friends of Liberty at the Opera House this (Friday) evening at 7½ o'clock.

Freemen, American Freemen! Will this continent be one of happy Republics or one of European Monarchical Despotisms? Irishmen! Will your Native Land at length be Free or still suffer beneath the Tyrant's Yoke. Now for the Friends of Universal Liberty. Now for the Lovers of Irish Independence. The first blow has been struck. Will you sustain your countrymen or not? Secrecy is the war cry. Will Ireland be free or slave? Answer ye Irishmen of Buffalo." At this meeting excitement was at a white heat and \$1309 was collected in a few minutes from among the audience, most of whom were poor people, Irish servant girls earning a dollar and a half a week tossed in their scanty hoards with hearty blessings on the army in the field. They fondly imagined that their native land was to be free at once, looking on the descent into Canada as the first move in that direction.

Indeed for a time fortune did seem to smile on the little army of invaders. They posted pickets up and down the river, took full possession of Ft. Erie and just missed capturing a Grand Trunk train. The inhabitants, after the first scare was over, returned to their homes and seemed to regard the whole affair as a holiday scamper. Whilst they did not fraternize with the Fenians, they certainly did nothing to impede their movements. The day was one of those charming June ones clear, bright and balmy, the white tents of the Fenians had for a background the beautiful Newbigging orchard, the scene was indeed a picturesque one. There was just enough of a breeze to fling out the green and gold standards that floated above the encampment, the Niagara river was thick with pleasure boats to see the fun and the American shore was black with crowds of people. Not a redcoat was to be seen anywhere, it might have been merely a picnic so quietly did

everything seem. Still the war correspondent was on hand, as witness the following despatch :

FENIAN ARMY, BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS,
Newbigging Farm, June 1st, 1866.

A brigade of the Irish Army, under command of Col. John O'Neill is quietly encamped in an apple orchard on the Newbigging Farm near Frenchman's Creek about two miles from Fort Erie. The command consists of the 13th Regiment, Col. O'Neill from Tennessee ; 17th Regiment, Col. Starr from Kentucky ; 18th Regiment, Lt.-Col. John Grace from Ohio and the 17th Regiment, Col. Hay from Buffalo, N. Y., with a detachment of troops from Indiana."

Nor were the invaders themselves idle by any means. Mounted scouts were scouring the adjacent country, securing food supplies and horses by seizure, getting information as to the roads and distributing a proclamation, professing to give their reasons for thus making an incursion into a country with which they had no quarrel. Read, even at this distance of time, it will be seen to have been skilfully worded to attain its object, viz., to detach the Canadian people from their motherland and thus offer no opposition to the advance of the Fenian army. It is pitched in rather too heroic a vein of course, but the following extracts will show that it was not without a certain crafty skill too.

To the People of British America :

We come among you as the foes of British rule in Ireland. We have taken up the sword to strike down the oppressors rod, to deliver Ireland from the tyrant, the despoiler, the robber. We have registered our oaths upon the altar of our country in the full view of Heaven and sent up our vows to the throne of Him, who inspired them. Then, looking about us for the enemy, we find him **HERE**, here in your midst where he is most vulnerable and convenient to our strength We have no issue with the people of these provinces and wish to have none but the most friendly relations. Our weapons are for the oppressors of Ireland. Our blows shall be directed only against the power of England, her privileges alone shall we invade. We do not propose to divest you of a solitary right you now enjoy. We are here neither as murderers, nor robbers, for plunder and spoilation. We are here as the Irish Army of liberation, the friends of liberty against despotism, of democracy against aristocracy, of the people against their oppressors. In a word, our war is with the armed power of England, not with the people, not with these provinces. Against England, upon land and sea, till Ireland is free. To Irishmen throughout these provinces, we appeal in the name of seven centuries of British iniquity and Irish misery and suffering, in the names of our murdered sires, our desolate homes, our desecrated altars, our million of famine graves, our insulted name and race — to stretch forth the hand of brotherhood in the holy cause of fatherland and smite

the tyrant where we can. We conjure you, our countrymen, who, from misfortune inflicted by the very tyranny you are serving, or from any other cause, have been forced to enter the ranks of the enemy, not to be the willing instruments of your country's death or degradation. No uniform, and surely not the blooddyed coat of England, can emancipate you from the natural law, that binds your allegiance to Ireland, to liberty, to right, to justice. To the friends of Ireland, of freedom, of humanity, of the people, we offer the olive branch of peace and the honest grasp of friendship. Take it Irishmen, Frenchmen, American, take it all and trust it. . . . We wish to meet with friends, we are prepared to meet with enemies. We shall endeavor to merit the confidence of the former and the latter can expect from us but the leniency of a determined though generous foe and the restraints and relations imposed by civilized warfare.

(Signed) T. W. SWEENEY,

Major-General commanding the Armies of Ireland."

But, spite of cunningly-worded proclamations, high-sounding phrases and an eager audience to witness the fray, the Fenian cause did not advance rapidly. The expected assistance from Canadian sources failed to materialize altogether, the men were clamorous for food and little was to be had. Hazy rumors too came floating into the camp that the redcoats were coming, but just from what direction no one could tell. For the first time apparently, the Fenians began to realize that there was a great, big country somewhere back of the frontier and that there might be people there too arming to crush them. Mutterings of discontent began to be heard as early as Friday noon and towards evening twenty of the men deserted in a body and recrossed to the American side. Clearly, something must be done and that right quickly. Most of Friday night Colonel O'Neill and his officers might be seen in a little group by a camp-fire poring over a map of Canada and their discussions at times became quite heated. Twice the bugles sounded an alarm and the drowsy men stood to their arms, but no redcoats put in an appearance and the force grumblingly laid down to rest again.

The scene was one worthy of a painter. The snowy blossoms of the apple trees scattering down their petals on the upturned faces of the sleeping crusaders, for the night was a hot one and most of the men stretched out at full length in the open air, the guards pacing back and forth apprehensive of danger, the ghostly white tents half hidden among the trees and the silvery gleam of moonlight across the broad bosom of Niagara. In that little army of sleepers there were no doubt many who were dreaming of a free Ireland, a conquered Canada and all the visions

of a lifetime realized. Ah me, but they would think far differently two days later. They had yet to learn the aroused temper of Canada which had already put them down for a plundering band of marauders. Just as the clock across the river announced two the council of war broke up, their decision had been made, to push on farther into the country and if possible destroy the Welland Canal and seize the Grand Trunk Railway. One section of the officers was flat-footed for going across the river again. They pointed out with much force that no news had come of any other invasion along the frontier though this was promised them, and they spoke bitterly of Major-General Sweeny as a "fighting man on paper" since he, by virtue of his position as general commander ought to have accompanied them in their dangerous undertaking. But the other officers, Colonel O'Neill especially insistent, urged that the invasions at other points might have taken place though they had not heard of them. "Anyhow" he added "let us push forward to meet the enemy regardless of what others may or may not do. We have embarked in this enterprise, the eyes of the world are on us; do not I earnestly advise you, do not let us be made a laughing stock by turning back before we have even smelled powder." His counsels prevailed, the bugles sounded a general turn out. In the dim half light of approaching morning the men hastily prepared what little breakfast there was to prepare, and by four o'clock the tiny but compact Army of Ireland was marching out along the Bowen road towards Port Colborne, mounted scouts ahead, then the green and gold standards borne by four horsemen, then the rank and file tramping along stolidly they knew not where, whilst behind them arose the smoke from a burning heap of rifles and camp supplies which they had abandoned. Truly since Peter the Hermit's forces streamed out from Constantinople never was seen a more chimerical or higher hoped array. The morning was a lovely one even for June, and under it's influence the men sang "The Wearing of the Green" and other party songs as they swung steadily on under the slowly awakening sun, the country people along the line of march driving their flocks into the woods in advance to save them.

Let us see now what is being done throughout that country into that which this force is so boldly marching. There is no use denying the inroad of the Fenians caused general alarm throughout Canada, this alarm being often more acute at remote points than right along the border. It was not that the Canadians were not brave, for they would face any people man to man, but rather because there was so much

mystery about what numbers they were facing, for if the Fenians were not permanently successful in any other way they were decidedly so in shrouding their movements in a veil of secrecy. We are told new that paid agents kept the Canadian Government warned of each move and even in a general way of the numbers of the Fenian Brotherhood, but it can be asserted with truth that the average Canadian citizen in 1866 put the numbers of that organization anywhere from ten thousand to one hundred thousand men and that they were likely to strike at several points simultaneously. If the authorities were really informed as to their strength and movements—something which seems very problematical—they kept their secrets quite as well as the Fenians themselves. At the same time, nothing is more certain than that once the invaders landed there was no lack of spirit shown throughout Canada. First and foremost—and let this be empathized—there was no sympathy whatever manifested towards the Fenians by any class of the population or by any section. As has already been shown, the raiders counting confidently on defections to their ranks had, even brought along extra weapons and ammunition, as well as distributing the proclamation already quoted from. This document was expected to cause wholesale desertions of Irish Roman Catholics from the Canadian volunteers and as already noted was worded with considerable skill towards that aim. Never was an invading force doomed to more complete and bitter disappointment. Not an Irish Roman Catholic went over to them. On the contrary, they regarded the invaders as freebooters out for plunder and Major-General Sweeney's appeal to them for assistance as a pure impertinence. In every little hamlet throughout the land, Irish Roman Catholics were among the first to enlist for service against the invaders. One mistake there was made by our people though and to this day its traditions linger among us. That is in making too light of the Fenians. The present author has been at some pains to find out by conversations with those who came into contact with them, just what manner of men they were, and is in a position to state, that the little force which invaded Canada was made up nearly altogether of well-drilled, well-armed, military men under fairly strict discipline. As to the first, the defeat at Ridgeway of our forces—for that is what it was—ought to be sufficient proof and for the latter the fact—attested to by all—that during their short stay in Canada, not an instance is afforded of an insult to a woman. Let us do the memory of these men justice, misguided and all as we believe them to have been.

The whole story of the Fenian Raid from a Canadian standpoint cannot be better told than is done in the following state despatches, from the Governor-General to the Imperial Secretary of War :

(I)

OTTAWA, JUNE 1ST, 1866.

SIR,—I have the honor to inform you that a body of six hundred Fenians entered this Province this morning. They crossed the Niagara River at Black Rock near Buffalo in the State of New York and established themselves in the Village of Fort Erie, in Canada. I am now occupied in taking measures for meeting this emergency.

I have, etc.,

(Signed) MONCK.

The Rt. Hon. Edward Cardwell, etc.

(II)

OTTAWA, JUNE 4TH, 1866.

SIR,—Referring to my despatch of 1st June, I have the honor to state for your information, that the body of Fenian conspirators, who crossed the frontier from Buffalo to Fort Erie on the morning of Friday, June 1st, proved to be between eight and nine hundred men and seem to have been well armed. I had previously had information that some such attempt would shortly be made and a party of Volunteers had been stationed at Port Colbourne in anticipation of an attack. I have not yet had time to receive official accounts of the military operations, but from telegraphic reports which have reached me I am able to give the following statement of what occurred, which I think may be considered authentic :

Immediately on the receipt of the intelligence of the invasion, Major-General Napier pushed on by rail to Chippewa, a force consisting of Artillery and regular troops under Col. Peacocke, 16th Regiment. Chippewa is about nineteen miles from Fort Erie and there is no railway communication between the two places. On arriving at Chippewa, Col. Peacocke moved on in the direction of Fort Erie. On the morning of Saturday, June 2nd, the body of Volunteers stationed, as already mentioned at Port Colbourne, left that place by rail which runs parallel to the shore of Lake Erie and went in the direction of Fort Erie as far as a place called Ridgeway. Here they left the railway and proceeded on foot apparently with the intention of effecting a junction with Col. Peacocke and his force. They came upon the Fenians encamped in the bush and immediately attacked, but were outnumbered and compelled to retire on Port Colbourne. This occurred some time on Saturday, June 2nd.

Colonel Peacocke, in the meantime was advancing in the direction of Fort Erie from Chippewa along the banks of the Niagara River, but was not able to reach the former place before nightfall. The Fenians however did not await his arrival but re-crossed the river during the night, between the 2nd and 3rd inst. to the number of about seven hundred and fifty men, and, as appears from the accompanying telegram from Mr. Consul Hemans, were immediately arrested by

the authorities of the United States. I am happy to be able to inform you that the officers of the United States Government appear to have exerted themselves to prevent any assistance being supplied to the invaders. I transmit copies of telegrams received on this subject from the United States Consul Hemans.

We have sixty-five prisoners in our possession, who have been by my direction committed to the Common Gaol at Toronto to await trial. I think it is creditable to both the Military and Militia authorities in Canada that they were in a position within twenty-four hours after the invasion of the Province at a point of the enemy's own selection, to place opposite to him such a force as compelled his precipitate retreat without even risking an engagement. I shall not fail to send you more full particulars when I shall have received the official reports from the officers engaged, but the main facts are as I have stated them above.

I have, etc.,

(Signed) MONCK.

The Rt. Hon. Edward Cardwell, etc., etc.

(III)

OTTAWA, JUNE 14TH, 1866.

SIR,—I have had the satisfaction in other communications to report to you the excellent spirit evinced by the resident population of Canada in connection with the late Fenian attack on the Province. There has been in addition an exhibition of patriotism and devotion on the part of Canadians who happened to be domiciled at the time of the disturbance outside of the Province, which deserves I think special mention and praise. Immediately after the news of the inroad on the Province reached Chicago, sixty young Canadians who were resident there engaged in various employments gave up their situations and repaired by railroad to Canada to give their aid in defending the land of their birth. These young men have been formed into a Volunteer Company and are now doing duty at Toronto.

I had also a communication from Her Majesty's Consul at New York to the effect that a large number of Canadians, resident there, were prepared to abandon their occupations and come to assist in the repulse of the invaders of Canada if I considered their services necessary. I informed Mr. Archibald by telegraph that I did not require their aid, but begged him to express to them my gratitude for the exhibition of their loyalty. Such conduct speaks for itself and I would not weaken the effect of the bare relation of the facts by any attempt at eulogy on my part.

I have, etc.

(Signed) MONCK.

The Rt. Hon. Edward Cardwell, etc., etc.

The last quoted despatch throws a flood of light on how utterly mistaken the Fenians were in supposing that any portion of the Canadian people would join them. In their brotherhood meetings, the rank and file had been told that the Canadians were groaning under monarchial tyranny and were ready to rise at the first opportunity, whilst

the very opposite was the truth, since no people on earth have greater love for their homes and institutions, their beautiful land of sunny lakes and fertile soil. With dismay the Fenian leaders learned this truth after landing, for their scouts sent out, brought back alarming news of the sturdy populace flocking into the towns to join the militia from all sides. This accounts for the rapidity with which the invaders got away after drawing first blood. In fact nothing but rare good luck, the miscalculation of an officer and the too daring eagerness of the volunteers to engage the enemy ; these alone prevented the little Fenian army from being caught between the two British forces and crushed like an egg-shell.



CHAPTER XXI.

THE HOME DEFENDING CONTINUED.

“Go strew his ashes to the wind,
 Whose sword or voice has saved mankind,
 And is he dead whose glorious mind
 Lifts them on high?
 To live in hearts we leave behind
 Is not to die.”

If you ever visit the pleasant little village of Ridgeway—it seems like a bit of old England transplanted—go in the white-walled Memorial church there dear reader and you will see carved on a marble tablet the above lines. If you will examine this tablet further you will read:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF THE RIDGEWAY MARTYRS, WHO FELL DEFENDING
 THEIR COUNTRY IN THE ATTEMPTED FENIAN INVASION, JUNE, 1866.

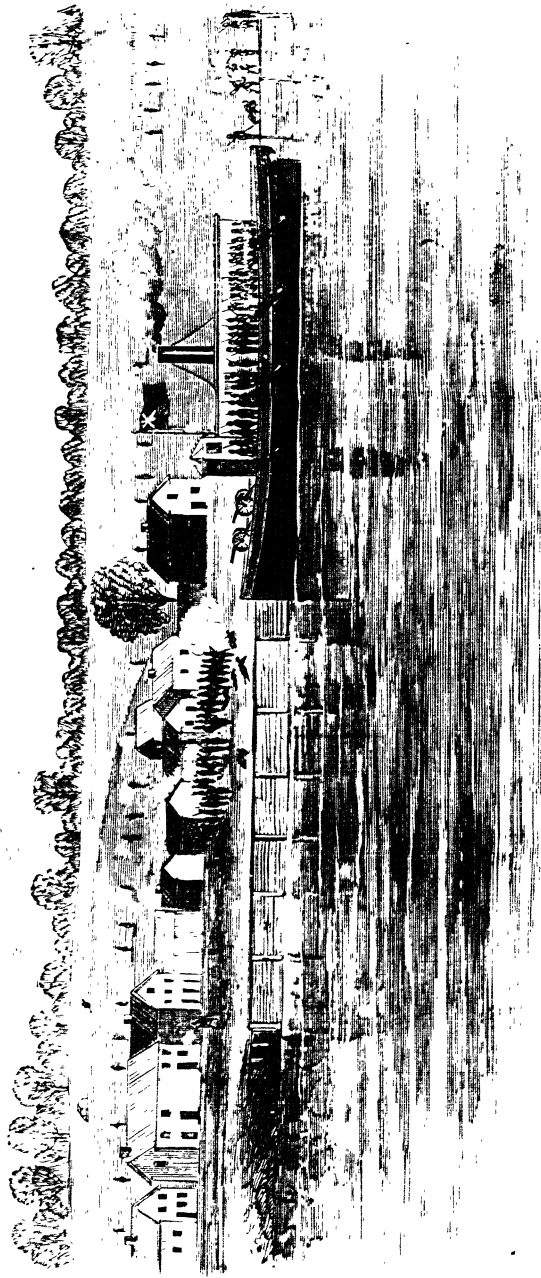
Malcolm McEachren, Ensign, Queens Own, killed.

Hugh Matheson, Sergeant, Queens Own, died of wounds.	Francis Lakey, Corporal, Queens Own, died of wounds.
William Smith, Queens Own, killed.	Mark Defries, Queens Own, killed.
Christopher Anderson, Queens Own, killed.	William F. Tempest, Queens Own, killed.
J. H. Mewburn, Queens Own, killed.	Malcolm McKenzie, Queens Own, killed.

Erected by the citizens in the vicinity of the battle ground, September, 1874.*

Canada is not as rich in historical associations as some of the older countries, it is therefore meet and proper that our few memories should be preserved in some such practicable way as these villagers have done. The number of men who fell in this skirmish were inconsiderable, but

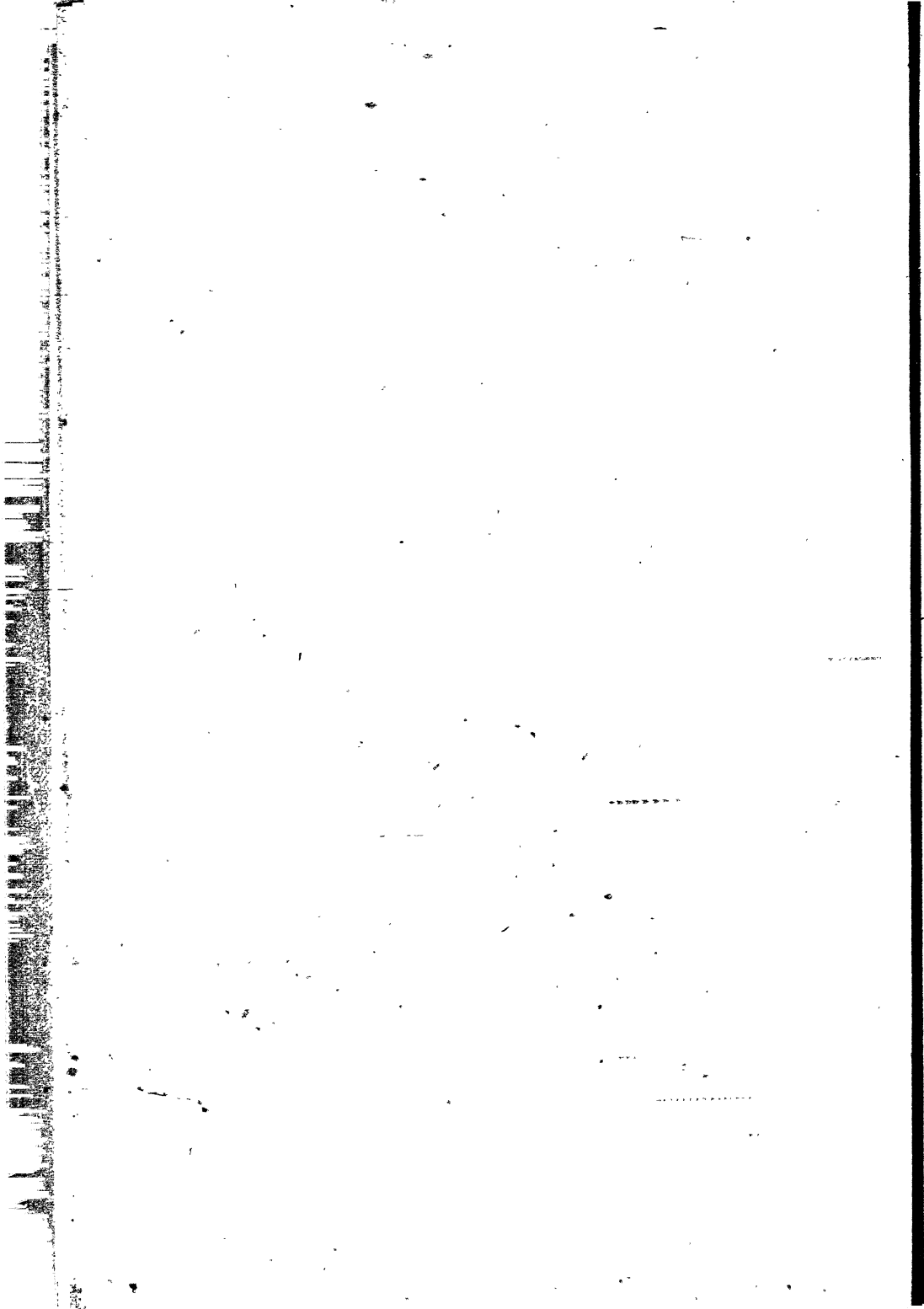
* NOTE—The number of Fenians killed at Ridgeway will never be known definitely, since they being the victors had an opportunity to remove or bury their dead. But several bodies were afterwards found as they had fallen among the bushes or in the fence corners, where they had dragged themselves to die. In the minute book of the Township of Bertie (where Ridgeway is situated) for 1867 may still be read this grimly humorous motion “Moved by Duncan Schooly, seconded by J. J. Sherk, that Hiram Sager be paid three dollars for burying four DEAD Fenians killed at the battle at Limestone Ridge in June last.



From Harper's Week 3.

SKIRMISH BETWEEN THE CANADIAN VOLUNTEERS AND FENIANS AT FORT FRUI DOCK, JUNE 2ND, 1866.

From the original sketch made for Harper's Weekly at that time.



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the principle they were contending for was everything. Just as long as Canada's sons stand ready to defend their homes from invasion and lay down their lives as these men did in 1866, just so long will this country be what it is now, a land of liberty, contentment and happiness. Viewed in this light the little Memorial Church at Ridgeway is a preserver of our dearest memories, a shrine for all true Canadians to worship at.

And where is Norman Scott all this time? Has he been in the forefront defending his country from attack, or is his evil fate pursuing him relentlessly still and thwarting all his plans? No dear reader not the latter by any means. From the time that beautiful spring morning when he turned his steps away from Maple Bend and home, all his plans seemed to almost work themselves out, no help was needed from him. True his heart was heavy as he thought of Holly's unexpected snub to himself, the more he thought of it the more unexplainable it seemed. She did not—could not—love that mean spirited George Craig, for a thousand little ways and gestures, a tone of the voice, an emphasis in the songs she sang, all had convinced him that he and he alone possessed the key to her heart, despite her teasing manners and occasional flirtings. Besides, how could a true girl like her ever fancy a character like George Craig's—the idea was preposterous. Having reasoned himself into this frame of mind, he next sought around for a sufficient reason for his snubbing. There was their conversation to be sure that wintry night under the moonlight and his promise to curb his temper. "But surely" he said to himself "she should take into account my provocation and not hold me too firmly to that promise." Then, as he recalled the memory of George's taunting words and insulting manner in the barnyard, his old fierceness blazed up afresh. "Under like circumstances," he savagely muttered "I would do the same thing again and if she chooses to remain angry she can do so, I will not try to change her mind." With this rather bitter remark, he dismissed the subject from his mind and bent all his energies to the project immediately at hand.

When he reached Toronto, from which he had been borne so tenderly some twenty years before a tiny, helpless infant by his grand parents, it was easy to see that something unusual was astir. A body of troops was drilling on the commons outside the city and at the old fort a battery was practicing on a target far out in the lake. The drill-sheds too were scenes of activity and in the usually peaceful streets military

uniforms were the rule rather than the exception. The fact was, that Toronto was in the midst of one of the numerous Fenian "scares" that preceded the real raid itself, whilst the specials issued from the newspaper offices did not help to allay the excitement, telling as they did of Fenian attacks along the New Brunswick border, soon to be repeated on the entire frontier facing the United States. Norman, as a fine, atheletic, young man, had not the slightest difficulty in getting enrolled in the Queen's Own Rifles. From that time on he strove to perfect himself in all the details of drill with such success that he was soon regarded as an apt soidier. Moreover, he was so genuinely affable and pleasant to all that he made friends by the score, and when the steamer City of Toronto swung out from the dock on the morning of June 1st, 1866, with the Queen's Own on board, bound for the front there was not a more cheery or popular man among his fellows than he. The raw country boy had been fashioned in a very short time into a model "Tommy Atkins," the dark green tunic showing his compact and well-knit figure to great advantage.

We will not follow him closely through the campaign, since we have already been partly over the ground. They reached Pt. Colborne at noon where they found everybody excited of course, all reports agreed the Fenian army was somewhere in the vicinity but no two accounts agreed as to where. This was one of the most remarkable features in this odd campaign, that neither force knew exactly the whereabouts of the other and when they did come into collision at last it seemed to be more than half by chance. Of course the fairly well wooded country around accounted partly for this, but after all a proper system of scouting would have prevented many ludicrous and in some cases costly mistakes. During the night there were several false alarms, consequently no sleep for anyone. This, coupled with insufficient food, did not contribute to the comfort of the men, yet there were no murmurs when next morning they took train for Ridgeway to find the enemy if possible. The men felt that they were on the eve of action and were anxious for the fray, too anxious in fact but anything was preferable to the feverish suspense of the last few days. Just as the troops disembarked from the cars at Ridgeway, a local character named Johnston came riding furiously up the picturesque Ridge road—which follows closely the winding of an old Indian trail—waving a rusty Revolutionary sword and shouting "The Fenians are coming back there" pointing in the direction of Stevensville. "Can you lead me to where those Fenians are" Col.

Booker, the commanding officer of the Canadian force, said, addressing the mounted man. "Indeed I can" he replied. "Very well, lead on—we follow," the impetuous officer commanded though his orders were to merely form a junction with the force of regulars under Col. Peacocke. Nothing more was said however, the bugles sounded the advance, the men fell in, the Queen's Own leading, the 13th Battalion of Hamilton next and the Caledonia Rifles bringing up the rear.

Norman was one of a party selected to go in advance of the main body, as they swung out in the direction of Stevensville. Their duty was to know that the woods were clear of enemies on each side of the road and thus not allow any general ambush. His early training, his woodcraft, his utter fearlessness all stood him in good stead now. For about two miles not a Fenian was sighted. Then he heard the sharp crack of a rifle off to the right and pushing forward was just in time to see smoke curling up from behind a log, though no one was visible. Crouching down himself he awaited developments. Presently a head appeared above the log, then the figure of a man and a Fenian, since he wore an army cap unlike the volunteers. He could have bored him through and through as his attention was directed towards where he had shot at another of the scouting party, but he hesitated to do so, it seemed too much like murder. All at once the Fenian whirled around sharply, his eye had caught the gleam of Norman's rifle barrel, for the morning sun had now relieved the gloom of the forest. Without pausing a moment the Fenian fired in Norman's direction and he could hear the sharp "ping" of the bullet overhead, as it buried itself in a small maple tree. "Very well" our hero grimly muttered to himself "two can play at that game my man" and taking careful aim along the tree trunk he shattered the Fenian's right arm. Jumping from behind his cover and running forward he expected to capture the first prisoner, but in this he was doomed to disappointment. The pickets of the Fenians had gradually overlapped his present position and shots came from both sides the moment he rose. They were at considerable distance, yet it needed no second thought to convince him that he himself would soon be surrounded. He therefore cautiously withdrew and rejoined his company, the firing had now become general all along the line and their scouting duties were finished.

All the world knows the story of the skirmish at Ridgeway or Limestone Ridge as it is often called, how the Queen's Own gradually

pushed the Fenian skirmishing lines back on the main body itself, in spite of their entrenchments of fence rails, how the ammunition of the volunteers then gave out and other troops (13th Batt.) had to be brought up, how the mistake was made of ordering the men to prepare for cavalry on seeing some mounted leaders of the Fenians ride out in front of their army, how this order threw all into confusion and then came the fatal bugle sounding "retreat." The Fenian host swept forward, the retreat was likely to develop into a rout when a few daring fellows threw themselves ino the breach and checked up the too impetuous victors. Norman was one of these rescuers. He felt all the thrill of battle in his veins. Picking out a few companions, whom he knew were armed with Spencer repeating rifles—just then being introduced—he posted them so skilfully among the woods bordering on the Ridge road, along which the pursuers must pass, and their superior weapons enabled them to keep up such a continuous fire, that Col. O'Neil had to order a halt and send a strong company into the woods on each side to clear out the daring fellows. By the time this was done the rest of the volunteers had reached Ridgeway again, where Colonel Booker managed to partially reform his flying column and start them on the march to Port Colborne, leaving word with the scouting party to observe the movements of the victorious Fenians and keep headquarters duly informed thereon.

Nothing could suit Norman better. From the shadow of the woods they watched the Fenian army preparing dinner on the battle ground of the morning, all appearing well satisfied with themselves, the officers chatting in an animated circle near where one of the green and gold standards flaunted in the breeze. After dinner the men stretched out in the shade to sleep, no pickets were posted since it was supposed all the Canadian forces had quite vanished, but the officers seemed to be alert and anxiously discussing some fresh move. Norman and his companions fully expected them to move in the direction of Port Colborne at any moment and were preparing to contest the way as well as they could, but great was their surprise when the bugle sounded about 2 o'clock, the men were formed up in a hollow square and after being addressed by Colonel O'Neil on horseback, the whole column moved away swiftly towards Fort Erie down the Garrison road. Our small party of scouts kept close on their heels however, and from a slight range of hills saw the gobbling up of the Welland Battery and Dunnville Naval Brigade—about a hundred men all told—by the Fenians, who

had now divided themselves into two bodies and soon overwhelmed this little force whom they found in possession of Fort Erie. The scene was a most picturesque one to witness. Under a cloudless June sky, with the shining, skimming surface of Lake Erie gently rippling in the dazzling sunlight as a setting on the right and in the back ground the clear blue Niagara on its long journey to the sea, could anything be more romantic? They could see the Fenians close in swiftly on the old ruined fort with a military precision most admirable and then they could hear the sharp crack of the Canadian rifles in return. For a moment they thought of throwing themselves against the Fenian rear in hopes of diverting attention from the little garrison, but second thought convinced them that twenty men could not hope to do anything with hundreds. In less than an hour all was over and the green-gold ensign of Erin floated from the ruins of old Fort Erie itself. During the night however, a panic seemed to seize the invaders, it was a case of every man for himself, boats were hastily seized to get across the river again and some of the conquerors at Ridgeway were seen paddling across astride of logs. Such was their haste, even their outlying pickets were left behind no one thinking in the hurry to warn them. When Sunday morning, June 3rd, 1866, dawned fair and bright, the green-gold flag was nowhere to be seen on Canadian soil — the Fenian Raid was over.

From the first preparations Norman had a plan of his own in his head. Coming fresh from the farm and country life all he had witnessed in this campaign was novel to him. Even the mustering of the troops for drill — an ordinary enough sight for the city bred boy — was a magnificent spectacle to him. It sent the blood bounding through his veins, he felt the thrill of a new and martial life around him and he knew — was sure of it — that given the opportunity he could describe it all. With the usual unerring instinct of the country bred boy he went straight at the mark. He sent a short descriptive article to one of the big New York papers and as there was an intense curiosity there at that time about Canada and the threatened raid, another and another were asked for till he found himself getting famous. He adopted as his pen name "Andrew Gillies," because he had often heard his grandmother speak of her old father with such deep affection, and that was his name it will be remembered.

One would naturally imagine at first thought that city bred boys would more likely be able to describe stirring scenes impressively than country boys, seeing that they are so accustomed to passing sights. The very

opposite however is found to be the case. The country boy may have had fewer mental impressions but they have been far more vivid. The tree, the flower, the flight of the birds southward, the upsprouting of the grain in the field, the heading out of the clover have all been separate and distinct phenomena to study by themselves. In this way he has learned to be accurate before all things, he has learned to particularize, anybody can generalize. The city boy on the other hand has seen a swift succession of events pass before his eyes since childhood, but like the spokes in a rapidly turning wheel they are all blurred together. He can glibly echo the opinions around about him but mere echoes have no market value. If a census were taken of those in really responsible positions, even in the cities, it would be found that the boys from the country meadows were largely in the majority. Thus, the pure, rich country blood is poured into city veins, revivifying and renewing by its added volume of strength. Indeed, nothing can be more certain than that the average quality of the city population would degenerate more quickly even than it is doing now, were it not for the influx from the country. Norman's letters were eagerly perused in New York. There was a novelty about them, a richness of description, a subtle charm of a life first seen, a touch here and there which did not suggest the scribbling reporter or literary hack. Men began to ask each other who "Andrew Gillies" could be. With the end of the Fenian Raid, he found himself a steady writer on the staff in New York at a salary, which appeared enormous to him after his experience in country school teaching. We will follow him to the city in another chapter.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SECOND HOME FORGETTING.

"In two days and a half we visited fifty-eight buildings and saw the dwelling places of more than a thousand families. Breathing the foul air, in addition to the physical exertion involved in climbing and descending five-story buildings, left me in a state of prostration from which I did not recover for several days. After it was over I understood better why no woman and but few men had ever made anything like a thorough investigation of the system. Filth and wretchedness, the desperate struggle for existence and the absolute lack of anything approaching home life, combine to make a picture which seems to be burned into the memory of anyone who has seen it. The little children are the most pathetic sight of all. The bad conditions, instead of killing out the race, seem only to encourage reproduction. The alleys, court yards, cellars and streets fairly swarm with children. 'They die like flies in the summer time,' said our guide, 'and the undertakers make special rates for the summer traffic in the tenement district.' "

—*Extract from a private letter.*

In his new life Norman soon became entirely absorbed, Maple Bend a mere reminiscence. Once in a while the winsome face of Holly would rise up before him, a sadly sweet, reproachful one, but in the main he was too busy to hardly reflect on the past. The change from his quiet country home to the very middle of that great city's bustle almost entirely occupied his mind. All around was new, he was living years each day, for blind chance had thrown him into the very centre of the whirl. New York City, just at that time had one of its periodical spasms of wanting to know what was going on in the slums, it was fashionable to go slumming and the big papers were trying to outdo each other in writing up the sunken quarters of the city. Norman was assigned to this task. His employers, remembering the freshness and originality of his former articles and the charm of his country standpoint, insisted that he should devote himself to that work specially and introducing another innovation, they directed him to sign his pen name "Andrew Gillies" to all his contributions. In a short time his right name was almost entirely forgotten and he became "Andrew Gillies" to all intents and purposes.

His barque at last seemed to be fairly embarked on the flowing tide, he was courted right and left. He was shocked—how deeply he did not recognize just yet—by the misery and suffering he encountered in the course of his duty, but this only served to make his articles the more readable. His employers were delighted and as for himself he could not certainly say yet what his real feelings were. One thing was certain, the adulation he was receiving was not altogether disagreeable. We are all intensely human on that side, praise usually pierces the citadel of the heart even in the strongest. Day after day during that intensely hot summer of 1866, he pushed his way into the reeking, sultry tenement houses, the vile brothels and other hot-beds of crime, saw the poor degraded creatures panting for a breath of pure air in their narrow alleys and garbage-strewn lanes and day by day he described the same. Invitations came in thick and fast all addressed to "Andrew Gillies" to attend social functions, trips to the seaside, etc. He was quite the lion of the season, the country had just passed through a four years' war, but society was never more brilliant. Many of these invitations he was forced to decline, he attended as many as he could spare time for.

One feature though of his popularity he was very proud of. His strong, manly letters drew such attention to the stifling courts where these poor people had to live and raise their children, that a movement was begun to send the little ones out to the farms and open places of the country. This was the beginning of the "Fresh Air Fund," which has since given thousands of poor city children delightful summer holidays away from the hot city for a few weeks in summer. Many a poor child has to thank this fund for the few rays of sunshine that have slanted into their starved, pitiful lives.

And now by one of those strange mischances which often puzzle us in real life, Norman's life was approaching that of his father whom we have lost track of so long. It will be remembered that after his marriage to Mrs. Deane, under the name of James S. Johnston, they had merged the two names together and were now known as Mr. and Mrs. Deane-Johnston, since it sounded more fashionable. They were now in the gay whirl of New York Society, she brisk and alert as she had been in business, he too indolent to be much interested but loving luxury well enough to allow himself to drift along in an easy fashion. She looked carefully after the list of guests invited to their receptions to see that no nobles were missed, he on the other hand did not care who attended

as long as he was not bothered too much. "Ask anybody you like" he used to tell her "only don't ask any disagreeable people. I hate bores and asses who insist on discussing politics or literature. Confound them, let them go to a club if they want to argue." This sort of life suited his moods perfectly. All his past life was a dreamy remembrance, not to be recalled because it rasped on his luxury loving nature. "I think I can smell that plagued old stable in Toronto yet" he said to himself one afternoon whilst seated in his richly furnished smoking room, with a choice Havana between his lips. He watched the smoke as it curled up towards the ceiling for a few minutes and then exclaimed with more waste of energy than he was accustomed to, "Bah, it makes me sick to think of those days, the dreary waking up to life and a crust each morning, the menial stable work and all that sort of thing. Somebody has to do it I suppose but I don't propose to be that somebody if I can help it. And I used to be an artist too, and painted such bright pictures to be sure." He laughed immoderately as he thought of his artist days—he had never touched a brush since nor ever intended to again.

A rap came to the door and his daughter entered—a beautiful girl with all her father's grace of manner and none of her mother's masculinity. She had in addition to beauty of face and figure something far grander, beauty of life, beauty of purpose, beauty of nature. Her mother had vainly endeavored to make her a merely child of fashion but it could not be done. Edith Deane-Johnston was a child of nature and fashion could not cramp her into anything else. She delighted in their fashionable receptions it is true, but only because there she met some of the brightest minds there were in the city. Largely through Edith's influence her mother began to invite literary lions to these functions and of course Mrs. Deane-Johnston needed no second urging, once she discovered it was fashionable besides to do so. So it came about that through these different motives their drawing rooms often held notable people in the literary world and their receptions were much talked about. "What are you laughing at so heartily papa" Edith said as she entered and found her father in such a mirthful mood. "Oh nothing you would care to know Edith" he answered quickly "just something that happened years ago before you were born." "Yes you are beginning to look a little old, papa" she came over to where he sat and run her hands through his hair, in which a slight silver streak could be noticed here and there "but you have never told me much about your life

before you met mamma. Did you always live in New York, or where do your relatives live?" "None of my relatives live in this country and I did not always live in this city either." His answer was rather short for one usually so good natured, especially with his daughter whom he almost adored. "Wont you tell me any more papa?" She had cuddled down on his lap and was looking up in his face with great, searching eyes of truth. "Yes I will Edith, but"—his voice faltered and his indolent manner faded away—"not to-night, not to-night my darling." "Very well," for with a woman's quick intuition she noticed his change of manner and altered tones "let us talk of something else. Who do you think mamma has invited to our Thursday night reception?" "I couldn't guess in a year" he answered gaily "some literary lion with flowing mane I presume." "Exactly, none other than 'Andrew Gillies' who is creating such a stir now with his vivid pictures of life in the slums. Oh I do hope he will come, for he must be an interesting person." "And does my little girl read those sketches of low life?" he asked with a yawn. "Certainly, don't you too papa?" "Oh yes when I have time to do so, but that sort of thing has been written up before and there cannot be anything new said on it." "But papa" Edith was very much in earnest now "these articles are not vulgar 'write ups,' like an advertising agent gets out to boom a country town, they are distinct studies of life in the slums. As to being new, anything original is new and 'Andrew Gillies' is original. I do hope he will come."

"Why you seem to be quite interested in this new star, Edith. You are not very old yet but I thought even you had seen enough of these flaming constellations, that your mother is forever discovering, to be a trifle tired of them." "I confess that I am tired of the conventional society pet, as we see him at our receptions from time to time, but this writer is not conventional. I fancy he must have been brought up in the country, he sees everything with such wonder-loving eyes here and describes it so artlessly" she answered. "Oh he will wane after a time like the others, never fear. Just now he is shining brilliantly, but that will not last long. Do you know daughter "he spoke with considerable animation" this New York is fed from time to time with just such morsels as 'Andrew Gillies.' Like a hungry lion it grinds up each fresh victim between its insatiable jaws, all the time looking around for the next. To-day it is 'Andrew Gillies,' to-morrow it is somebody else. It enjoys and applauds his unconventionality, whilst all the time it is really sapping and undermining that same unconventionality. The

moment it discovers that he is losing his charm of freshness—in other words is becoming a city man—that moment it tosses him aside like a sucked orange.”

“But papa, they should not stay in the city too long. I would rather not win applause at all than to win it at such a price.” “The poor fools do not realize it till too late” he laughed softly, unpleasantly. “They flutter around the blaze till their wings are scorched and then it is impossible to fly away. Oh I know them, and to tell the truth I always feel rather sorry when I see your mother introducing a new arrival. “Another lamb for the shambles” I often say to myself.” “Papa, you have painted a very disagreeable picture indeed, one I fear with too much truth in it. “If I like th’s ‘Andrew Gillies’ when I meet him, I intend to warn him against this tendency.” “Well you can save your breath and time. I tell you none of them can see it that way, if warned a thousand times. They have to learn it good and hard for themselves. But what is his right name, Edith?” “I never heard it, nobody calls him anything else than ‘Andrew Gillies.’ That is a half familiar name—Scotch I think—and I must try and shake off some of my laziness to study this new star, since my little girl is so much interested in him.”

Norman found the Deane-Johnston home the pleasantest yet visited in the city. He was simply delighted with Edith too. She was so frank, so unlike the affected creatures he met elsewhere in the city, who simpered and giggled and chattered behind their fans, that it was a real treat to draw her off to a quiet corner and chat confidentially whilst the others waltzed. This attracted considerable attention to the young couple, and not a few savage glances were bestowed on them from angry mammas, who declared that “Edith, as the daughter of the hostess, did not show good taste in thus monopolizing this rising young literary man.” One of these indignant dames indeed spoke about the matter. “Have you noticed how absorbed your daughter is in this ‘Andrew Gillies’ she queried. “Oh yes.” Mrs. Deane-Johnston was secretly pleased to think such was the case, “but you know my dear, Edith always did appreciate literary people.” “I never noticed it so much before,” the answer came rather dryly, “they might almost be brother and sister.” “Why several people have made that remark before to-night” the hostess answered laughingly “do you think they look alike.” “Most strikingly alike” and she passed on to another group.

To make a long story short, before the winter was over Norman and Edith were engaged, half-brother and half-sister, and unless something intervened to prevent this shocking union they were to be married in the spring out in mid-ocean. Mrs. Deane-Johnston, ever on the alert for something new to startle society with, proposed that she, Edith and 'Andrew Gillies' should take a trip to Europe and in mid-ocean the ceremony be performed. This was agreed to and Norman—as we know him—in anticipation of his marriage had furnished a house and invited his grandparents to visit him, but without telling them of his approaching marriage as he wished to surprise them. He also arranged to have the house kept open during his absence for their accomodation, even going so far as to provide a guide to show the old folks the sights of the city. "It will be a change for them from Maple Bend to New York and may do them good in their old age" he said to himself. They were to come about a week or so before his return from Europe, thus they would be in good time to greet him and his bride on their return home.

To Edith alone he had told the story of his past life, the little he knew of his father and mother, his boyhood days, his arrest and even his love affair with Holly, though, truth to say, on that subject he spoke in more general terms than on any other. Without intending to do so at all, he misled her on this matter. As she understood it, they had simply been school day lovers and she did not attach much importance to that. Edith did not know that little Holly, the country girl, still really held first place in his affections, that she still was his only as she had been his first love. He for his part could not say exactly how he and Edith became engaged in fact. He respected her for her good sense, he was interested in her conversation, he liked her company better than that of any of her companions but—but—he did not love her. He was smarting still under the heartless manner—as he supposed—of Holly's rebuff to him, Edith's mother adroitly managed matters so that society assumed they were engaged long before they really were, in short everything tended towards their marriage and he felt that he could not honorably withdraw. He was getting married more because it seemed the proper thing to do under the circumstances, than that his heart was in it. He laid no restriction on Edith as to keeping his life's history a secret, but she—romantically disposed—preferred to do so herself till after their marriage." "I knew you first as 'Andrew Gillies' and that you will be up to our wedding-day" she

said to him when he suggested that her father and mother ought to know that he was not wealthy, nor even from an aristocratic family. I will tell mamma all about you the day before our marriage, and then how surprised papa will be to be introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Norman Scott on our return from Europe. Oh I think it will be such fun and I am so anxious to meet those delightful old folks, your grandparents as you have described them to me. Now Norman, or rather 'Andrew' she added archly "you must promise me one thing, and that is to take me sometime to see that dear old farm at Maple Bend, its stretching meadows and cool dark woods, and who knows but that we might chance to meet your little school sweetheart Holly Venning somewhere there, in her pink sunbonnet and checked pinafore. Now promise me." He turned away for a moment, strange thoughts were crowding in on him, to fly from the city, to seek Holly and hear from her own lips his fate once for all, and then that ugly blank note came back to his memory, it was deadly black now and seemed to mock his love with stinging words and a cold, sneering laugh. He turned again to Edith, his voice was calm though he was laboring under strong emotion. "Yes Edith, you will go to Maple Bend sometime, but whether you will see Holly Venning or not I cannot of course say."

Thus merrily in preparations for the approaching wedding, the time sped by till spring, cheerful even in the city's grime, again made its advent known by opening bud and bursting leaf. Once only had an echo of his past life come to Norman. One night his duties took him down among the lowest of the low, the dance-houses and concert halls where thieves, thugs and fallen women consort together in one mass of vileness. As he stepped out of one den he came face to face with George Craig just entering. There was a moments pause under the flaring gas light and then George stepped back to avoid him. A bitter taunt rose to Norman's lips at once. "Don't be afraid you coward, I won't harm you." He muttered something to himself and slunk away, Norman saw him no more.—Almost to a day, one year from the time he had left his country home behind, Norman Scott with Edith and her mother waving good-byes to their friends on the pier, sailed out of New York on board the "Majestic" bound for Europe. It had become noised abroad among the other passengers that the young couple were to be married *en route*, and much interest was aroused by this novel idea. It was also known that they intended returning by the same boat

—his duties did not allow of a longer trip—and it was suggested that the vessel be re-christened and called the "Honeymoon."

Meanwhile, as the good vessel speeds on bearing these young hearts towards an unnatural union, which both would revolt at did they but know their close relationship, let us glance back at Maple Bend again where we find the old farm team hitched up to the democrat wagon, ready to take Mr. and Mrs. Ruthven to the station to visit their grandson in his New York home. A big, old fashioned trunk is in the back of the rig and Donald Gordon is holding the reins. He is in a bad temper as usual. "It wasn't enough" he said to the horses as he curried down their rough coats that morning "for this young scallawag of a boy to run away and join the soldiers, but after that was over—a great pity he didn't get killed by those Fenians—he goes straightway to New York, instead of coming back home, settling down and marrying Holly Venning who has almost cried her eyes out over him. I know she has, though she says nothing about it. If there are any prettier girls over there than her, I would like to see them. One thing sure, there can't be any better ones." The old man was silent for a moment and then he burst out savagely. "Hang it all. I wish now I had never stood up for him, the way he has turned out. I don't know what to say to that old German fool, when he gibes me now about Scotch promises. I wonder what did come between them anyway. Seems like if nobody understands it not even herself."

As he left good-bye with them at the station the old retainer said "When will I come for you again?" "Oh we cannot say" Mrs. Ruthven answered jokingly "we may decide to stay in New York you know." "Little fear of that" he said testily "you'll be only too glad to get back again." Then coming closer and wiping his eyes quickly, the first emotion he had displayed in years, he added in a hoarse undertone to Mr. Ruthven "Try and get the boy to come back to the farm. Tell him that Holly wants to speak to him." He turned sharply about and strode away to the old democrat, and his neighbors were surprised to see him give the horses a smart crack with the whip as he drove away. The horses were surprised too—they had not been used so in years before—and Donald had some difficulty in stopping them from running away. The fact was, that he was feeling more savage the longer he thought of Norman's perfidy to sweet, little country Holly, and his utter foolishness in leaving the delights of living on the old farm for the uncertain pleasures of the city. "It passes my understanding" the old

man said to himself, as he looked out over the fields of sprouting grain on his way home, or caught a whiff of perfume from the wood-violets, clustered in a shady nook by the roadside "it clean beats my time, why anyone should deliberately leave a fine farm like the Ruthven's to go to the hot dusty city. I can understand of course poor city bodies who never knew anything better, taking a delight in tramping up and down hard pavements, or being satisfied with a narrow back-yard view of life, but I would think that a healthy boy like Norman Scott would feel like smothering, if he could not range through the old cherry woods once in a while and get a good clear breath of air. I really think he must have got slightly daft over his trouble with Holly. But if they bring him home, he shant get away again, I'll look out for that." Thus resolved, old Donald turned the team up the long lane they knew so well, and soon had them bedded down and ready for the night.

When Mr. and Mrs. Ruthven reached New York, they were amazed at the change in the city since they passed through it so many years before. Then they were able to understand directions, but now the bigness of the city, the roar of its traffic, the seemingly unending din of street noises almost stunned them. They wished themselves back at the old farm again, perhaps too the fact that they were no longer young had something to do with it. Then they had the zest and eagerness of young lives, impatient to do battle with the world and its dragons, now the most they could look forward to were a few short years of quietness and peace till the final call came. But they found that Norman had made every provision for their comfort during his absence, and the first few days were very pleasantly spent in sight-seeing, a pleasure which came to a sudden and sensational end.

The third morning after their arrival in the city, Mr. Ruthven was taken to see the Exchange where the brokers meet to buy and sell the different stocks, whilst Mrs. Ruthven not feeling very well remained at home. His guide expected that the honest old farmer would be much interested in seeing this collection of wealthy men in the midst of business, but he was not. "Looks too much like a swarm of hungry dogs quarrelling over some bones, to suit me" the old man said as he moved away. "Let us go down the bay for a sail, I want to get a sniff of the old salt sea breeze again before I die" All at once he gripped the guide's arm so tightly that he almost cried out with pain. "Stay one moment!" he muttered hoarsely "who is that man yonder?" He pointed as he spoke towards a figure lounging in an easy chair among

the crowd of noisy, eager men of business. The individual, pointed out by Mr. Ruthven, sat unconcernedly in the midst of this tumult of buyers and sellers and appeared to regard his fellows as a part of the passing show. They amused by their intense earnestness much more than they interested him. He was one of them, but of their fierce passions for gain he had not a trace even. From time to time he ran his white fingers carelessly through his iron grey hair, yawned and looked at his watch, wondering when it would be time for lunch. Meanwhile Mr. Ruthven was all fidgets. His face had paled and he kept muttering "It looks like him yet it cannot be either, I must be mistaken." Seeing his very evident agitation the guide said to the old man. "If you would like to know that gentleman's name I will find out for you." "Very well, please do so" he answered. Beckoning to an attendant, the guide pointed out the lounging figure and asked his name. "He is a Mr. Deane-Johnston who married a rich widow. He does not have to hustle now, and I rather think he likes to take the world easy about as well as anybody I know of" was the answer. Mr. Ruthven seemed disappointed but not entirely satisfied yet. Taking out of his pocket an envelope addressed to himself by Norman, he handed it to the attendant. "Will you please take this envelope to that man, and ask him if he knows the address."

"Certainly" and he made his way over towards the indolent one. The moment he cast his eyes on the envelope all his indolence vanished—Harry Scott was face to face with his past. What he had vainly tried to conceal even from himself for more than twenty years, was now close at hand, loud-voiced and insistent. In an alarmed tone he said to the attendant: "Where did you get this envelope?" "From that old man in the gallery." He took one long look in the direction—it was enough, the stooping, gray-headed figure, the strong, still resolute, Scotch face could be none other than John Ruthven's, though much changed by years of pioneer toil. As he gazed, all his city life faded away into nothingness, the glare and glitter of present surroundings grew dim, he saw again the little clearing in the forest and shy Mary Ruthven watching her father pile up the brushwood on the log heap till it burst into flame. Swiftly all his own ingratitude these long years came back to him, he felt like rushing up and asking forgiveness, he longed too to know what had become of his only son. Had he lived through babyhood, was he still alive? These and half a dozen other questions came thronging in on him, but he hesitated about approaching the

old Scotchman for he remembered that he could be severe when he wanted to.

Mr. Ruthven solved the difficulty by coming forward himself — the years had softened his recollections of the truant. There were mutual explanations and then Harry asked anxiously: "May I ask now about my boy — I cannot even remember his name, more shame to me." "Why he is or rather was until very lately in your own city here, but is away now on a sea-voyage. I wonder that you have not heard of him. He has become famous I believe and invited us to come down and see him. He will be back now in a few days." "Ah indeed" Harry replied "I am pleased to hear of his success, though he owes but little to me I must admit. In what line is he engaged? We must go and see him as soon as we can." "He has become a newspaper writer" the grandfather answered proudly "and often has he sent us home papers containing his pieces all signed 'Andrew Gillies.' You see," but the old man got no farther, his listener caught the words out of his mouth.

"Andrew Gillies" did you say? "My God, man, he is married to my daughter, his own half-sister by this time. What can we do? What can we do? Look what that foolish lie about my name has led to? Oh this is too hard" he broke down in a fit of weeping, all of which was incomprehensible to Mr. Ruthven. Then as he got calmer he told the whole matter to the old man withholding nothing. The horrible union into which two innocent lives must have entered ere this upset both men. They were fairly wild with concern. "One thing we can do" Harry managed to think out "we can cable them and forbid the marriage, but their plan was to have the ceremony performed on the outward trip, that is the trouble. However, let us hope something or other intervened to prevent it. I think myself that Andrew—or Norman as I now know him—was not overly anxious in the matter. My wife managed that affair, largely like she managed others" he was thinking of his own case. Nothing more could be done so they drove around to see Mrs. Ruthven, first arranging between themselves that nothing was to be said to her about their discovery in the meantime.

And how speeds matters on board the good ship "Majestic," bound for Liverpool, in the interval? From the time they lost sight of land, a deep gloom seemed to settle down on Norman. He could not shake off the thought that the action he was about to take had a dishonorable side to it. Away out on the broad bosom of the ocean, separated from the fuss and worry of the great city, he was able to think more clearly

on this matter than he had been doing lately. Unconsciously too, his code of honor had been somewhat warped by contact with the city. He had seen so much of the seamy side of life, he had mingled so much lately, in the prosecution of his duties, with those among whom honor is an unknown quantity, a thing to be laughed at and scorned, that he had come to regard his proposed marriage as almost a natural sequel to Holly's inattention to his suit.

But as he paced the promenade deck one evening after most of the other passengers had retired, he took a different view of it, a new and true light stole in on him and he felt decidedly uneasy in his mind. The night was a beautiful clear one, the moonlight came streaming across the glimmering waste of waters, there was just a faintly perceptible swell on old ocean, and as he watched the silver-tipped crests of the long, low ridges of water pounding themselves into tiny lines of foam against the massive sides of the vessel, he fancied that each one was singing his own dishonor. "False lover," "False lover," "False lover" they seemed to be humming over and over till their music became so hateful that he turned quickly away. As he walked towards the stern of the vessel, he put his hand in the inside pocket of his overcoat for a light scarf, the ocean air was chilly for his throat. He found the scarf, also a little book—his old diary—which he had not seen for a long time because he had not been wearing this overcoat. He opened the little book at random, the clear moonlight brought each ink stroke out with startling distinctness and there staring him in the face were two names, one of them in his own plain handwriting, the other in a dainty feminine one. Here is what he read

"NORMAN SCOTT,
HOLLY VENNING."

Ah, but how distinctly their conversation came back to him as he read. He could see her half-pained face again looking up into his own and hear her say. "Maybe you will forget though our poor, little, restricted life here then. You are clever Norman, the big world will grab you up eagerly for it is always ready to applaud cleverness, and in years to come you may forget your country friends, forget—everybody." "You were wrong Holly" he reflected to himself bitterly "it did not take years, just one year did it effectually." With almost a curse on his own instability of purpose, he recalled his own answer to her half fears that night. "I may forget it is true my country friends, I may even

forget my happy country school-days, but there is one sweet face I can never forget. Can you guess whose it is? Come, let us write our names down so that neither of us can ever forget our conversation to-night."

But stinging memory was not through with him even yet. It recalled her half-joking answer as to why she thought he himself ought to retain the page, whereon they had written their names "because you are most likely to forget, because men are false and women true." "Yes, Holly" he muttered to himself, pacing up and down the deck, "you were right about men being false, I see it all now, but 'better late than never,' and fortunately it is not yet too late to pause ere I take another false step. I have done Edith and Holly both wrong, from now I will try to repair that wrong. Edith is too sensible a girl not to understand my motives once they are explained to her, something I will do first thing in the morning. And as for her mother, her anger must be braved I suppose. Even that is better than going any farther in the direction I was pursuing."

Having come to this eminently wise resolve, he turned in and slept soundly till long after daylight. He found little difficulty in righting matters with Edith, she for her part could not think of entering into a marriage where there was the slightest bar, though she chided him for allowing matters to drift on thus far without frankly telling her all, but she could go no farther in reproaching him for this than he had himself already. However, her mother on being informed of his resolve was furious. She stormed at him, she threatened legal redress, she even burst into tears, something most unusual in this society woman. She insisted over and over that all her friends would be laughing at her and Edith, laying such stress on this side of the matter that he somewhat contemptuously asked her if "Edith's own wishes were not to be consulted, rather than society's" adding "I do not deny madam that I have done wrong, but I wish to retrace my footsteps. You would have me go on that wrong pathway, even if every step led me farther and farther away from the path of honor, as long as your world of fashion applauded. I tell you once and for all that I decline to follow your lead farther." This stormy interview ended in more tears but he was obdurate, nothing could move him now. During the remainder of the voyage, Edith and her mother kept out of his way and the rest of the passengers seemed to regard him with no kindly eyes either. But at Liverpool, where a cable message was waiting them, it was seen what a narrow

escape from a repulsive union there had been, and peace on a new basis was established between them. The events of the past few days though had come as a terrible shock to Edith's sensitive nature, and on the homeward voyage she was quite ill. But her mother and Norman, now working cordially together, nursed her back to health, so that when New York was again reached and her father, accompanied by an old, white-haired couple, met them on the landing-stage, she had regained her old-time jollity of manner and charm of conversation. She had lost a lover but had found a brother, and it was a happy group, who gathered in the fashionable New York home that night.



CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FINAL HOME COMING.

“O wanderers from ancestral soil,
Leave noisome mill and chaffering store ;
Gird up your loins for sturdier toil,
And build the home once more.
Come back to bayberry-scented slopes,
And fragrant fern, and ground-mat vine ;
Breathe airs blown over holt and copse
Sweet with black birch and pine.”

— *Whittier.*

“Well, I am going to give up journalism, abandon the city and go back to the farm” was the way Norman introduced himself to his employer the next morning after the events narrated in last chapter. “Nonsense my boy, what are you talking about anyhow?” The busy man looked up from his work with a half laugh scarcely believing he had heard aright. “I am talking about going back to the farm” he answered firmly “and I intend to do it too.” “What is the trouble, don’t we pay you enough?” He was getting interested now that he understood his most brilliant writer was about to leave him, and a money consideration seemed to him the only feasible explanation of such a strange procedure. “Yes my salary is ample,” he answered, “sometimes I think it is more than I earn. But the life has become distasteful to me.” “Do you mean that your associates on the staff are not congenial, or that the social world does not suit you?” “My associates on the staff are all pleasant, the social world does not interest me much but that fact has very little to do with my present decision.” “Please sit down then and explain exactly why you wish to leave us, it is all a puzzle to me” the manager said wearily as he laid aside his pen and prepared to listen.

“Why Mr. Anderson, have you never heard of people abandoning the city and going back to the farm again?” Norman exclaimed in some surprise.

"Certainly, I have, but not a successful person like yourself. I can understand the failures of life, the ne'er-do-wells, the floating derelicts, drifting back to the farm once more just as they drift into the lower quarters of our great cities, but I cannot understand a clever young man like yourself with most of life before you, with a splendid future just ahead, taken up by society too, I repeat I cannot understand such a move. The only reasonable explanation is, that away off on some lonely hillside farm, there is a pair of bright eyes which might grow brighter by your coming. Oh you need not blush" Norman had colored to his very ears "I know how it is myself, I was not always old and grizzled like I am now and I cannot blame you, my boy. But confound it, marry the girl and bring her to the city too. We have work here that you only can do as it should be done, in fact I understood you took a holiday to get married." "I did, but"— he hesitated to finish the sentence and the keen business man broke in with "Never mind now, I do not wish to interfere with your private affairs nor to know them. If there has or has not been a hitch, go back to your work anyhow, we want you to stay with us, let others do the farming. Good farmers are thicker than blackbirds in spring time, good writers are scarcer than angel's visits."

"I thank you for your good opinion of myself Mr. Anderson, but my decision is unchanged" he said firmly. "If my talents are such as you say, then the neighborhood where I was born and raised have first claim on them. In the huge, festering mass of this city's sunken population, which I have investigated and which has largely driven me to my present resolve, I could only hope at the very best to ameliorate a tiny fraction of the misery I have witnessed, but in my own country home if I be true to myself, I may be an uplifting force in many directions, touching the lives of probably all my neighbors. The wide sweep of public life has dazzled far too many already, to be a plain citizen discharging all its obligations has a greater charm for me. In the confusing roar of the city one almost comes to forget that unnumbered millions cannot get to the so called top. To be useful to those every day toilers is my ambition, if ambition it can be called. Besides, I will not deny that a selfish consideration entered into my decisions. We are living this life but once here, and to take the most happiness out of this assured fact may be selfish, but it is at least natural. I enjoy the free, open air life of the country, I do not enjoy the close smothering breeze of the alley-ways and courts. My nature is not to be a martyr for others

improvement, nor to have others martyrs for mine. I would if I could that every person in the world might pursue those callings, which suit their individual tastes. To be as useful in that calling as possible is not alone a duty, it is a privilege. But I insist that the distinction which separates callings into "high" and "low" is an altogether false one. The statesman who governs a country wisely and well is pursuing a high calling, the farmer who scatters his grain afield and reaps and houses his harvests in their proper seasons is also pursuing a high calling. The individual makes his own calling high or low, according as he does the work in hand well or illy. The calling itself has no class or distinction inherent in it."

"But will the farm offer enough scope for your abilities?" the manager asked. "Will you not tire of its isolated life as so many others have done before you?"

"Why should I tire of it?" he asked by way of an answer. "Is it not after all the real corner-stone of the whole edifice of human effort? Does not existence itself depend on the varied products of the farm? What is the most appalling calamity that can befall any people? Famine, another name for scarcity of farm products. Surely there can be no more responsible post than that of the farmer. If he should go asleep on duty, life itself would be snuffed out." "As to the isolation of farm life, I look forward confidently to the day—maybe not in my own time—when much of this shall have passed away. I see means of communication so cheapened and extended, that farmers and their families may breathe in the pure country air of the farm, and at the same time enjoy most of the privileges of the town. I see, in my mind's eye, educative influences, say celebrated lectures in the city, attended by cultured audiences largely drawn from the farms, and those same audiences whirled away to their peaceful country homes afterwards in a few moments at a trifling cost. Nay, I see in every country village throughout the land, reading circles formed to study the best literature, and learned professors from the great universities directing them, glad of the opportunity to meet such earnest people. I see in addition the farmer's daily paper and letters laid on his breakfast table every morning, the same as in the city now. All these reforms may be delayed some time, but they are bound to come. Time is on the side of the farm. God made the country and man made the town."

"You are indeed enthusiastic on this point" the manager observed "but how do you account for the present rush from the country to the town?"

“In much the same way as I account for any other rush. One follows the other. Let one man but run up a street yelling, and see how quickly he will have a crowd at his heels. I look though, for this mad exodus to continue till it cures itself, for men are very much like a flock of sheep, who will blindly follow their leader from a good pasture field into a poorer. But when the latter is picked bare, then pale hunger — the real tester — will drive them back again. It will be the same with the present rush to the towns. They will become so congested, the suffering will become so intense that the inevitable reaction will set in, returning reason will tell these people that the soil itself is the real storehouse of nature, and we will see the tide set in again towards the farm. I am as certain of this prediction being fulfilled, as I am that the sun will rise to-morrow morning.

“Well, I must say that you have made out a tolerably strong case from your point of view” Mr. Anderson said, “still I hope you may be able to keep up your connection with the paper, even if you do go back to the farm.

“Oh yes” he answered eagerly “nothing will please me better than to write of the country and its people. I want to say also, that perhaps my stay in the city would not have affected me so deeply, had I not been brought directly into contact with its worst side from the start. The squalid misery of the slums, the inhuman depravity of whole families herded together in one common living and sleeping-room like brute beasts, the poor, pathetic old-young faces of the little children in those smothering tenement houses, their wee, staring eyes straining to catch one glimpse of the blue sky beyond, oh God can I ever forget them? And the horrible unkindness everywhere! I had read that there was a feeling of mellow good-fellowship, running like a fine thread throughout the relations of the slum-dwellers, but I saw no evidences of such. Instead of this, I saw drunken, ruffianly brothers strike their sisters with closed fists, I saw fathers pound their weakly children like if they were fighting with men, till I had to interfere to save life, I saw everywhere in the slums a systematic and cruel tyranny of the strong over the weak. Not even once did I see any indication of finer feelings, not once did I see a standing up against the savage sway of the intoxicated bully. The reign of brute force was everywhere in the slums, civilization had dropped off like a useless mask. Can you wonder that I almost hate the city where such can and does exist, that I long again for the dear old farm, to hear the joyous matins of the birds in the trees, the babble of

the brook among the hills and the drowsy murmurings of the wild bumble bees. All these sing of freedom and not of tyranny. I fancy I can smell the perfume-laden breeze even now, as it comes sweeping up the old lane, fresh from across the sweet clover fields. The little, box-like backyards of the city, hemmed in by high board walls, they are cramping and fettering me, I want to roll over and over in the deep grass of the meadows again, without a fear of trespassing on someone else's property. I hate your trim, clipped parks and flower beds, laid out with mathematical accuracy, and looking for all the world like huge checkerboards, I hate your park policeman and their stupid signs "keep off the grass," as if God's own sod was not intended to be pressed by human feet. I never passed by one of those barbarous signs yet that I did not wish for an axe to smash it to atoms. You, a city-bred man, can scarcely understand such feelings, simply because you never had elbow room. All your life you have been hedged in by by-laws and ordinances and this and that rule, till you have come to regard all these as natural. The Prisoner of Chillon came at last, after years of captivity, to regard the spiders in his cell as close friends and even the chains, that bound him fast, were objects of affection.

"My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are :— even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh."

So it is with you Mr. Anderson. You are surprised to find no doubt, that the things you admired all your lifetime inspired quite different feelings in me. Here is the difference, my early teacher was nature itself, yours was conventional art."

"But talking of teachers, surely you do not mean that the country has superior facilities to the city in this respect," Mr. Anderson interrupted rather impatiently.

"It has and it has not. It has not of course the magnificent seats of learning of the city, the colleges, the universities and great technical schools where scholars congregate. I do not despise them by any means, to do so would be foolish in the extreme. They have a wide-reaching and on the whole a healthful influence, despite some minor faults which will slowly remedy themselves. I look for them to become grander instruments of good than they are even now. But ah, the country is the place for the young mind to expand in. We learn the aggregated wisdom of books at the colleges, in the country we

gather each one for himself or herself a personal bit of knowledge, not possessed by anyone else, since it is drawn from the unfailing and ever fresh stores of nature. It is sometimes said that certain colleges turn out specialists, but they are specialists only in a narrow sense, that of having mastered the collected knowledge, which forms the stock-in-trade of that particular line of thought. Two specialists of this type, having absorbed an equal amount of this knowledge, will be as like as two peas. Thus they are turning out, not specialists but machines of a certain pattern, duly stamped M. A., B. A., L. L. B., etc., and for aught I know, patented as well" he was growing bitter as he proceeded.

"What then would you have instead of the present system?" the manager asked in some surprise.

"Why nature is the true specialist. She takes the young child in hand, not in classes mind you but individually, and leads them to observe the winging down of the autumn tinted leaves, the broad circling of the hawk high overhead, the tiny rootlets pushing out to meet the spring warmth and all her innumerable sources of information. She does this so kindly, so unconsciously, that the child never realizes that it is being educated, that it is being developed into a true specialist, true in the sense that its knowledge is at first hand, that it is not patterned after anything or anybody. You ask me what I would do. I would like to see every child in all the land spend their receptive years, say from four to fifteen, in the country and very largely in the open air. I would make their support compulsory by the parents when able to do so, and by the state, when the parents could not afford to do this. I would not break up homes of course, for nothing can atone for loss of home life, but consistent with this essential I would make the country a universal home for the young and plastic. Then there would be no more slums, no more degraded, savagely tyrannical men and women, for all would be truly educated, and to be educated in that way does not alone bring a sense of freedom in ourselves, but it causes us to seek to extend the same to all others. Then the reign of "man's inhumanity to man" would come to an end for good and all. No, Mr. Anderson, I cannot admit that even in the matter of true education, the city is equal to the farm. Restfulness, reflection, they are essentials of every well-balanced education."

"Yes, when you look at it in that light, the city does draw on our stores of energy too much. Even I, born and raised here, feel the drain of times and would gladly quit. But this has always been my home

and I suppose I will yet die, right in the harness," he spoke rather sadly and Norman was touched.

"Give it up, give it up before it is too late. Turn to the country, you will find the rest you crave for in the broad open fields anywhere away from the roar of the city. I do not ask you to go to Canada, as I intend to do; you are an American and this is your country. But I do ask you to give up your present life, because I know that you are fast becoming a martyr to it, that the strain will clip fifteen or twenty years off your life and if you will allow me now, I will read to you part of a sober opinion by one of the most eminent physicians in this city as a proof of what I have said."

The manager nodded his head and Norman read:

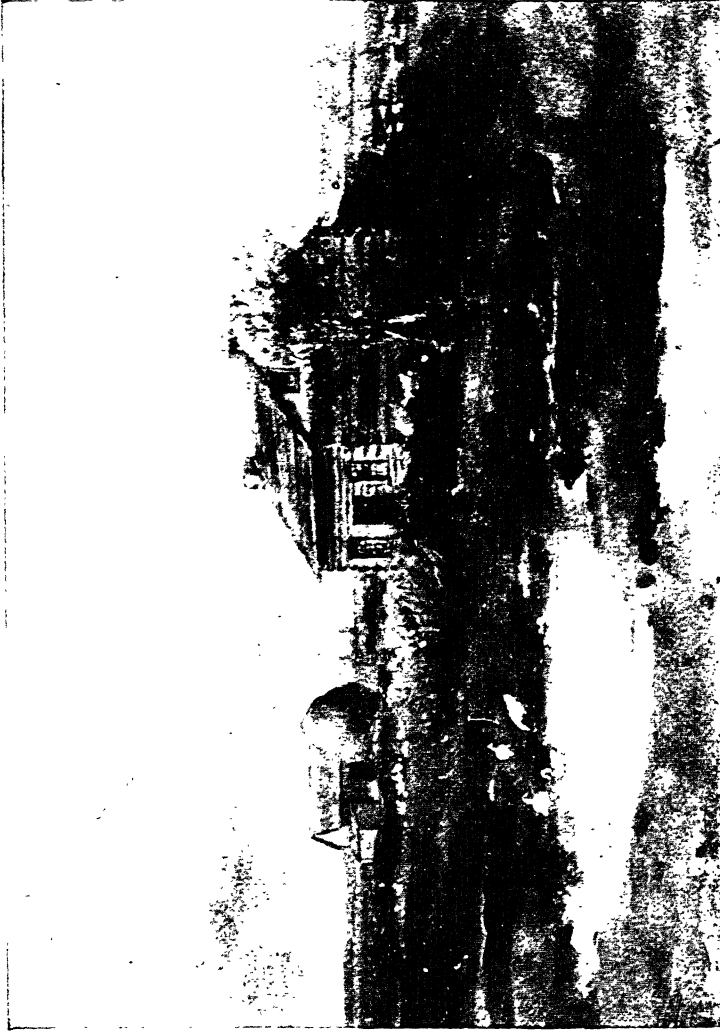
"It is not the one thing alone, it is not the simple fact of eating one's lunch too quickly which constitutes what I call fast living. But all of our surroundings, our pleasures and pastimes partake of the same high pitch. Our social conditions tend towards this end. The humblest can hope for a palace some day. Even the Germans and the English live here but a short time before they likewise are tuned up to concert pitch. The rewards, so rich and so sure; and the ever stimulating competition of his fellows drive the business man, the lawyer, the engineer, the man in any line of intellectual activity, to his greatest effort all of the time. He is like a steam engine under forced draught. The fact that his daily routine is one of ever present and intense excitement has brought him to believe he must have a stimulus, even in his recreations. Books which are exciting, dramas of the most gorgeous setting and sensational character of plot, athletic games that demand the utmost effort, horses whose speed is that of railroad trains, yachts which beat their prototypes throughout the world—these and a thousand other things, all intense, all exciting, all startling, all sensational, are the occupations of his leisure hours. What is the outcome? To supply his rapidly exhausted system he is compelled to consume large quantities of rich food and to stimulate himself with alcoholic beverages. He starts upon his career with a robust digestion, not easily deranged, and his career ends in premature death, which too often owes its origin to the flagrant abuse of that digestion. The majority of men who break down before they reach 50 were healthy in youth, the possessors of a good physique and a strong pair of lungs. I believe that if you would make a list of all the men in this city who were not born to wealth, and who had amassed a fortune of \$100,000, or had made success in some line of intellectual effort relatively as great as the massing of so much money, you will find that two-thirds of them were country-born and country-bred. New York is the arena where Americans who are bound to win or to die come. It gets the best brawn and brain in the country, uses up the stored energy of many generations, cries for more victims and they willingly offer themselves. This New Yorker, born out of town, who is the most enthusiastic New Yorker is the maddest of all the racers in the chase for fortune and position. He is usually successful at the cost of his health.

But nature is a strict and accurate accountant. She puts everything down in the great ledger, and when she finally sends in her bill she will not accept fame or money for pay. When the first indisposition comes he goes to the doctor. After the doctor has questioned him he usually gleans information something like this:

"I go to work at 9 o'clock in the morning. I hurry down town as soon as my breakfast is completed. Before I go into the office I go to the soda-water fountain and get a tonic of some sort and take a glass of brandy, because my stomach is heavy and my brain seems 'clogged up.' I do not have time to think of anything but business till lunch time. Then I eat at my desk if I cannot get away, talking over some matter in the meanwhile; or I go to a restaurant, eat as quickly as I can and get back to work again. I have to travel a great deal, I usually do this at night, and often I do not get much sleep on the cars. When I am at home I go to the theatre, or, more often, hold some business conference. After the theatre I lunch. I drink enough to make me forget my stomach trouble, and perhaps I eat a little too heartily. I do not get to bed until 2, and then I do not sleep. My business dealings of the day and the plans for the morrow repeat themselves over and over again and again."

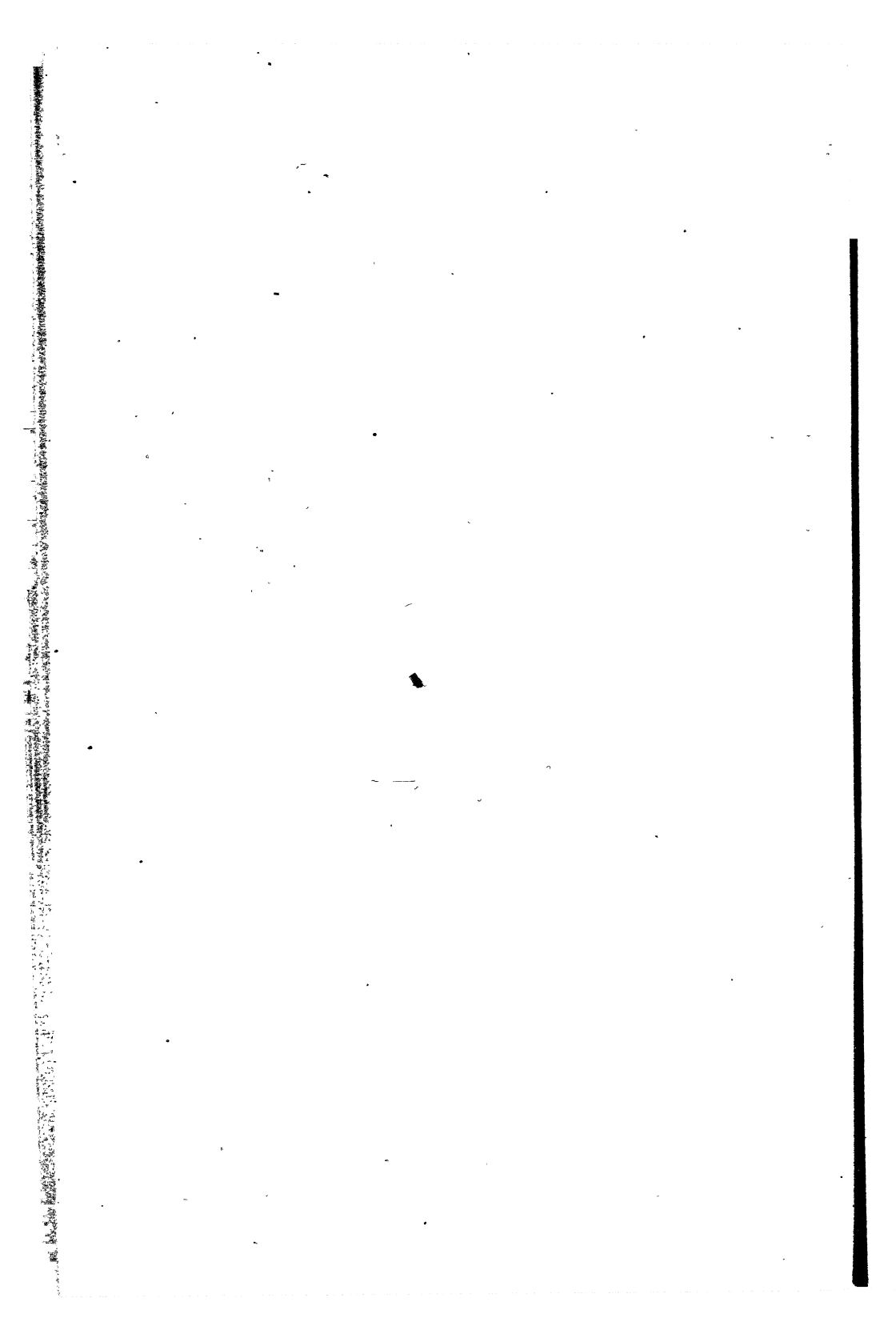
If the patient is told that he must change his habits altogether he is profoundly surprised. He considers that an impossibility. Even if he promises reform he will not observe the rules laid down for more than two or three days, when he will be going on once more at the same breakneck speed. So the doctor contrives to do the best he can without the co-operation of his patient. And he succeeds wonderfully well he seldom effects a cure, for he is not allowed the opportunity. Yet he adroitly puts on patches here and there. He keeps his patient alive, but the interest in his affairs and the pressure of the sphere in which he lives keep his brain in abnormal activity, until at last he has sapped all the energy which he brought to the beginning of his career, and has stolen all of the energy of future years which should have sufficed to give him a healthy old age. And he dies just as he should begin the happiest period of his life."

As he stopped reading, he turned towards Mr. Anderson to notice the effect. The keen business head, already streaked with gray, was bowed forward, his handkerchief was at his eyes, and for a moment nothing was said. Wiping hastily away his tears, the manager spoke again but his voice had a tender ring now. "Yes that is all true but I am too old to change now. This is my tread-mill, I must endure it till the end comes. I will try and see that my children do not follow in my footsteps, but as I have said it is too late in life for me to change. I will offer no further objections to your plans, I see that you are right. Go young man, you have much of life before you, you have talents, you have good health, you have an abundant store of energy. May the good Lord prosper you and may that little maid out on the hill-side farm not say 'nay' to you."



THE DEAR OLD FARM.

• From the original water-color by W. Smith.



He resumed his writing and Norman saw that the interview was at an end. Our story is almost at an end too. If ever there was a joyful man it was Donald Gordon, when the cars drew up at the station and he saw that Norman was one of the party. "I hope there are no return tickets among you" he said to Mr. Ruthven but meaning Norman all the time. "No indeed" the old man replied, "we have all seen quite enough of the city and its ways. Maple Bend suits us firstrate." Nobody ever heard outside of themselves what happened when Norman went to see Holly the next day. His grandmother declared though afterwards that she heard him reciting to himself before he set out some verses, which she herself had learned him. They ran something like this :

Do you remember where we played,
 The pools upon the shore,
 The crabs we caught, the boat we made,
 The old sea's rush and roar?
 Do you remember how I vowed
 To sail across the blue,
 And build behind the silver-cloud
 A palace-home for you?
 Do you remember all our pain
 Beside the little pool
 When you were taken home again,
 And I went back to school?
 You smiled upon me through your tears,
 And took my keepsake knife,
 You vowed to love me all the years,
 And be my little wife!

Maple Bend itself is no more. It is now a country of lovely farms, the last traces of the village have almost dissappeared, but the creek still sweeps around in one long, graceful bend, and in the early spring days a group of healthy, clear-eyed children may still be seen trooping out to the sugar bush, where their ancestors settled so many years ago, and these children call Norman and Holly, "father" and "mother." But instead of the old log-house with its bark roof, a comfortable modern mansion looks out past the maple woods to the green, smiling fields beyond.

Not one of the original pioneers is left. Out in the orchard, where their only child was laid so early in life, Mr. and Mrs. Ruthven sleep side by side (they died within a month of each other) and close by, a headstone marks Donald Gordon's last resting place, his dying request

being that he should be buried on the old farm where he had spent so many happy years. Even Ezra Stubbs has passed away, though he stoutly maintained to within a few hours of his death that he was good for twenty years more.

Only one echo ever came back of George Craig. In one of the New York papers, for he still kept up a sort of periodical correspondence there, Norman one day noticed this item.

A SNEAK THIEF FATALLY INJURED.

About 2 o'clock this morning, Mr. Joseph Snelzer, who resides at 221 East Street, was awakened by hearing his bedroom window slam violently down. In the half darkness he could see a man hurriedly trying to raise it again from the inside. Only half awake, he sleepily asked the intruder what he wanted, and the response was a pistol shot, which smashed the thumb of Mr. Snelzer's outstretched hand. Despite this wound he pluckily grappled with the burglar, and in the struggle that ensued succeeded in turning the weapon so effectually on the man, that he now lies dying at Emergency Hospital, whither he was conveyed in the police wagon of No. 6 station.

The dying man has been recognized as George Craig, an old offender, his particular line hitherto having been sneaking into hallways, stealing wraps, and other articles. He was not regarded by the police as a dangerous man at all, on account of lack of nerve, and among the fraternity of thieves he was looked upon with contempt. The attempt on Mr. Snelzer's residence is thought to be his first venture in that line, as it will certainly be his last, nor is he thought to have had any pals. Entrance seems to have been effected by climbing the verandah and prying the window open. In his haste and half fear he must have left the half raised window without a support, and this fact led to his tragical encounter with Mr. Snelzer. It is saddening of course to see any one die, but very little sympathy is being wasted on a cowardly night prowler who first fired on a half awake man."

Year by year, Norman Scott and Holly his wife see their horizons widening. Their children are being taught that farm life is not degrading or dull, their relatives in New York come to visit them each summer but they do not desire to change their peaceful country home for the city's worry, nor do they suffer by contrast in culture and breadth of view with those they meet, when they return the visits. Norman himself is in the county council, his name is synonomous in a wide area for honesty of purpose and clearness of vision, he has been asked on many occasions to stand for parliamentary honors but has so far declined. All in all, he has never for even one moment regretted his decision to return to the Dear Old Farm.

