Title: More Leaves from Lantern Lane
Author: McClung, Nellie Letitia (1873-1951)
Date of first publication: 1937
Edition used as base for this ebook: Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1937 [first edition]
Date first posted: 28 October 2010
Date last updated: October 17, 2014
Faded Page ebook#201410D1

This ebook was produced by: Al Haines

MORE LEAVES

from

LANTERN LANE

by

Nellie L. McClung

THOMAS ALLEN PUBLISHER
TORONTO, CANADA

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Sowing Seeds in Danny
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In Times Like These
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Leaves from Lantern Lane

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MORE LEAVES FROM LANTERN LANE

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The material contained in this book is reprinted with the kind permission of the editors of the following newspapers: The Edmonton Bulletin, The Winnipeg Free Press, The Vancouver Province, The Toronto Telegram, The Hamilton Spectator, The Ottawa Citizen, The St. Stephen Courier, The Sudbury Star, The Regina Leader, The Saskatoon Star Phoenix and The Victoria Times.

WINTER HAS COME TO LANTERN LANE

By the calendar it should have come some time ago, but this year in Victoria, B.C., we had a long Indian summer with a bright sun and flowers in the gardens—marigolds, hollyhocks, chrysanthemums, and purple violets in the shady corners. In December a yellow jasmine suddenly broke into bloom, and I thought the innocent little shrub had been deceived by the fine weather, but the neighbors tell me this is a winter-blooming jasmine.

I stopped writing here to go out and see if it were still alive, for we had some frosty nights. I have two little blossoms in my hand now to give me courage to tell you that these little flowers have not a trace of damage, although the ground is as hard as iron, and the odd cabbages left in the field, wrapped and rewrapped in their thick leaves, are frozen to their hearts' cores. They must have hidden fires in their hearts like the prairie crocuses that push their furry noses through the snow at the end of March.

The jasmine, or jessamine, belongs to the olive family. You can see I have been consulting the encyclopedia. I had to. I was not even sure of the name. I called it "jasmine" the other day and an expert gardener in the next ten seconds called it "jessamine" and gave me a meaningful glance. Now I hope she reads this. The jasmine (that is what I called it first and I am going to stick to it) is a native of a warm climate. But evidently it is an adaptable immigrant. It is a close relative of the lilac, and just at this moment I think it is a far finer shrub. Here are the lilacs standing huddled in silence, bare and grey, and not a gleam will we get out of them until that flowery season when the whole garden is dripping with bloom, but the little jasmine is blooming now when all around is bare and dead. That is the sort of shrub to have!

I have the same affection for it that we used to have for the old hen on the farm. She began to lay just after New Year's, when eggs were sixty cents a dozen and when the other hens were resting from their labors. She was not a pleasant hen to deal with, I must admit, being of a cross and boastful disposition, but her timing was good. No doubt she felt, as efficient people often do, that she had earned the right to be disagreeable.

I was speaking about the coming of winter at Lantern Lane. The water is frozen in the bird baths; the purple aubretia, which was just beginning to put out timid little points of color, has hastily recalled them. The violets are stiff, and the wall flowers are listing to port. There is no color left in the garden now but the red berries of the cotoneaster and the few bits of green moss that we brought back from Goldstream and put in one of the rockeries. The lawn on which we spent hours of weeding and gallons of water last year, is still green in spots and looks like a piece of spoiled velvet. But in front of the house are two green strips of cover-crop, which stretch across the landscape. Two fields of frozen broccoli lie to the right, but whether they are lost or not will not be known. If the little button or head has not yet been formed, they will recover.

The frozen soil has embarrassed the pheasant and quail, and makes it hard for them to get their food, since they can

no longer scratch for seeds; so they come into the farmyards now, nervously looking for crumbs. The neighbors put out grain for them, and are rewarded by seeing these beautiful birds at close range.

Across the road the high stand of evergreens remains unchanged. I hope no profane axe will ever be laid to their roots, for of all the trees the evergreen is the stateliest and most enduring. Janey Canuck, the beloved Canadian writer, in her "Seeds of Pine" said, "A group of pine trees will restore sanity to a disordered mind, for they are cordial trees, and in quietness and confidence is their strength. Pines are never tremulous or trivial; neither do they fade or die." I like to see them swaying in the wind, gracefully bending and bowing without haste or fear or resentment.

Two nights ago, one of the worst winds of this year blew in from the sea and raked the trees with a heavy hand, and now the woodland path to the water is carpeted with their green twigs, and here and there a big branch is broken down. The frost has heaved the ground too, and now the little path is not easy to travel, because of the loosened shell of honeycombed earth, which gives and crunches under foot.

The whole shore is filled with driftwood, fine timbers, boards, pieces of boats, a few trees, and an infinite variety of old roots, old logs whose worn surfaces tell you they have been buffeted by the waves for many years. Now they rest for a while on the beach, a little interlude in their endless wandering, and we go and look wistfully at them.

We see enough firewood to last all the people in Gordon Head for a year or more, if we could get it. But the bank is high, and the wood could not be lifted up without great expense, so we just look at the driftwood and marvel at the wasteful ways of life.

At a point which juts out into the sea, where the foam broke in the big storm, the rocks are sheeted with ice, and it even hangs on some of the trees, a solemn warning to them that they are marked for destruction. In some big storm they, too, will join the driftwood.

On the beach now are benches made of old logs and boards, and there we sat, and looked about at the sea's strange offerings—tangles of kelp all twisted together like the tumbleweed on the prairies; a frame which had been used to load ships, with the paint still fresh on it; an old arbutus root with waving arms, lashing in to shore, with all the bark gone, and the wood so smooth and white, bore a ghostly resemblance to human flesh.

The benches would have been comfortable on a fine day, but on this morning, though the sun lay in soft rosy light on the island of San Juan across the straits, the salt of the sea blew cold and the breath of the Pacific was as chilling as any wind that ever swept across Jasper Avenue in Edmonton.

Winter has come to the island—but do not think I am complaining. I like the winter scene. I like to see the icicles hanging from the monkey tree. I like to see the friendly lights in the neighbors' houses on a cold moonlight night. I like to pile wood on the fire, even if it does take a little while afterward to bite the slivers out of my fingers. And I like the long winter evenings, when the neighbors drop in, and eat apples, pop corn, work puzzles or listen to the radio, and as no one has to get up early, we stay up until half-past ten and think nothing of it!

BRIGHT AND COLD

The Canadian people are poor advertisers. We glory in our infirmities and confess our frailties with gay abandon. We send out the blackest weather reports without one word of defence or explanation. When a snowstorm comes in June, we photograph the landscape, date it, and send it forth to be used against us. We do not mention the fact that a good snowstorm is about the finest thing that could possibly happen to the crops in June. A snowy street with the heavily laden branches makes such a pretty picture that we just have to take it and send it to the relatives in the Old Country. They think this is a frozen country—Rudyard Kipling started it—and so we may as well carry on.

It is a good thing for the Pacific Coast that fog does not photograph!

And what mean and niggling little items of news concerning the weather "our correspondents" send across the line!

I remember searching the Los Angeles Times for news of my country one night, and all I could find was that "the ink had frozen in the schools of Brantford and the children had been sent home" to wait for the thaw no doubt. Just as if the processes of learning would be slowed up for a little thing like that. At Northfield school in Manitoba, where my young feet were led in wisdom's ways, our ink went into its winter quarters with the beaver and the muskrat, and it is little we cared.

There were compensations! We had shinny and snow-balling, and we generally managed to keep one place on the pond swept for skating.

Cold weather has its softer side. It is not all evil. I love to see the prairies when they are all mantled with snow, and the shadow of every building and fence post lies blue on the white ground. I like to see the cattle wedging into the strawstacks with the hair on them standing up thick as plush. I like to see the blue smoke rising straight up into the windless air from the houses. I like to see the children on their way to school, riding each other on their handsleighs, and see the horses and cutters on the roads with their red-lined fur robes, and hear the chiming bells.

We need to have our artists show us the beauty of the Winter Day. I saw a picture a few days ago that has feeling and life and atmosphere in it, and everything a picture should have. It is a wintry scene, the sky is cold and the clouds are wind-driven, and the snow is beginning to curl and drift. You can see that a storm is coming, and the prudent traveller should seek shelter. But the Indian, though he knows all this, has dismounted from his horse, and stands beside the telegraph post, laying his ear to the cold timber. His horse and the pack-pony huddle together with their rumps to the storm. And the picture is called "The Song of the Talking Wire."

There is no more artistic background for a story than the glittering white world, where death lurks in the blue shadows. Sir Gilbert Parker knew how to make it work for him, and in his epics of the north, the stories of "Pretty Pierre," the cold played a leading part, shaping the destiny of his characters. He used it as Thomas Hardy used Egdon Heath in his "Return of the Native." Look what James Oliver Curwood could do with a North-West Mounted Policeman, a beautiful nurse, and a few Indians set against a good hard winter, north of the Peace.

Those of us who write have not half appreciated the beauty of our winters. We have allowed our good to be evil spoken of. It was a visitor to Winnipeg who saw a poem in a cold day when the statue of the Old Queen was white with snow. Rose Fyleman described the snow as "very clean and very hard, and glittering like a Christmas card."

"Snow upon the house-tops,
  Snow upon the street
And Queen Victoria in her chair
  Has snow upon her stony hair
And snow upon her feet."

Francis Thompson's poem "To a Snowflake" is one of the gems of our language, a symphony of words

"What heart could have thought you
  Past our devisal
Of filigree petal
  Fragilely, surely.
Who hammered you, wrought you
  Of Argentine metal?
'God was my shaper,
  Passing surmisal.'
Insculped and embossed
  With his hammer of wind
And his graver of frost."

I hope that some lover of Canada, anxious to advance the cause of letters, will begin to work on an anthology of cold weather literature, prose and verse, collecting everything that is worthy, from "Jingle Bells" to that lovely poem which begins "The snow had begun in the gloaming, and busily all the night, had been heaping field and highway, with a silence deep and white." There is an abundance of material, stories of mercy flights, stories told by trappers, descriptions of storms, blocked trains, and gallant rescues; brighter stories too of moonlight skating on the lake, with bonfires and baked potatoes, or roast corn; hockey games, and skiing. There is a wealth of material which will be lost unless some one takes it out of "Time's careless keeping."

I know why my mind is running on these things. It is the coming of Christmas. I want to go back. I want to hitch up Nap and go to Millford for the Christmas mail. But Nap is gone and Millford is gone; I want to go to the Sunday school concert in the church at Manitou and see Santa Claus come down through the trap-door. I want to believe it is Santa Claus though I know it is either Wilbert Logan or Bert Crane. I want to see the snow weaving a pattern around the street lamp in front of the Farmers' Store, where the sleighs are being filled with parcels. I want to go down to the little red station, and listen to the "Song of the Talking Wire." I want to go back.

A CHRISTMAS STORY

I would not have chosen an unemployment camp for the setting of a Christmas story. I have always thought of them as dull houses of frustrated hopes, where young hearts grow sad and bitter, and life loses all dimensions but that of length. But it is quite possible that none of us knows the full magic of Christmas, and how it works its way, even into sombre places.

This is the story of Mack, the cook at one of the camps on the Coast, and Mack was no ordinary camp-cook. Mack had a knack of putting food together. He had a gift. It was Mack who discovered that prunes soaked in warm water until they have lost all their wrinkles, could be cooked in the pan beside a roast of pork, imparting a flavor to the pork that made even the superintendent come out to the kitchen and ask him how it came about. It was Mack who raised green peppers from seed in a sunny place that he had dug and cared for, and cooked them with rice and tomatoes and cheese, and salt pork, and bread crumbs, making every fellow his friend for life.

Mack had the gift! And you would never think it to look at him, for he was a thin, pale, little fellow, with a child's voice and a bare face that never needed shaving.

Soon after he came to the camp, he got in right, one time when the bread ran out, by whipping up some sour milk biscuits, and sprinkling cinnamon on them when he put them in the oven. The superintendent again made comment, and at the end of three months Mack was installed as head cook, and allowed to pick his own assistants. It was the fact of Mack's cooking that started the Christmas fund. About the end of November the boys began talking of Christmas dinners they had had in happier seasons when they had jobs, or were going to school and living at home. And someone made the statement that there was no one who could put up a better Christmas dinner than Mack "if he had the groceries." So the fund began. Twenty cents a day is not a lavish wage, but out of it twenty-two dollars was raised to buy whatever Mack thought he should have. And Mack was deputed to go to town and make the purchases. It was to be Mack's one holiday too, so the superintendent told him to stay the day.

Mack had saved seven dollars of his own, and he knew what he was going to do with it. Mack had his plans—one luxury and one only would he allow himself. He hired a car for the afternoon. He wanted to feel again a steering-wheel in his hand. But first he did his shopping. He spent the camp money as cautiously as any MacTavish ever did. He consulted with the head of the grocery department of one of the big stores and got every advantage of bargain prices, past or future, on his turkeys. By buying his turkeys at the big store his purchases would be delivered free of charge. He spent the whole morning in and out of bargain basements assembling all his purchases at last, and having them delivered with the turkeys. Methodically he checked his list and saved all his bills. At the end he had four cents on hand but had bought everything.

When the business of the day was over, Mack gave himself the luxury of eating what someone else had cooked. And then began his holiday, which was a drive around town. At ten o'clock at night he was still driving. He had been around Marine Drive twice, out to Butchart's Gardens, and up the Island Highway. Now even the business streets of Victoria are swept and clear of traffic at this hour as we all know, and as Mack viewed the clear length of Yates Street with its beautiful lights like clusters of white grapes, a sudden desire for speed swept his careful soul! It might be a whole year before he had another holiday, and when would he ever have his hands on a car? Just one grand burst of speed before he took the car back! There was not a soul in sight.

At the corner of Quadra, the Law on a motorcycle drew up beside him and he slowed down; all the weight that had been in his foot was now in his heart.

"Where are you going, Doctor?" said the hardest voice he had ever heard.

* * * * *

In spite of Mack's tearful pleadings, the Law was adamant. Speeding must cease. There had been accidents. Orders had been issued to gather in all offenders. Too bad—but he should have thought about all this about ten seconds before he stepped on the gas! "Twenty-five dollars, or ten days."

Mack begged for a postcard and painfully inscribed it to the Superintendent. Words were so feeble, and so hard to come by.—

"Dear Sir:

I'm in jail for speeding, but I got the stuff O.K. Merry Christmas to all, I'm sorry.

Mack."

The next night the camp was in a state of panic. No Mack—no groceries, for the stores make delivery only twice a week. Had he gone with the money? Were they to be cheated out of their Christmas dinner after all? If Mack had fooled them, whom could you trust? The murmurings grew into a clamour. The superintendent was firm in his opinion that Mack had not absconded. It was he who thought of jail as a possible explanation, but advised patience. Give him another day, or two days. Meanwhile the new cook was having trouble. He was lost without his chief, and everyone's temper was touchy. Nothing he could do pleased the "boarders." He burned the porridge, and cooked potatoes with a bone in them, and mutiny seemed certain.

On the third day, Mack's card came, also the turkeys and groceries, which were unpacked and put in the storage kitchen by the disconsolate cook, who knew the cooking of these was far beyond him. If he spoiled them, nothing would save him.

That day a delegation went to the superintendent's office—-two men, with the cook between them. They had a proposition to make. The superintendent listened attentively. "We got to get Mack out of jail," the spokesman said. "This man," eyeing the downcast Pete with disapproval, "can't boil water without burning it. Now the turkeys and everything are here, we just feel we must get Mack to come back. Would you take Pete here, into town, and turn him over to the Magistrate. He ought to be in jail anyway for the things he has done, and let him work out Mack's sentence, whatever it is?"

"What have you to say to this, Peter?" the superintendent asked. "Are you willing to go to jail?"

"Glad to go anywhere!" he answered, "to get away from this gang. Nothing pleases them. I've worked my fingers to the bone for them, and what do I get? Sure I'll go to jail, and like the company. It will be a swell change for me."

The superintendent drove into Victoria that day, taking Pete with him for safe-keeping, and went to the Magistrate, explaining the situation. He told about the twenty-two dollars and the turkeys—and dwelt on Mack's great skill as a

cook, and the strained situation at the camp under Pete's cooking, with Christmas only two days away. He described the delegation and Pete's willingness to take Mack's place. "Might he ask for Mack's release?"

"On what grounds?" the Magistrate asked. "He was driving fifty—he had no excuse and made no plea—he wasn't drunk."

"No, he wouldn't be," the superintendent pleaded, "but don't you see, your Honor, he hasn't had his hand on a car for a year, and I suppose it went to his head a bit. He forgot just for a moment that he was definitely out of work, and he didn't hurt anyone. Besides we need him at the camp—I really can't do without him."

The Magistrate hesitated. It was irregular. Still—it did seem too bad to disappoint the whole camp, and these camps are difficult places at best—Christmas is a poor time to keep a good cook in jail. He began writing on the desk pad. The superintendent followed his hand and read, "Released on grounds of compassion." Then looking up, he said, with a smile, "In consideration of this season of goodwill, we will grant your request and we will not insist on the sentence being completed by the gentleman known as Pete. He, too, is entitled to a Merry Christmas, even if he did burn the porridge, and let me wish you both the compliments of the season."

After Mack had a shave and a haircut, he and the superintendent did some more shopping for the party. When they arrived at the camp, the full force was waiting for them and received them with cheers. They even forgave Pete his evil workings, now that they knew the food was safe from his blundering hands.

All that day Mack worked, and all through the night. He peeled apples, chopped meat and suet for the mince pies. Pete assisted by scraping vegetables, keeping fires on, carrying water, grating the bread for the dressing, and peeling the onions. The turkeys were cooked with strips of bacon laid across the breasts and sausages under the wings—many sausages to make the meat go farther. Mack had thought of everything, even to the little whirls of white tissue paper to cover the ends of the drumsticks. For a centre-piece on the table, he had a little log cabin made of peeled withes, which one of the men sat up late to finish, and a rail fence around it made of candy sticks. The roof of the cabin lifted off, and inside it was filled with home-made candy, made by Mack at 3 o'clock on Christmas morning. The table had long strips of red tissue-paper on the white oil-cloth and the turkeys were brought in on their big platters, sending out their delicious odour of sage and onions—blue enamel dishes of cranberries were dotted up and down the table. Giblet-gravy and open dishes of mashed potatoes, mashed turnips, creamed carrots and pickled beets completed the setting. When everyone at the camp sat down together, staff and men, the superintendent at the head of the table, every face wore a smile and every man wished his neighbor a "Merry Christmas."

THE LAST NIGHT

The last night in the Old Year should have a wind that mourns in the chimney, not a roaring, rushing wind, but just a gentle sorrowing wind that brings memories of other nights, when other friends sat with us beside the fire.

It is a soul-searching time when the books are closing, and the last returns are in; and one cannot escape the strictures of one's conscience for the kind deeds left undone, the encouraging word unspoken. There is a finality about it all! New Year's Eve puts the closure on all our excuses and alibis, and just while we are in that meditative melancholy mood, remembering that action is the best relief for penitence, how would it be to look over the bookshelves and see how many borrowed books we have? The Scotch people believe that, on New Year's morning, an evil spirit comes into the house that has retained other people's property. I wish more people believed this.

The last night of the Old Year has always seemed to me to be a strange night for people to throw themselves into drunken revels, doing what they would not think of doing at any other time, impelled by a pitiful desire for escape, in sad confession of the barrenness of their minds and souls.

If it gives release for even one night to those who have nothing in the year's activities to cheer or comfort them, who

have no sense of achievement, no mental satisfaction from the labor of the year—nothing but a harvest of barren regrets—I would not be the one to begrudge it to them but it is a matter of deep regret and pain to know that young people are following this evil custom. It is pitiful to think of the first sun of the New Year shedding its beams on intoxicated young people, who in the name of pleasure have lowered their standards of life, and dulled the finer impulses of their souls.

Every year there are young people present for the first time at these places, many of whom did not want to go, did not want to spend their money for something that leaves nothing but regrets, but they did not know how to refuse—when "everyone is doing it!"

Some day a new vision will fill the hearts of young men and women (it has come in some places) and they will refuse to follow the stupidities of their elders—refuse to wage their wars, drink their liquors, be deceived by their sophistries. They will be so full of plans to make a brave new world with new fashions, new conditions of life, new standards of what constitutes a good time, that they will not need an outside stimulant to put life into their gatherings. Some of us thought emancipated women would do this; we thought their love of conservation, love of beauty, love of child welfare, would spur them on to finer things. But women hadn't the nerve; hadn't the courage. They were too afraid of being considered "queer" if they failed to fall in line with custom. So now our hope is in the valiant young. They are our Last Reserves!

We think of these things in the closing days of the year, when our minds go back to all the fine ambitions and hopes of long ago. Think of them with sorrow and contrition. Maybe our method of reform has been wrong. There is no use telling people what to do, or not to do—(it takes a long time to find that out.) We all love to direct the traffic by the simple method of speech. It is so easy, and gives one a sense of power. But if one method fails, if the armour in which we trusted has proven worthless, by all means let us try a new method, a new armour. We are experimenters anyway—all of us, doctors, scientists, statesmen, preachers, social workers, farmers.

There is an old proverb about "Satan finding mischief still for idle hands to do." It still operates. The idle person is never happy for long. Everyone craves exaltation. No one wants to travel the low road all the way through life. I wrote last chapter about the young fellow from the unemployment camp who got his exaltation from driving a car after his long period of doing without a car. It became his intoxication. We all crave that sensation of power and release which we call a thrill, and if our lives are dull and grey, without purpose or meaning, we are exposed to the temptations of changing the picture in ways that leave a bitter sting. Education and religion could drive out boredom by giving us a new look at life—such as Paul got on the road to Damascus. If, all at once, we see a great cause to be helped, a great program to which we can contribute, we will not find life boring. We will get our high moments by doing something.

The women who run the Women's Workroom in this city, and help women out-of-work to earn money and to learn sewing and dressmaking—they do not need to search for thrills. They get theirs in seeing hope grow where despair had been. The woman in Winnipeg who began the Good Neighbor Clubs for men out-of-work, and saw hundreds of men enjoying books, music and games, in warm and comfortable quarters, instead of slinking into doorways to get out of the wind—she had her thrill surely.

Everyone who does a good piece of work gets a reward in the form of an uplift of spirit. The woman who makes a dress or bakes a cake, the man who ploughs a straight furrow, knows this exaltation. It is the ability to do something well enough to take a pride in it which builds up character. The children in the schools who are being taught handicrafts are getting a preparation for the life that they will live when school days are over. Manual training in schools has changed many a 'problem' boy into a fine worker and a good citizen.

We are just at the beginning of a New Era. Work, which held many people to a straight path, has been reduced by machines. Work, when there was too much of it, broke backs and soured tempers, but it produced character too. Now that work has been largely taken over by machines, we could have a Golden Age, if we were educated for it. In the year that is coming before us, I hope this education will be our aim. It cannot all be done by mass effort. There is a place for every individual who catches the vision of the New Era, and who will reach out and do something to widen someone's horizon. It may be a light service, to give a cheerful book to a lonely one; to teach a song or a new game to a group of children; to show the neighbor's girl how to knit herself a sweater. Slight things, small services, maybe, but by these little acts of kindness you are showing someone how to find joy in his life, and joy means much more than pleasure!

So let the Old Year go. We are facing a better one.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

I am not among the strong members of society who scoff at New Year's Resolutions as signs of weakness. I believe everyone should sit down early in the New Year and draft a set. Indeed, I would like to have the privilege of making up a neat dozen or so for my different friends. They might not follow them, or even approve of them, but such is the mellowness of my New Year mood that I submit them anyway.

1. When I am at a meeting, I will come to order when the bell rings, even if I am just approaching the "nub" of a very good story. I will not mutter, or whisper, or give my opinion to the member next me instead of addressing the chair. If I cannot have my own way I will not fall silent and sad or threaten to resign.

2. When I hear a good story I will not try to discount it by telling a better one. That cuts friendship. When a literary agent in Hollywood told me he and his wife had created a record by remaining married for eighteen years, I could have raised his score considerably, but I didn't—I told him it was marvellous!—and, looking at him again, I said it was truly wonderful!

3. Now in regard to words—during the year that is coming I will try to ease the strain on the two adjectives I have just used, "wonderful" and "marvellous." Good words they are but they are beginning to show signs of fatigue. With a whole dictionary of words beside me, there is no reason for making these two do all the chores!

4. I will not waste other people's time by telling them how busy I am. Everyone is busy or believes he is, so that has ceased to be news. Indeed I will try to listen more and talk less. We all learn more by listening, anyway.

5. I will do at least one thing each day that I do not want to do—go for a walk, do without a meal, tidy a drawer, do a bit of mending, return a book or read a dull one, just to keep a hold on my will-power.

6. I will not be afraid of silences in conversation. There are times when a clean silence is better than idle chatter. In the silence thoughts may germinate.

7. I will not be one of those sensitive souls, whose feelings are easily hurt. If anyone is going to offend me, he will have to put it in writing.

8. I will never offer to do something, or give something, hoping that the prospective recipient will refuse to let me do it. If I do something for anyone, I will not resent him letting me do it. This is the rock on which many a good family friendship founders. The mothers or fathers do too much for their children, play the part of the perpetual doormat, and then are angry at the children for taking so much.

9. I will keep alive my sense of wonder. Things do just "come about" sometimes—delightful happenings—pleasant surprises! Santa Claus is not merely a seasonal worker. I heard to-day of a woman who was in desperate straits, everything had gone wrong, and she could see no way out of her financial difficulties but to go and ask for relief. Her husband had been out of work for a year and had gone to the woods to get a job, but broke his leg the first day he was working. She had not a friend in the city to whom she could turn. She was living in a rooming house and had sold everything that would sell. One day a messenger from a local bank called to see her and asked her to come to the bank. An insurance company in Edmonton had written to the bank asking it to locate her. They had two hundred dollars for her from a policy which she thought had lapsed years ago.

10. I will try to tell the exact truth, which (apart from its morality) saves much wear and tear on the memory.

11. I will reaffirm my conviction that intellectual snobs are the most objectionable of all snobs. People who are

excessively and offensively proud of their wealth or social position may not know any better, but those who have had advantages of mental development denied to their less fortunate brothers and yet have no understanding or sympathy in their hearts for the unlearned and uncouth, are, to me, the most objectionable of all people.

12. I am going to do more this year than I ever did to get books for everyone. There are so many book-hungry people. I will not be a book-hoarder any more. Books are a refuge, a sure defence, equalizers of life's good gifts. They atone for so many of life's injustices. I have been a bit mean about them for I like to see plenty of books around me. They comfort the eye. They furnish a room more than curtains or drapes. But that's no excuse—books belong to the people who will read them, and on a shelf they are just so much dull merchandise. I had an experience a few days ago which has shaken me out of my possessiveness. I was reading one of the new books as I travelled west to Vancouver and I had a good impulse to give it to a woman whom I met and talked with. She lives in a little place in the interior, and is a real book-lover. I had not quite finished the book and so made that excuse for not parting with it. When I reached Vancouver I carried the book in my hand, and went into a store to do some shopping before going on the Victoria boat. When I reached the boat the book was gone, and I have a guilty feeling that it served me right. I remember another time when I got a direct lesson along this line. I had an Elbert Hubbard edition of the Christmas Carol, hand-tooled soft leather, a lovely book, so beautiful I kept it out of sight so no one would ask me to lend it. One night, through an open window, the rain blew in on my lovely book and the soft leather wrinkled and warped. After that I did not mind lending it—it went out freely. I learned then what Francis Thompson meant by that line in 'The Hound of Heaven'—

"Ah, must thou char the wood ere thou canst limn with it" (i.e. write with it). My book had to have its beauty spoiled before I would let it fulfil the clear purpose of a book.

Let us who love books, and have drawn comfort from them, never forget that one hungry soul is of more value than many books!

GARDENING BY CATALOGUE

One of the delights of winter life comes to us at the turn of the year, when the catalogues come in. I did not get a chance to indulge in this pleasure until now, but I kept the catalogues safely and knew that one good evening lay ahead, when I would begin at page one and work slowly through these fascinating pages.

Gardening by catalogue is so satisfying—not a thrips, not a cutworm, no watering, no disappointments, and the results are right before you. When I sit down to enjoy a catalogue I do not let any mournful yesterdays disturb my heart. The future lies before me.

When I read about the California Wonder Green Peppers and Ruby King Peppers and see their pictures, shiny and fat, I revel in them, notwithstanding my experience of last summer when I waited on a row of them, hand and foot, hoeing, finger-mingling the soil and watering, and coaxing and calling. Though they did at last answer, it was but feebly. My neighbor had them twice as large, and higher and better in every way. Of course that was Last Year, and I know more now. I had never even seen a pepper growing before—and mine, though small, tasted like peppers and reddened at last. I'll try a new kind this year, Chinese Giant is the largest of all and I do like bulk! I shall write down Chinese Giant.

Across the page from the peppers are the Onions, and here I linger reading every word. I am glad to see that Ailsa Craig still stands at the head of the class. "Excellent for fancy trade," it says. Some people probably do not know there is fancy trade in onions. No doubt these are the onions used in sandwiches at brides' receptions, or are enclosed in a cellophane bag and put in Christmas hampers. One of my neighbors last November sent me an onion about the size of a quart bowl, a beauty, which would have made a centerpiece for a table set in a fluffed-out hairpin doily. We used part of it to flavor the Christmas turkey. I suppose that might be part of the 'fancy trade.' The onion is rapidly coming into its own all over the world. It's climbing the ladder of fame. A society has been formed now in Kalamazoo, Michigan, called "The Onion Anti-Defamation Society" to protect the good name of the onion from slander and evil insinuations, and I am in hearty approval of its aims. The onion has suffered from having a personality of its own, an honest personality too,

which distinguishes it from other of the earth's offerings. The onion has a sure Place in history, and if Herodotus can be relied upon, it was the onion that permitted the pyramids to be built. Oliver Wendell Holmes said of it that it is "a communicative vegetable with a real genius for soup," and he could have added, salad and meat pie.

And the onion holds its place in art. I wonder how many of the idle scoffers know that there is an onion pattern in china. It comes in the blue china, made in England, and it shows the onion in natural and in conventional design.

I received a rebuke last Sunday from an old gardener, and his complaint against me was that I had not made out a good enough case for the onion, when I wrote about it in my column. I had not told all. I had not told anything of the onion's medicinal qualities—how a cut onion will absorb the germs floating in a sick room; how a poultice of onion will relieve a sore throat and restore a voice that has become hoarse; and if applied to the soles of the feet of a child, will relieve a cold and even croup. I told him I would do what I could to repair the slight I had unwittingly put upon the onion, in failing to give it the credit it deserves.

The onion figures in the news too, and has been affected by the evil workings of the human heart. Spain is no longer the world's greatest onion grower—it has lost its place in the line. Bermuda and Canada have stepped up and are now supplying the Empire.

I see by the catalogue that the Japanese, or Ebenezer is the earliest onion, and if planted early, will mature in July, "and," says the catalogue writer, "they will bring a good price then."

There is a page of Snapdragons in color that slows up my pilgrimage through the catalogue. I cannot leave it. There is an "Orchid" in yellow and mauve, a "Sunnybrook" in shades of quivering sunshine, and a "Ruby" that glows like the heart of a campfire in a dark night. Snapdragons have a pleasant association for me, dating back to the first flower show I attended at the Coast. I had been wandering around in a daze, seeing many flowers I had never even heard of. I had been asking questions too, revealing the depth of my ignorance, and had been "set in my place" more than once, and given that look which means, "Where were you brought up, if ever?" At last I came upon the display of Snapdragons, and they looked like friendly faces in a foreign land. But above them stood a foreign word, a rather ugly word, hard to say. "Are these not Snapdragons?" I asked the exhibitor. "They are," she said with a friendly smile. "Then what is this?" I asked, pointing to the big word. "Antirrhinum is the proper name," she said, "but like you, I prefer to call them Snapdragons." "Like you," that's what she said, and "Prefer!" That was tact. It was more than tact. It was a tempering of the wind to the shorn lamb!

It is quite true that some of the plants listed and pictured in the catalogue do not always look like their pictures when grown. We have not been able to get Sweetpeas that are as beautiful as they appear in the catalogue. They get leggy and decrepit and full of rickets. But there's something so lovely about Sweetpeas, so fresh, and comforting, that the garden would not seem right without them. I shall try the mixed seed this time and get them in early.

Then I came to the Chinese Lantern Plant, and I mark a big X on the northwest and southeast corner, for I have plans for them. I want to put round beds of them down Lantern Lane, between the cherry trees. "It is easily grown anywhere," says the catalogue, but I beg leave to submit a minority report. This will be the third year I have tried Chinese Lantern Plant. (Physalis Franchetti). It came up, and then dwindled and departed. One time in Calgary I got roots from a woman who was digging it out of her garden because it had become a pest. I planted them in hope and great expectation, and nothing has been seen of them since. I shall give them one more chance. I want more lanterns up and down the lane. And with it I am going to plant Honesty. The catalogue shows a lovely bouquet of Chinese Lanterns and Honesty for winter use, and I want plenty of them to send out with the holly at Christmas.

I am doing my winter gardening now on this pleasant evening in early February and I see no reason to deny myself anything. I shall have two packages of everything. I hurry up now and mark Freesias and Bellis the Bride, and Rosa Rouletti....

The catalogue says everyone should plant a tree because this is Coronation Year. I think I'll plant a red maple for George, the maple being our own best loved Canadian tree and a fitting tribute to a King; and for Edward I shall plant an evergreen, in memory of a handsome boy who pitied the poor and who was the idol of our hearts for many years; a gallant lad, who even in his hour of grief took his leave of us all like a gentleman, with kind words on his tongue. For

him I shall plant a white pine.

VANCOUVER WEATHER

I bought a new hat to-day in Vancouver, but you would never know it for a new hat. It is just the sort of hat everyone has and the kind that I have had for years. But it is this year's model, and I have the sales slip to convince myself that it is a new one. It is brown felt and of no particular style, just a hat. And you may well wonder why I bought it—I, to whom a bit of color is very pleasing. The only colorful thing about this hat is the tag, and it does not show, and the only reason I can give is that I had to have something to wear with a brown suit, and it had to be in a large headsize, and this is it! I complained about its dullness and the saleslady put a feather in it, a sad little thing in shades of dust and rust, dropped by some despondent hen in a careless moment.

In contemplation of this morose headcover, I am moved to mourn for the lovely hats that once made bright the windows of millinery shops, and brought back youth and beauty to aging faces. Many a time when the tides of life were running low and the winds of the world were contrary, I was enabled to meet what came, with fortitude and composure, by buying a new hat for myself. On one of these occasions I bought a hat made of velvet flowers in the sweet pea shades, mauve and crimson and purple and midnight, blue, coral, ivory and rose. It had a broken rim flaring up on one side to show the flowers against the hair. Ah, me! but that was an easy hat to look at. It put the rhythm back into life. And who does not remember the Gainsborough hats with their drooping plumes—willow plumes which came into a family not as an extravagance but as an heirloom, and could be used again and again and dyed and divided and loaned for weddings? With a drooping plume in smoky rose falling to the shoulder from a hat which rolled back from the face to show the lining of black panne velvet, it was easy to think that we resembled Daisy of Pless or Lady Hamilton or Lady Jane Grey. I remember that even a shiny sailor hat, when it had a crown of black-eyed susans in rich yellow with black centres, was calculated to lift one's spirits above the mean things of life.

But what good is a brown felt with a soup-colored feather! Why have the milliners put us down to this? and at a time when dust-pans and drain-boards come in apple-green and buttercup-yellow, and when the clothes' lines on Monday morning foam and billow in color.

I think I hear someone rise here to interrupt and say how lovely are some of these queer little things that are worn for hats, the berets and tea-cosies and funnels and windmills. And I will admit that the younger ones look well in them. It is hard to spoil a pretty young face. But what support do we get, we who need all the help that color and line can offer? We get a brown felt, with pensive feather. I have swept the soot from the top of the oven on Saturday afternoons with prettier feathers than this!

Goldsmith in one of his poems has something to say on this subject of adornment. While women are young and beautiful they are scornful of adornment, he says,

> But when those charms are past for charms are frail,
> When time advances and when lovers fail,
> She then shines forth solicitous to bless,
> In all the glaring impotence of dress."

Now there is truth in that, but Oliver is wrong about the motive. Older women do crave pretty clothes and warm colors, but it is not "to be noticed" or "to catch a beau," or cover a rival with confusion and jealousy. Their motive is much more simple and praiseworthy. It is merely to feel the sense of well-being and pleasure that comes in the presence of beauty. They can get the same sensation from the presence on the table of a bowl of flowers.

The weather in Vancouver is under discussion every day, and to the visitors from the prairie, it crowds the Health

Insurance Bill off the front page. The visitor refers scoffingly to the "Evergreen Playground where golf can be played every day in the year." "We came to the Coast for the winter," they say ironically—"and we are getting it." And they tell stories of seeing what they thought was a robin, but on closer inspection found it was a sparrow who had brought out his red flannels!

Vancouver can take anything with cheerfulness but snow. Snow gets them down, and this year they had about six weeks of it. The streets are piled with it at this minute, but there are signs of release. It is raining and now the people are growing hopeful. Rain will take away the snow. When the laundryman came this morning, dripping wet, I said something about the weather. The rain was falling in sheets. "This is the end of our trouble," he said cheerfully, "I think the good weather will last now!" Good weather!

Now I suppose that explains why the hats come in brown felt!

THE CANADIAN SCENE

There is much written today about Canada which will never see the light unless the signs are changed. Editors are afraid of Canadian stories. Our people are too near the romance and drama of their own country to really appreciate it, and are inclined to take the dull view "that nothing ever happens here." Our people like stories of the South Seas, New York night clubs, gangsters of the Arizona desert, handsome young millionaires who live as they please, selfishly and without purpose, but so full of wisecracks that we are ready to forgive them anything.

These feverish stories leave the reader unrefreshed and dissatisfied with everyday life, thereby defeating the whole purpose of reading, but they are written glamorously and grow on the reader like a drug. Meanwhile there are real stories of our own country begging to be published but the editors fear the apathy of the Canadian public.

There are many causes for this apathy. We live near a great and excitement-loving country. Attractively printed magazines with thrilling pictures are easily obtained. Undoubtedly the motive of escape enters into the choice of the reading, and we know it has a certain appeal and value. But there is a regrettable lack of interest in our country which could be remedied in the schools and homes if we had more enthusiasm among the teachers and parents for the beauties and dramatic possibilities of Canada.

* * * * *

Here and there are bright spots, I shall mention two which are before me. I know a teacher in Vancouver who, to the many pupils who have passed through her hands, has given a knowledge and love for the Canadian background as seen in our literature. She has Canadian pictures on the walls of her room, and she reads Canadian stories and teaches Canadian songs, and in many ways imparts a feeling of loyalty without in any way detracting from the friendly and neighborly attitude toward other countries. I know a Reading Club in one of the western cities, whose members have been studying Canadian books for years. When I was asked to speak to them at one of their meetings and they showed me a list of the books they had read and studied, I felt abashed and humble. I am sure I had not read a third of the books. They could tell of the romance of the lumbering industry in Canada, and the fur-trade, and the fisheries. They knew all about the first shipment of wheat that went from Canada, the trail of the explorers and the coming of the railways. They were all busy women, and had done this in one afternoon a week over a period of years.

We are sorry to have to admit that the people who are enthusiastic about the Canadian scene are still "news."

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In addition to the people who like the exotic settings referred to above, we have the people who hold fast to the English tradition, and like their stories set among the trimmed hedges of the English countryside, and if the scene changes to a city, prefer it to stay within the "sound of the Bow Bells." Canada is still to them a bleak and bare country, devoid of

beauty and romance, where a living may be made, to be sure, but it has never become a "home."

I am full of this subject because I have just read a story of the Far North, that romantic land with its brief bright summer, where the growth is so rapid that wheat will ripen in ninety days from the time it is planted. But the story is not of agriculture. It is the authentic diary of a woman who followed the trap lines from September till April, travelling three hundred miles from Fort Vermillion by wagon, water, canoe, and on foot, in all the rigors of the winter weather. The party consisted of two men, two women, and a baby eighteen months old. The two men are returned soldiers whose only chance of health lay in the outdoor life. There is no love-element in the story unless you call it that, when two women are willing to go with their men into the wilderness to find peace for their war-shattered nerves. The charm of the story is that it is plainly and simply told. There is no ornamentation or embroidery, yet through it shines the writer's love for the long trail. She tells of the glistening moonlight on the snow, and the dark nights when the stars glitter in the darkness like fiery eyes, the sun dulled into a red ball by the smoke of the bushfire and the Northern Lights crumpling and hissing as they march across the sky.

There is much information concerning the fur-trade deftly woven into the background, giving the reader a new conception of the hazards of the trapper's life. When I see a fur coat in a shop window now, I will see more than the coat —I will see the blinding snowstorms, dogs with bleeding feet cut by ice, patient men and women, snowblind, frostbitten. I will even think of the evil-smelling bait used in the traps, which was so potent when warmed on the camp stove that even the baby protested, crying "open the door." The baby learned to talk in the eight months, but did not know what to call a little girl who came out from one of the forts, and so called out, "hello little something."

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The story is full of adventure and heroism told with a fine detachment. At one stage of the journey the little party travelled over a lake a mile-and-a-half wide of "rubber ice" which bent beneath them like a swinging bridge, cracking in long lines, with the water oozing through. The party spread out for safety but even the dogs stopped and whimpered in fear. The writer tells how her husband called back to her to come on and not be afraid for she was "as safe as if she were in God's pocket."

This simple story written by a woman who has never thought of herself as anything but an ordinary woman doing just "what anyone would do," has all the charm of Dillon Wallace's stories of the north, from which the last generation got many a thrill.

But here is the difficulty—where will an editor be found who will take a chance on a book like this?—a story which has no villain but one old husky dog called Skinflint, no thief but the weasel and the bear, no human triangle or jealousies or infidelities; only adventure in full measure and hardship and courage in the age-old struggle of man against the elements.

The name of the writer is Mrs. Christina Jones, known as Mrs. "Paddle River Jones" to distinguish her from others of the same name, and she was well-known in the north country as the good-angel of her district, even before she took to writing. She and "Alf." her husband came to the city for a while but they had been too long in the wilds to grow accustomed to the grinding of street cars and the shrieking of automobile brakes and horns. So they have gone back to the silent places, and her manuscript is going the rounds of the publishing houses.

WOMEN AND THEIR MONEY

An oil boom is with us again and fortunes are being made—on paper anyway. A young couple who went south on their honeymoon before Christmas, rather begrudging the money their trip would cost, came back to find they had more money than before they left. Old certificates that had been lying in trunks are being taken out, dusted, and sold for real money. Conversation now in street cars and at teas hum with excitement. We are back to the breath-taking days of 1912 and 1926.

I talked yesterday with a hard-headed insurance woman, and I asked if she found the oil boom had affected her business. I was glad to hear her say that the effect so far was all good.

"I do not know how long it will last," she said, "but the lessons learned in the last boom, with its tragic collapse, seem to be sticking—and women are buying annuities with the money they have made on their oil stocks or have had left to them in insurance... When I hear that someone has made money I aim to get to them before the smart young man with curly lashes arrives with the prospectus of a new mine whose location is next door to one of the Big Ones. We have a few very fine examples left over from the last boom, of what can happen to women and their money, and these I dwell on with all the interesting detail at my command. I mean the cases of dependent women now living with unwilling relatives. Everyone can cite cases. Some of them have seen Mrs. G. wheeling her daughter's baby in the park at the dinner hour so she will be out of the way when her son-in-law comes home all tired out after a hard day at the office. Mrs. G.'s insurance money was all lost in his oil company in 1927 and so, of course, she looks like a bit of bad news to him. If Mrs. G. had an annuity of $100 a month she and her son-in-law would be good friends. It is surprising how even a smaller sum than that, when it is sure to come each month, adds to any woman's charm, improves her conversation and gives weight to her opinions. It makes her a welcome guest at any of her children's houses, and that is no slam on her children either, for young people have their own burdens.

"I tell them these things," she went on, "I tell them it is a safe rule always to prepare for the worst, and then if it comes, you are ready, and if it does not come you are all right, too. I find women are craving security more than they ever did, and so will listen to reason. They have had plenty of time to think since the last boom....

"Sometimes the young fellow with the fine new portfolio and I meet on the door-step and if there is any delay in getting in, I tell him my business. Of course I know insurance looks like a dish of cold porridge to him, but I generally get his interest when I tell him my slogan for this time of mining activity—'A widow with money is a shining mark for a mining shark.'

"There are other dangers for widows with money, matrimonial dangers, especially widows who have money left to them in a lump sum. Good men and true are ever ready to step in and spend it for them.... You remember Vance Terry, don't you, who was one of our agents in Calgary? He left his wife all the insurance in a lump sum, and I was surprised at that, but I suppose she wanted it that way. I happened to know what a hard time he had keeping up the big premiums. She came out here to the Coast and bought a nice house and got herself a car and the two girls started to high school, and everything seemed to be working out just as Vance would like it.... One day I had a prospect with me for dinner at the hotel, and I saw Vance's widow with a young man somewhat younger than she, and I noticed that he was hanging on her words in a way that made me scent trouble. Knowing her as I did I could not believe that anything she would say would merit that rapt attention, for she always made me think of David Copperfield's mother. For Vance's sake I had tried to keep an eye on her. That night I went to see her and I found her all heated up on the subject of oil leases. I could tell she was on the verge of investing if she had not actually done so. Fortunately she had not, so I gave her my views on the whole subject of insurance and the fact that it is really a trust fund and that Vance had intended it for the two girls as well as for her and she had no right to run any risk of losing it. Before I left I persuaded her to take half of her money in the bank and put it into an annuity. She said her "friend" would be very much displeased, and asked me to stand by her in explaining about the annuity. But when I met her a few days later she said he was so angry at what she had done that he had not even come to see her. So I have a feeling that I may have saved her from picking a lemon in the garden of love. Anyway I know Vance would thank me....

"Now that is my mission—to watch over the shining marks, the tender lambs of the flocks and shepherd them into the green pastures of Annuities, and I believe in it with all my heart. I can always go back to my clients and they are glad to see me. Some of them have been known to send me flowers on my birthday."

When I left her I had a feeling that insurance is a real field for women who desire to do social service work.

WINTER IN THE KOOTENAY

It gives me a feeling of riches to travel through the country, even now in the time of snow. The snow piled high beside the track, and sitting on the tree stumps like a drum-major's cap, has in it the charm of abundance. At the Coast no one has a good word for the snow. It is a menace there, a disturbance and a pest, and there is certainly no beauty in its ugly, bedraggled, dirty face as it lies on the streets of Vancouver. No one ever wrote an ode to a snowflake there. But here in the Kootenay country, the snow is white and powdery. It covers the ground in billows; it runs down the mountains in white channels, veining their sides in lacy patterns. It softens every rock and ledge, and puts a knob on every fence-post, and when the bright sun pours through the white and blue mists that drape the peaks, the winter landscape softens into beauty.

In Nelson the sun goes down behind the mountains in the middle of the afternoon, but reappears through a gap and throws a lingering radiance on the eastern slopes. The streets of Nelson run uphill and down, and many of the people leave their cars in the garage this weather and do their travelling on foot, or on the two street cars, which bring the scattered parts of the town together. Nelson also has a ferry, which keeps a channel open across the Kootenay in all weathers.

I heard about the bridge which should have been built here many years ago.

"Four times we have sold our souls for this bridge," said the woman who drove me around; "four times it has been promised to us, by a candidate in the Provincial election, and that promise makes a sure election—I suppose we'll vote for the bridge as long as we live ... We get nothing, but we can't resist the bribe. Some of them promise us a Normal School, too ... they might just as well."

Nelson has a new Civic Centre, which lifts it out of the small-town class. The Civic Centre has an auditorium, which seats 900 people; badminton and basketball courts, containing 8,400 square feet, a curling rink and skating rink, with great showers and dressing rooms, club rooms and kitchen equipment sufficient to feed an army.

The Civic Centre has artistic features, too. The walls in the corridor of the theatre are covered with squares of wood veneer—(a home product) the grain of the wood running vertically and horizontally in alternate squares, making a striking checkerboard of the walls.

I asked them how this great project was being paid for, and given the information that two by-laws had been floated to cover the $250,000 cost. Nelson owns its own Utilities and always has a balance on the right side of the ledger. This year the profit is over a hundred thousand dollars. The late Mayor, who held firm to the principle of city ownership of all Utilities, had a rough time of it, receiving the censure of his fellow-citizens. But now his name is honored, and a drinking fountain in the square bears testimony to his statesmanship.

The question of how to maintain the hospitals is much in the public mind and it is strange to note that this highly fortunate city in excellent financial standing is considering a huge sweepstake scheme for the care of their sick. Out of every fifty cents contributed only ten cents would go to the hospital, but the friends and advocates of the scheme are not worried about that. Public opinion is sharply divided on this question, and the newspapers are full of letters up and down the country. The Bishop of Kootenay has declared himself against the scheme, in a strong letter in which he deals with the arguments with a cool logic that should but will not clear the air. The chance of something for nothing never loses its appeal. People crave the privilege of having a golden dream, which lights all the lamps of hope and desire. They know the chances are small but they like the dream. Great Britain tried raising money by lotteries, urged on by these same arguments of keeping the money at home, but the scheme was abolished because the results were evil. Gambling is always an evil, no matter how carefully it is disguised under the name of charity. The law recognizes this, and has declared against it, with one qualification (which should make us all ashamed) "except for church or charitable purposes."

The winter sports in the Kootenay country absorb the people. Such activity I have never seen before. The children hurry home from school for their skates, or skiis and are gone until darkness halts the game. The women play badminton, or curl, or both. The skating is a delight and joy to the eye. No one is too young or too old to cut scrolls on the ice.

The victories of the Kimberley Dynamiters in Europe is a personal triumph to all the population of the Kootenay, and I was asked very pointedly if the CBC was making plans to broadcast the final games.

I was in Kimberley the night the Dynamiters defeated France 13-1 and the people were very composed about it. They expect success now, and no wonder, for in all the European games the Dynamiters have not been defeated and only once have been tied.

The sponsors of the Dynamiters evidently believe that the appearance of these young men is good advertising for Canada and no doubt they are more effective than posters or literature. They are the living demonstration of a young and virile country. Once, long ago, it happened that a group of young men from Anglia was seen in the market place of Rome, and they were so beautiful of countenance, with their flaxen hair and soft skin that the great St. Augustine decided then and there that something should be done for their country. So it came that Christianity was sent to Britain.

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The drive to Kimberley from Cranbrook on a moonlight night is something to remember. The sunlight lingered on the peaks as daylight imperceptibly mellowed into moonlight, the glistening whiteness of the snow carrying us from one to the other. The whole countryside was one coverlet of white wool embroidered with evergreen trees. As we came into Kimberley, and saw the little rows of houses clinging to the lower levels along the river, with their snow-covered roofs, and brightly-lighted windows giving them the air of a perpetual holiday, we wondered if any of these was the home of a Dynamiter. We liked to imagine how the families will feel when they hear the final game coming over the sea and across the mountains with the shouts and cheering, and the ring of steel on ice, and know it is their boys who are the cause of all the commotion, and all the praise!

Surely after this, life can never be a dull thing to them.

IS CO-OPERATION COMING?

One of the high lights of my recent visit in the Kootenay country was having dinner at a lumber camp, a few miles from Cranbrook—and what a dinner that was! It was prepared by the camp cook Mau, and his Polish assistant Nick. Here, in a clearing in the woods, the camp has stood for two years, while the logging operations have gone on. There is a little street of bunkhouses, each one housing six men for sleeping, a wash house with showers, and a fine big eating-place, where the walls are lined with grocery shelves, a big kitchen at the back, with a giant of a stove with a full dozen plates, a second stove with a smooth top for cooking griddle cakes or frying eggs, a water heater above, which the cook had put on himself, and proudly explained "this stove just like fambly now."

There was a dinner waiting for us which decided me that I could live on one meal a day, if this were the meal, for we had fish (from Cold Lake, Alberta), lamb chops, French-fried potatoes, beans and corn, raspberry pie, mocha cake, and coffee. This is what I selected from the bewildering display of food Placed before us.

I asked the proprietor about this bill of fare. Was this a company meal? Surely this variety of food did not appear every day—three kinds of pie, fresh buns and salads! How could it be kept up? "Good food costs very little more than fairly good food," he said. "We have no waste. Mau is a great manager so we can give the men the best. We feed them well, house them comfortably, and they appreciate it. They work hard, and deserve all the comfort we can give them!"

"Have you ever had labor trouble?" I asked.

"No—never. You see, I know all these men. They belong here. Most of them have their homes here, and have worked for me for years—they like the work and the wages. I did not lay anyone off in the bad years."

That was the secret of it then. There was friendship and security. I saw that when we went into the stables and I was introduced to the men in charge, who told me about the horses and what they had to do. I noticed he called the boss "Harry," and so did the others.

Harry has worked at every part of the lumber business, but he is not the sort of man who has to have his hand on every department. He employs another hundred men in his factory in the town, dividing his time between it and the camp. He is never in a hurry and seems to preserve a cheerful and unruffled temper. He comes up to his house every morning when the mail comes in and his business cares sit lightly on him. He is fond of winter sports, plays golf in the summer, enters into the public life of his community, and even finds time to do a bit of wood carving.

All through the depression, he carried on. Lumber companies had a hard time when building dwindled, but Harry continued. His contracts still came in because it was certain that he would be able to fill them. There would be no disappointments. His workers were poor material for agitators, for they were contented and secure—so even in those hard days Harry and his men demonstrated that employer and employee can be friends—to their mutual advantage.

I know that the presence of kindly, capable and generous men like Harry in the economic field does not solve the deeper problems of labor, but it would go far toward a solution if they were in the majority. It happens in Harry's case that ownership, control, and management are all in his hands, and he uses them wisely and well.

We know the darker side of the economic picture. We know that in this highly competitive world many a kind and humane manager finds he cannot do what he would like to do. He has to lay men off, and to meet competition substitutes machines for men. He is driven by forces he cannot control!

But even in the face of all this, we are comforted to see what the individual can do....

I know there is a challenge in Communism—we are not wise when we attempt to ignore it and deportation and imprisonment are no answer. I would be afraid of Communism, if I did not know we have something better. Communism has done some good things, in cruel, ruthless, merciless ways, but it is built on hatred—and cannot therefore last indefinitely. In Christianity we have the whole social program of Communism and something else, which Communism can never have—the Christian dynamic, which enters into the heart, and makes people want to do right. But we will have to answer the challenge. Russia is putting it up to us!

I do not believe that our people will ever take to regimentation. But I look forward to a time when Co-operation will prevail. Sweden seems to have made great progress in Co-operation. In Great Britain a large percentage of the people belong to the Co-operative Societies, which are the greatest distributors of goods in the world now, and the largest buyers of Canadian wheat. Co-operatives do more than half of the business in Iceland and the Scandinavian countries and the idea is spreading, quietly, and bloodlessly. Is it the answer to our problems? May I sound a warning. I hope the progressive people of Canada will not divide on it! That seems to be our grave danger. Anyone who gets a good idea, immediately wants to build a political party on it! The result is that the forces of progress are divided and subdivided, until their influence is watered down to nothing. You can chip down a good log, which might have been made into something beautiful and useful, until you have nothing but a pile of saw-dust!

A DAY ON THE TRAIN

When people sympathize with me because I have to spend four days each way on the train from Victoria to Ottawa, and tell me I will soon be able to fly in a quarter of the time, I feel I am drawing down some good sympathy that belongs elsewhere.

My four days on the train are days of pure delight. I hope I will never be in such a hurry that I will have to fly.

My love for a train goes back to my childhood, when we waited and hoped and prayed for a railway to carry the farm products to market and bring us some of the advantages of the city. And at last it came! Through the Tiger Hills, it came one spring day with a reverberating whistle that sent the cows and colts in spasms of fear, galloping up to the bars. We had been expecting that first train for days but, even so, it came on us unawares, sweeping across the prairies just as if it had travelled the road before. We hitched up and went to town but when we got there, the train had gone on. It

couldn't fool around the station waiting for us. A train has dates to keep. But the agent, in a blue uniform with brass buttons and a shiny black cap, showed us what the train had brought—oranges, and nails, and machinery for the Massey-Harris agent—and the mail!

The train came twice a week from Winnipeg, and there was talk of a daily train, which, of course, no one believed! The train had one passenger-car, a caboose and a freight car, but no longer train could have a more piercing whistle or a finer plume of smoke.

We knew that having a train practically at our door—only three miles away—had suddenly lifted our burdens, brought the world to us, and increased the value of our land. We had not heard about "unearned increment" then, but we knew that great things had come to us.

So the train entered into the life of the neighborhood, and became an actor in our little dramas; we didn't mind waiting half the night for the train, in the winter, when the snow was deep. It was worth that to see it come down the hill and round the curve all covered with snow, and puffing as if its heart would break, with its headlight piercing the darkness. We couldn't set our clocks by the train, for that was before the time when trains had a schedule. We expected the train on Tuesday and Friday. It did not run by the clock, and sometimes ignored the calendar—but we were not disposed to be critical. It was our train.

Now a train with its mahogany panelling and air-conditioned berths represents to me the most comfortable form of travel. When I am beset with life, letters, and interviews, I think of the peaceful nights before me when I will sit up in Lower Seven, and read as long as I like, with the gentle murmur of air sifting in, as soft as a spring wind stirring the pussy willows along the Souris River—and then the long, long sleep, lulled by the rhythm of the rails and the gentle swaying of the coach.

The only time I did not enjoy the train was the day I came out of the Mountains on the Crow's Nest, and the fault was not in the train. It was in the countryside where I saw hungry cattle roving the snow-covered hills. The whole country was blocked with snow—not a car, not a bus—the train had brought some relief for the cattle but not enough. Bailed hay had come in and some cattle had been taken away, but still there were wandering herds restlessly searching for grass but searching in vain. I thought with sorrow and a sense of guilt of the farmer who could not bear to see his beasts suffer, and who shot them all and then shot himself, and I wished we could have some forethought about these things. After all the straw piles we have seen burned! We are so stupidly optimistic—we never will believe that a long hard winter lies ahead. Provision could have been made last fall, when supplies could have been shipped in. I see the Government is now spending money on relief for cattle, but it's too late for many of them and their distracted owners. I would like to see a permanent fund set apart to save the cattle. It would prevent the monetary loss, and more than that the heart-break. No one knows what they mean except those of us who have grown up With farm animals.

But today, travelling from Regina to Winnipeg, the scene has brightened. The cattle and horses are happily grazing in the sunshine. The grass here is abundant, and the straw stacks too, and the snow has melted into little streams that hurry down the furrows. The ploughed fields are steaming and I can almost see the pale boles of the poplars beginning to glow. The dark willows already have a gleam of red and gold. The snowdrifts inside the fence are fluted and blackened with soil, which when the snow turns to water, will rejoin the earth from which it came. The leafless trees make faint pencillings against the sky.

I hear a man in the next seat, shouting across the aisle to his friend that all these little prairie towns look alike, and all lack character. That's what he thinks! He does not know that every tree and building has a story and every one of these little places has a personality. He does not know that we are going now through the T. C. Norris country, that gentle, kindly, courteous man, who won his way to the confidence of the people by plain goodness. I think of the stormy meetings that I have seen grow calm at the sound of his voice. He was not an orator, nor an organizer but possessed such qualities of leadership that we all feel poorer since he left us! At Alexander I naturally think of Jessie McEwen, and Bella her sister, and at Griswold I think I see Kate Buchanan and at Brandon I look in vain for Beecham Trotter to give me a welcome—Beecham, very smart and trim in his grey suit and spats. Beecham Trotter was for many years one of the partners in Trotter and Trotter's Livery Stable, a gathering place for the teams that drew the wheat to Brandon. He was a man of ability and culture, with a gift for friendship. He wrote a valuable book about Brandon and its surroundings called "A Horseman in the West." But now Beecham has gone to a town even better than Brandon, and the station

platform, where I walk up and down as the train waits, is empty and cold.

The asylum stands on the opposite bank of the river, gay in a coat of new paint, if an asylum can ever be gay. A man once brought his wife in for treatment, and as he gave the information at the desk he questioned the doctor, on the cause of her lapse from reason. "It beats me where she could have got it, doctor!" he said plaintively. "She hasn't been off the farm for six years!"

GOOD OLD ONTARIO

I have been travelling for ten days in Ontario, that enchanted province of my childhood and, though this is not the season when the countryside is looking its best, I have had some delightful hours looking at the prosperous farms, grazing cattle, snake-fences, root-fences and the orchards in their symmetrical patterns. Ontario will ever have a charm for me, for I heard its glories extolled in that period of my life when every word fell on good ground, took root and blossomed. When my family left the friendly shelter of the old homestead on the Garafraxa Road, ten miles from Owen Sound, and pushed into the far west, I was seven years old and, though the parting was painful to the older members, it was all pure adventure for me. But in the long, lonely winter evenings, when the problems of life on the prairie narrowed down to one of keeping warm while we waited for the reluctant spring, I heard many stories of the abundant and happy life we had left behind—the friendly neighbors, the delights of the orchards and gardens, the social life centering in the Church and Sunday School, the unnumbered little things which had made our lives in Grey County so pleasant and which we had deliberately laid down in our quest for more and better land.

Ontario became to me then a land of pure delight. It was more than a place—it was a beatific state of being. I hoped I would not die before I saw Ontario,—even if Heaven could be all I had heard of it and I were sure of going there.

So I have always colored with the bright hues of imagination the big brick houses with their sharp gables edged with wooden lace, and the weather-beaten barns. The stone fences are to me triumphs of human hands akin to the Pyramids. My father cleared one hundred acres with his axe, cleared it of its hardwood, the hemlock, walnut and butternut. (I suppose it was this heavy growth which deceived him into thinking the soil must be good to grow such huge trees.) As I look out over the fields, so smoothly cultivated now, I think of all the intrepid men and women who spent their days in this fervor of pioneering—clearing away the forest to the end that their children might live in greater comfort and with less labor in the years to come. I wonder what they think of it all now. Are they glad they slashed and chopped, with blistered hands and stone-bruised feet, and burned great piles of logs and branches with the smoke in their eyes, scattering the ashes over the soil to make it bear more abundantly. I wonder what they would say to us now. They are all gone. One by one they went silently to rest and now lie in flattened graves, and even their names are becoming fainter in the stone as the moss creeps on and over.

But it is a pleasant land to travel over as I see it this Monday morning, with the clothes-lines full of clean clothes billowing in the high wind, and the spring-swollen rivers glinting and glistening in the sun. Every furrow holds its little silver stream, and in the coaxing sunshine of spring, the land is beginning to steam. There are no leaves yet on the trees that stand up in blue-black pencillings against the sky but I can picture them in all their beauty. I remember how my mother used to tell of the cattle lying in the shade of the big elm trees and chewing their cuds in deep contentment. In our bare treeless prairie, no wonder her mind ran back to the pleasant, cool patches of shade. The apple trees, she said, made circles of shade like lace mats in the orchard, and down in the deep woods it was green and cool on the hottest day. She told us how the sheep dotted the hillside, safe and secure, with no hungry wolves ready to spring on them ... and as the howling of the prairie coyotes punctuated her story, the safety of the Ontario sheep took on new depths of meaning.

When the first hot summer came in Manitoba and our little creek perfidiously dried up, we know it bore no relation to the dependable Ontario streams that ran winter and summer, as all streams should.

No one was ever lonely or sad in Ontario with neighbors so near, for the farms were small compared to these great stretches of land, six hundred and forty acres in a section—too much for any one family. That generally started an

argument, for the men of the family were not prepared to submit to any limiting like this, for Manitoba was a wheat-growing country where space was needed.

Last Saturday, I saw the Ontario scene when a snow storm softened every outline and the fine brick houses looked more secure and time-resisting than ever, and the streams ran black between their snowy banks. There is a great beauty to me in open water in the winter landscape; it is a sure sign of spring and winter's retirement. Winter had a way of lingering and wearing out its welcome back in the eighties, but the open water burrowing under the snow was unmistakably a signal of release.

The fine, old Ontario houses, with their high ceilings and oak floors and panellings, never lose their charm for me. I like the icy grandeur of the crystal chandeliers and the chaste elegance of the long mirrors over the fire places and even the irregularities of the floor levels. I stayed in one house, which was made of two houses put together and the wall, made up of the two walls, was three feet thick. The road to the bathroom had three steps down, then a little landing, and four steps up. But no one minded that. The spare room in one house where I spent two nights, had all the old favorites—a beaded match-holder on the wall with "Matches" done in colored beads on birch bark, complete with porcupine quills made into leaves (but no matches); a burnt-wood towel rack with "Towels" in fine flowing capital letters—and pillow shams! It was good to know that pillow shams had not vanished in this changing world. These were done in red roses and had the wide-awake child on one and the sleeping child on the other—"Goodnight" and "Good Morning." And best of all was a greeting plaque to all who might come to this peaceful room, done on ivory with pansies and parsley running under the words and all suspended by a chain, from a wall peg in the shape of a daisy.

"Sleep sweetly in this quiet room
O thou whoe'er thou art
And let no mournful yesterdays
Disturb thy peaceful heart.
Forget the past. Put out each glaring light
The stars are watching overhead.
Sleep sweetly then. Good night!"

Speaking of glaring lights, there is just one little improvement I would like to see in spare-rooms. I would like more "glaring lights." I like the shaded roselights with their cute little lace-frilled shades, and the flowered globes, and old-fashioned coaches, and hoop-skirted ladies, with some slight illumination inside. But if I may offer a suggestion without appearing ungracious, I would say a light, a real light, that has no other career and no ambition to be anything but a light, no desire to be a dancing girl or an antelope, would be welcome.... I might as well tell the whole story. I had tried to dress by the light of a pink nymph, beautiful but dim, one night, and read from what was left of a small bulb's glow after it had filtered through the drapery of a lady of fashion, so the next day, I bought an honest clear bulb and put it in the work of art that hung over my bed and enjoyed one good hour of Beverly Nichol's, "There's No Place Like Home." I thought proudly to myself, "The spare-room problem is solved! Why did I not think of this before?"

Now I have a new wonder—Why didn't I think of it the next morning?

WHERE MONEY FLOWS

The best-dressed women I saw in my travels in Ontario, I saw in Sudbury, the night I lectured there. Knitted suits, and dresses, smart furs, and smart hats and many of the new spring flowered dresses, turned the auditorium into a garden in full bloom. One dress will live in my memory, because it is exactly the sort of dress I tried to buy for myself in Toronto. But do you think I could? Not in a 42.

The hard-hearted autocrats who decide these matters, do not believe in making pretty dresses for anyone who has

put on a bit of weight with the passing years! The dress I had in my mind and which stood revealed before me in Sudbury has a navy blue ground, with spring flowers on it—real-looking flowers with warm leaves, clusters of violets, and buttercups, with hollyhocks in singing crimson! There it was, bright and beautiful on a handsome young woman with pansy brown eyes! She could have gone into a pageant as the Spirit of Spring.

I had to take a dull thing in mousy browns, with some splashes of jaded green, and little stingy dabs of yellow, and blue. It will never light any candles of imagination. The saleslady said it was a dead match for my brown hat, and so it is. They are both Dead Matches.

Sudbury is now a city of about 25,000 people, divided into three distinct types—the French Canadians, British Canadians and New Canadians, largely Finnish. Every street is busy, full of cars, and full of people. The stores seemed to be overflowing with merchandise. Sudbury and the surrounding district is the home of the nickel industry, not only of Canada, but of the world, giving to this district a significance unique in the Dominion.

The International Nickel employees vary in number from six to ten thousand and the company carries on mining operations in many places in the district. The smelters, refineries and a concentrator are situated at Copper Cliff, four and a half miles southwest of Sudbury. There has never been a strike or lock-out. The high smoke stacks (over five hundred feet high) carry the sulphur fumes into the air, and so prevent the plant destruction which some years ago denuded the countryside of its grass and trees.

When I first visited Copper Cliff some years ago, before the time of high smoke stacks, I was taken to see the one shrub. It was a lilac, and it was everyone's pride. The owner had by unceasing care kept it from the blighting fumes. When the wind blew in from the smelter she had wrapped it in a sheet, and on the day I saw it, it had come into bloom. I found myself getting fond of the brave little shrub too. It had the high proud look of a survivor.

Now the Copper Cliff people have lawns, and gardens, and the company gives prizes for gardens.

In 1885, when the C.P.R. was being built through this country, the ore was discovered as the cuts were made through the rocks. At first it was only the copper in the ore which attracted the attention. The discovery of nickel in the ore came later.

Nickel is a name with a sinister meaning. In the early part of the 18th century, it was found in the silver and copper mines of Saxony, and at first this new metal gave great promise with its smooth surface, and shiny glitter. But after many experiments it was pronounced utterly useless. In disgust the superstitious miners called it copper-nickel, after the old Nick himself, believing it to be of evil origin. Now the name still sticks, and is the same—or nearly the same, in all languages.

Nickel has come into our lives to stay. It is used in guns, and other instruments of war. It is used in making airplanes, automobiles, in the lovely chromium which gleams like silver in bathroom fixtures, in the monelmetal sinks, prized by particular housekeepers who have the money to get them.

This ore which has made Canada the producer of almost all the world's nickel is found in abundance in an elliptical ring varying from six to ten miles wide and about one hundred miles on each side of a saucerlike elevation. The bottom of the saucer is lower than the nickel range and is fertile farmland, well-settled and prosperous. It is estimated that the ore will last for several generations.

Canada uses only one-half of one percent of the output of the nickel mines and the British Empire uses fifteen percent. So the company is definitely dependent on the international field for markets. It was estimated in 1932 that the company had a fifty million investment in this district, and this has been materially increased. Last year the profit was said to be thirty million dollars.

The houses where the employees live look comfortable, and commodious, and the rents are low. Public School accommodation is ample and now there is a new High School in Copper Cliff, though the pupils from the outlying mines have to make the journey night and morning on a bus into Sudbury, leaving at eight in the morning and reaching their homes at five in the afternoon. This does not leave many hours of daylight for outdoor sport. There is a hospital and club

houses and a gymnasium for the workers and I hear that a ten percent wage raise has been given.

The company evidently takes some responsibility for its people, which no doubt explains the absence of labor trouble.

When I was in Sudbury the newspaper carried an interesting news item of a girl who finished High School and was determined to pursue her studies, and so went to Toronto, where she took a position as a waitress. In her spare time she studied, and succeeded at last in obtaining a degree. I could not help thinking that the ambitious young girl should not have had to make this heroic struggle to obtain her heart's desire. Aching feet are apt to cloud the brightest brain. The grand old epics of the brave Scotch laddies who went to Edinburgh with a bag of oatmeal and lived in a garret on one meal a day, studying law or theology do not seem so glorious when you know that some of them never recovered from the long years of under-nourishment, and some died, like the boy of whom Ian Maclaren wrote. Scholars are precious and we should not let them be sacrificed.

If there is one rich spot in Canada, it is surely this Sudbury basin, where nature has stored wealth with a prodigal hand.

The company officered by men of generous mind may have in view some plan for scholarships to help the ambitious young students in their chosen fields. What a fitting way that would be to immortalize the names of some of the pioneers of this great industry!

COMING HOME

I began to feel at home as soon as I walked up the gang-plank of the Victoria boat, ducked my head under the red flag, checked my hand baggage, and then came up the stairs to the lounge. The wicker chairs, with their hollow seats and footstools, gave me a welcome, and I sat down in one that had a cushion. Then I looked around me.

I did not recognize a soul, but by the conversation around me, I knew I was on the right boat. "I intended to stay longer, but, my dear, it is so noisy." "I heard from Avery that the camellia is in bloom and so I had to come." "They are always rushing about ... really it grows more like an American city every day ... I longed for our own quiet place by the sea." Two men behind me were discussing the Hornby plan of immigration. "It's the best thing we can do... More British, and still more British... The cold prairies may be our sanctuary when Quebec has become entirely French and the Pacific Coast Oriental!" I knew I was on the right boat!

Since it was a holiday week-end the boat was full of children, beautiful children, well-dressed and exemplary in manners. A lovely little girl of eight led her brother to a seat near me. I could see he was a care, but her face was marked by high resolve. She had probably prayed for a brother, and was going to abide by the bargain. Later, the young brother, bursting from her discipline, stumbled over my feet, and at his sister's instigation, returned to apologize. "I am sorry, I am very ashamed," he said, all in one breath. I wanted to kiss him, but I knew that would be a fatal blunder, so I accepted his apology gravely and silently hoped he would do it again. Indeed I was ready to have my corn stepped on if it would bring him back.

The day was one of the bright warm days when the five hours to Victoria go by like a flash. The sea sparkled, the gulls circled, the boat cut the water proudly, and all the sordid worrying things of life fell away from us, as flimsy and fleeting as the foam behind the boat.

When we were just one hour from Victoria we passed Gordon Head, and I tried to show a nurse from Winnipeg, with whom I was sitting, the exact location of the Lantern Lane house. There it was, looking about the size of a child's block, beyond Walter Paterson's pasture and just north of Stewart Skilling's fine crown of trees. The red roof could be distinguished and that was all. I found it hard to get much response even from my good friend the nurse. There was not much to see, to be sure. It was something like showing the baby's first tooth to a family friend. I tried to tell her how

interesting the drive from Victoria is, and especially the long straight stretch of Shelbourne Street with the booth where puppies are sold in the open. Poor little fellows, with their big sad eyes, placed there to sell themselves to the careless passers-by, and if you do not want one, how dangerous it is to stop for even a look. The sign reads "Puppies for sale, Kittens free." So if the puppies suffer an indignity by being offered for sale on a public highway, what about the kittens, set out "with no par value?"

And now I have been at home for two days, and I have been around to see how the plants wintered. The forsythia is a mass of golden blossoms, and the low daphne bush is in bloom, with its perfect little pale purple flowerets, heavy with perfume. The peach trees behind the garage have had a hard pruning and are fastened firmly to the wall. Hitherto they grew as they liked and ran to wood and leaves, but now they are full of blossoms under the new discipline. The peach tree on the south wall of the house is in blossom, too, and when we are washing dishes at the sink we look at its pink blossoms and forget to work. Soon the humming birds will sit on the naked air and thrust their needle-like bills into the little cups. Last year they were so numerous we had to be careful lest they fly in our faces. I heard of a woman near here who went among them with a brightly-flowered smock and a little bird flew over to her and proceeded to sample the cotton flowers, flying away at last with angry cries.

I read somewhere that humming birds "thumb" rides from larger birds when they go south in the fall, and have been seen to fly out of the downy wings of wild geese when they alight. I hope it is true, and if any of my readers have seen this, I shall be glad to have the story confirmed. Humming birds seem so small to make the long journey unaided.

All day long the skylarks sing, beginning before the sunrise, in low sweet gurgles of sound. Each spring their survival seems like a miracle—how do they escape the marauding crow and cat, nesting on the ground as they do? This last winter was hard on them, too, on account of the snow. But they are here, gladdening this part of the world with their flood of melody. A man is ploughing a field, with the gulls following him by hundreds, dropping on the new furrows in search of worms. He told me last year that once he ploughed down a gull and did not notice it until he had come back. There it was, completely submerged, all but a tip of one wing. But it was none the worse when he released it. Gulls have a stout heart. The other birds are back, the quail still calling to an unlistening world to "cut-that-out," and the pheasants, too, with their shining plumage and harsh voices. A visitor from the prairies told us he had heard a sound in the woods "as harsh as the creak of a rusty hinge," so we knew he had been listening to a pheasant.

The onions are planted in flats, and will be carefully set in rows when I get time to transplant them. I am changing their locality this year. I belong to the New School of Onion Growers now. No more of this letting the "onions grow in the one location, year after year," and being careful "not to put them in ground that has been freshly fertilized." That, I understand, went out with the Atomic Theory, and I did not know it. But I have been reading in the School of Higher Criticism this spring, so now I am going to give the onions a change of scene, and plenty of fertilizer. It is strange how onions and their relations come into the news every little while. Premier Hepburn's onion farms, no doubt, help him to meet the waves of this troublesome political world. There is something pungent, practical and peaceful about even one onion bed when life grows complicated. Yesterday when we went to see "As You Like It" we saw Queen Mary in the newsreel reviewing a Welsh regiment and distributing, not ribbons or medals or stars, but leeks, good honest leeks, to each man for Saint David's Day. The onion family holds its place against all comers!

Far be it from me to interject a sad note in the joyous atmosphere of home-coming. I realize it is no time to be telling of agricultural pests, aphis, blight, tent caterpillars, or the like. In fact these are all quiescent at this time and invisible, and it is well to let sleeping dogs lie. But here is one garden destroyer that has had its way during my absence, and I will explain its method of operation. When you plant seed in the autumn, putting stakes around the planting, with name of plant on same, at intervals, and feel you have made this corner of the earth safe for Physallis Franchetti, which is to say, Japanese Lanterns; and when you return to the scene of your endeavors, months later, expecting to find the tiny plants nosing up from the earth, and instead find the soil freshly cultivated and trenched for some other planting, and all evidence destroyed, you know it has fallen a victim to the hoe-worm, and there is not much you can do about it. At least there is not much I can do. I married one!

WORDS

"They had words!" In this brief sentence, there is a whole story of the clash of personalities. Words have made fortunes and broken them, and what a few words can do in the family circle makes a cyclone look as feeble as a wet kitten.

There are no idle words. They are all loaded and work overtime. I had a letter from a young friend of mine who is a singer, and in it she expressed the thought that if she had her choice of gifts, she would take a pleasing speaking voice, for she said, "I love words, spoken words, they glow like jewels!"

The radio is changing our attitude to the spoken word. We see what it can do. Let us renounce forever the belief that "words break no bones," and the other one that "talk is cheap." Words are sharp edged tools, and we do well to consider them seriously.

How a word can let us down, or rise up and condemn us! Marie Antoinette was never forgiven for her witless remark about the people eating cake if they had no bread, though, if she did say it, it was really nothing worse than a Gracie Allenism, but it hit home when people were hungry. It became a personal insult.

Into a certain prairie neighborhood, in the early eighties, there came an Old Country doctor whose degrees set forth after his name, filled the country people with awe. He was bitterly scornful of Canadian ways and manners and wrote letters to the papers condemning the ignorant Canadian, but no one took him seriously for he spoke in general terms. He was a picturesque figure too, in his broad hat and swinging cape, and would have been a figure of romance in the background of the pioneer days, but for one sentence which put him beyond the pale.

There came into the neighborhood a number of young Englishmen, to learn farming, and one of these had the misfortune to get hurt on a barbed wire fence. His employer went for the doctor, who refused to come with him, but gave directions for the treatment of the injured arm. The young man grew worse, blood poisoning threatened and the employer brought the doctor by sheer force at last, but it was too late—the patient died. The doctor might have still held the good-will of the neighborhood if he had been sorry—even if he had said nothing, the people would have believed he was sorry, but unfortunately he defended his own attitude by saying—"It does not matter much—there are plenty more, where he came from."

That hard saying ran like a prairie fire over the dry grass and has never been forgotten. His insults, his arrogance, his unwillingness to practise his profession would all have been softened into the tapestry of time, but his words are part now of the folklore of the community.

Words are like pictures. They glow and glisten. They tell a story. If you knew the history of every word in the English language, you could write the story of the English people, their inventions, their struggles, travels and alliances.

The Norman conquest left its mark on our language in words of pleasure, power and government; while Anglo-Saxon words were retained for the common things—the day's work, and all the menial tasks. "Pig" is Anglo-Saxon, and "pork" is Norman, and from that it is easy to read the relation of the conquerors and the conquered. While the animal had to be fed and cared for, it retained its Anglo-Saxon word. When it became an article of diet, the Normans claimed it.

During the War, a new set of words came in, as a result of new ways and methods. "Camouflage" had not been heard before, for the disguising of boats or motor cars was unknown.

Being the greatest travellers and explorers and colonizers, the English language is full of words from every country in the world. Coffee comes from Turkey. Boomerang from Australia. Saunter comes to us from the time of the Crusades, when idle fellows were always "about to go to the Holy Land." (Saint Torre.)

The English language takes its own wherever it finds it, even reaches out and takes in a slang word if it fills a need. "Blizzard is now a perfectly good word, expressive and distinctive. A blizzard is not merely a storm, it is a certain kind of storm composed of wind, falling snow, and whirling snow. It blots out the landscape. It chokes and blinds and confuses the traveller and one day someone gathered in all the strands, twisted them, and tied a knot in them and called it

a "blizzard," which is exactly what it should be called.

And that is how words come! The need comes first, and out of the need the word!

Supercilious means literally the "lifting of an eyebrow"—"rival" comes from the word "river," and means the people who get their water from the same place, and if you have ever drawn your water from the community well, you will understand this "rivalry" especially in the dry part of the summer.

Words are our tools—everyone's tools. So it is well to keep plenty of them on hand, and not use any of them too often, and not put too heavy a load on any of them—nor make them work overtime. We do well to save our superlatives too, for real occasions. Over-emphasis, like screaming, is always an admission of weakness. So is profanity.

There is danger in words. There is such a thing as a fatal fluency when people talk by ear, carried away by the volume of sound. Anatole France described the foamy eloquence of a politician of his day, as the sort of speech that "glides but never penetrates."

We should never offend our conscience by talking against our better judgment, for it is true that we can lose ourselves in a labyrinth of our own words.

"Yes indeed, words are things
And the man who concedes
To language the privilege to
Outrage his soul,
Is controlled by the words
He disdains to control."

NEVER TOO OLD FOR ROMANCE

The two old ladies were part of the night-shift who keep the offices clean, while we sleep, and now in the early morning light had plodded heavily down the stairs, for the elevators were not running. As they waited for a street car they looked at the lurid picture in front of the Golden Palace, which told of a coming attraction to that house of Mirth and Romance. The picture displayed a galloping horse, with flowing mane and fiery eyes. On its back sat the gallant hero, lean and graceful, carrying his lady-love swung across the saddle bow, her golden hair streaming in the wind. Before them lay the blue hills of desire where they would leave the world behind with all its cares, and the name of the picture was Mad Love!

The two tired old women drank it in eagerly. Then one said to the other, "Aye, dearie—that's the life!"

No, we are never too old for romance,—for if you do not hold on to something thrilling and sweet, this is a dull world—both dull and perverse. Your bank balance is never as large as you expect; the paper you intended to save is always the one that was taken to light the fire—there are only thirteen plots for stories and thirty-seven dramatic situations—the best songs have been written; the best speeches made. Insurance tables are not a bit comforting. They bring in a discouraging report on the strivings and savings of mankind. They say that only nine people out of every hundred leave more than fifty dollars a month to their heirs, twenty-seven leave less than fifty dollars a month, and the remaining sixty-four leave nothing! Vanity! Vanity! And vexation of spirit! Picnic days rain! Clotheslines break! Beauty fades! and stockings run! It's a dull world, and a deadly serious one. None of us will get out of it alive!

But tomorrow will be Saint Valentine's Day, and this is no way for us to feel. There must be some romance in life. Something to atone for its greyness.

The young people who receive Valentines tomorrow feel that life is full of beauty and music and color. The Age of

Romance definitely breaks over boys and girls with unmistakable manifestations. When a boy begins to wash his neck without anyone telling him; or a girl is suddenly dissatisfied with her mother's dressmaking, you can tell the new era has begun. And it's a time of heart burnings, too. I remember the first time I expected and hoped I might get a Valentine. One of the boys I knew was drawing wheat to Brandon, so he could easily buy a Valentine there at Christie's Book Store, on Rosser Avenue. He asked me if I had ever received a Valentine and I told him I had not. That was all. But it was enough —

I knew it would be a lovely one with doors of paper-lace, that would open to disclose two red satin hearts, pierced by Cupid's darts. My sister Lizzie had a Valentine like that, perfumed too. I waited for the day. He did buy a Valentine in Brandon, but he gave it to Hannah! And my young heart broke for the space of half-a-day. During that time I pined. I knew how to pine. The continued stories in the Family Herald often told of young women who were crossed in love. So I knew. "The laughter had gone from her lips and the light from her eye!" I knew I would never touch food again. I would fade away before their eyes, but they must never know! I would carry the secret to my grave! At the end of the half day the spell was broken. My mother made potato cakes for supper!

There is romance in every period of life, for romance has many forms. Paper lace, and satin hearts are not its only medium. There is the romance of a successful marriage and of house management, in cooking new dishes, of making new friends, of going new places, learning new ways of tackling a new job, of overcoming difficulties, of helping a good cause.

The simplest things in life have a romance if we know their significance. We offer our hands in friendship when we meet, but the significance of this form of greeting is that we are showing that our hand is empty of knife or dagger—a gentle little reminder of the playful ways of our ancestors.

There is romance in sowing the seed and watching it grow, even if you have only a windowbox—the romance of the good earth.

We saw a man ploughing just out of Los Angeles one lovely spring day of soft air, and springing flowers. We had been at the Chinese theatre in Hollywood, with its gold and red dragons, its soft-footed silk clad ushers, its enamelled pillars, tiled floors, crusted tapestries, changing lights, and were somewhat overcome with its barbaric splendor. We had come through the milling crowds of cars and people pouring like mountain torrents through those congested streets, where everyone hurries as if their lives depended upon that split second. At last we reached the open green country, and on a sloping hillside, man and team went steadily up and down, turning over the fresh sod, without haste, and without faltering. It was as sweet as a drink of cold water on a hot and dusty day. It was as comforting as the silence that falls when night comes down and the winds are hushed.

Then there is the Romance of History, the ebb and flow of human affairs. Think of the minstrels who once wandered from castle to castle, bringing the folklore and stories of victories and defeats; things present and things to come, with the odd, carefully chosen bit of gossip, with harp accompaniment; always welcome in the castle hall to amuse and entertain their betters, always sure of food and clothing. A good singing minstrel, especially if he could do a bit of foretelling, had no economic worries. Then came the newspapers and the minstrels were out, as definitely out as a livery stable in Detroit. But now the minstrels are back again, not only in the halls of the great, but beside the poor man's fireside, in service stations and in light-houses, and even in motor cars. Their voices may be heard, once more, carrying news, past and present and even doing a little turn at prophecy. But now we call them broadcasters!

Talk of Romance! It walks beside us everyday!

WE THINK WE HAVE SOMETHING

An old lady, living in Victoria was asked by a casual acquaintance if she travelled much. "I do not," she answered, bristling at the suggestion, "and why should I? I am here!" I feel like that when I hear the skylarks, and all I need to do to

hear them is to go outside and listen. Today the sun has come out after a three-day rain, and the larks are in full swing. I am sure a dozen are singing, some visible, and some in the clouds.

The skylark is a modest-looking little bird, about seven inches long, with rather a rough greyish brown coat. It does not sit in trees, or on fences like other birds, but is either on the ground or in the air. The male bird is the singer and does not rise directly from the nest when he feels a desire to sing, but runs thirty to forty feet before ascending, not wishing to disclose the location of his home. The song, which has captured the imagination of poets great and small, resembles that of a canary, a succession of trills and warbles, and may last ten minutes. When the little singer finishes he drops like a stone to the earth. The first time I saw this descent, I thought he had been shot by a stray bullet.

I do not think any part of the skylark's song is any more beautiful or arresting than the gay lilting melody of the meadowlark, which seems to thrive in all parts of Canada. No bird note could be lovelier than that clear fresh challenge, so hopeful and comforting. Many a time the song of the first meadowlark in the spring on the prairie seemed to lift all the burdens of life, like a sudden burst of sunshine in a dark room!

Skylarks nest on the ground, making an inartistic dwelling of sticks and grass, lined with hair. The nest has only one protection—it looks exactly like its surroundings; and here the four little eggs are laid and hatched, the eggs being a dull stone grey. Twice a year the family venture is made.

The skylarks are here by the kind forethought of some of Victoria's public-spirited citizens. One hundred pairs were brought in 1903 by the local Naturalist society, assisted by a grant from the government. About seven hundred dollars was the cost of the first venture. English robins, finches, blue tits, and bullfinches were brought too, but these, unfortunately did not survive. In June, 1903, the little songsters were released and their sponsors watched them anxiously. For a while it seemed they could not sing the songs of Zion in a strange land, and as the bird is hard to see unless it rises and sings, there was a grave fear that they had perished. (I have not yet seen a skylark on the ground.) But they survived and multiplied and now are enlarging their sphere, though slowly.

The birds released on the mainland near Vancouver, died, and the same sad fate, for no known reasons, overtook the birds that were set free at Duncan, B.C. Some years ago the American Government established a colony of larks on Long Island, which survived for a while and then folded up and disappeared. So the only skylarks on the American continent, north or south, are here in a small area on the Saanich peninsula, just north of the city of Victoria. The nearest skylarks to the east are 6,000 miles away in Great Britain and Ireland, or 2,500 miles west in the Hawaiian Islands, where they were brought from New Zealand. So no wonder we are proud and happy and humble and most appreciative.

People come from long distances to hear our singers. When the conference of one of the churches meets here in May, there will be a "Skylark Drive" one sunny afternoon to Uplands, Cadboro Bay and Gordon Head. Some one spoke of a "Skylark Breakfast," which has a sinister sound, particularly when we know that skylarks are still eaten in some European countries and considered a great delicacy.

A modern writer refers to this sport of killing little birds, and says in Europe it "takes the place of golf in Anglo-Saxon countries, and both are an excuse for walking abroad ... The mind revolts at a reasonless walk, but it accepts joyfully as soon as you propose some sort of accompaniment of competition or some sort of killing!"

It would seem that we are a long way yet from being civilized when a "bird that sings at heaven's gate" can be made into a pie and eaten.

Ralph Hodgson, an English poet, writes about the eating of song birds, in his poem called "Stupidity Street."—

"I saw with open eyes
  Singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops
  For the people to eat
Sold in the shops of
  Stupidity Street.

I saw in a vision
The worm in the wheat
And in the shops nothing
For people to eat
Nothing for sale in
Stupidity Street."

The skylarks are loved and cherished in Victoria, listened to and written about. Our local cannery uses the skylark for a trademark on its cans of fruit, on a gay picture which shows the beauty of the countryside. One of the Victoria papers gave prizes for poems written by school children, some years ago, and some of the poems sent in were full of poetic fervor. The prize winning poem was written by a fourteen-year-old girl, living at Oak Bay, and began,

"Up through a blue and cloudless sky
Soar the skylarks carolling high
An infinite speck to the wondering eye."

A sixteen-year-old boy began his poem as follows:

"Bright bird that springest from the earth
And soaring still does sing
Glad in the glory of thy song
And powers of thy wing."

I wish I had saved all the skylark poems I have seen in the local papers here. The pro at Cedar Hill Golf club showed me his, soon after I came to Victoria, and showed me the first lark I had seen, a little speck in the air, throwing back to us a rain of melody. An anonymous writer has written a beautiful poem, beginning:

"I flushed him first upon the broom-drest hill
Right at my feet he rose on fluttering wing
And filled the air with such a carolling
It seemed to make my very heart stand still."

Dr. J. K. Unsworth of Victoria is the able champion and historian of this fascinating little immigrant. He has written its story in many papers and magazines, and kept green the memory of the good citizens whose generosity and artistic sense, thirty-four years ago, brought us this good gift.

The reader will see from the restrained modesty of the foregoing that, while we do not wish to come right out and brag about our skylarks in Victoria, still, in the words of Bob Burns, we "think we have something."

ARE WE A GLOOMY PEOPLE?

In all the discussion of radio programs we have had across the country, there is one opinion from which there is no dissenting voice. We should cultivate more humor in Canada. We need more merriment, more laughter. There is too much seriousness in our mentality. We are too near to the pioneer period of our life, when life was a stern struggle.

While granting all this, I am persuaded that our sense of humor is not lower than that of other countries. But it is more critical than some. Humor is an elusive thing. Like the wind, it bloweth where it listeth. It cannot be forced. You cannot persuade yourself to believe something is funny if it is not, though we have all laughed at old jokes—I hope, and gave no sign of having heard them before. That is just simple tact or diplomacy. The customer is always right; so is the guest, the teacher, the school inspector, the publisher, the editor, and all those who sit in authority over us. At their poor or old jokes we have laughed—but let it never be counted against us. We know better.

I attended a banquet once where the speaker came from an Eastern province, his first visit to the West, and he brought to us the humor of forty years ago. For the first half dozen stories I was inwardly scornful, but as the evening wore on, I recaptured the spirit of the era and enjoyed it all. He was so thorough about it. He told us the one about the man who complained about his wife's love of money—her constant asking for more and more. No,—he did not know what she did with it; he had not given her any yet! He brought back the repartee of Sir John A. Macdonald, and the Scotchman's national prayer, "Lord gie us a guid conceit o' ourselves," with its rider that not many prayers had been so well answered. He even had the one about the tramp who was given a home-made loaf of bread by the bride, but it was so heavy and hard he threw it into the duck pond, and the subsequent message from the neighbor's little girl to the bride, "Oh Missus, come quick. Your ducks is sunk!"

It was like a visit to a tea meeting in the old Methodist church back home. I could believe the cloverleaf tea cups were tied with red and blue yarn for purposes of identification.

Humor has an exacting technique. It has to have in it the element of surprise; consequently an old joke loses it savor, while an old song grows sweeter as the years go by. For this reason the writing of humor is a serious business. Professional humorists have sad faces, quite beyond comforting, because humor really cannot be written. It has to happen!

Humor is a kindly thing. Everyone can laugh at it. No one is hurt. Wit, and repartee may have a sting, but humor falls like the dew from heaven. The word humor means moisture. It comes to comfort the dusty roads of life, and we should make much of it. Children should be taught to laugh even as we teach them to pray. Rudyard Kipling had that in mind when he wrote his Children's Hymn:

> "Teach them delight in simple things,
> The mirth that has no bitter springs,
> That they may build from age to age
> An undented heritage!"

It is in the homes without laughter that childhood is thwarted and blighted, young souls soured and curdled, and from these homes go out the defeated men and women who make up our problems; the dour, the unimaginative ones, who see only the sombre shades in life and enemies everywhere. Dictators who build their own monuments to the sky, who strut and pose, do these things because they have never laughed at themselves. We should greatly fear the people who are wicked; we should also fear those who are ignorant. Still more must we fear the people who are devoid of humor. They are the tyrants, the oppressors, the demagogues who lead whole nations astray.

We have had, and still have humorists in Canada. Who of us who knew him will ever forget the quiet little man who looked like a Presbyterian elder in his neat pepper and salt suit, diffident to the point of shyness in his conversation, but who for all that, wielded a flashing pen. The editor of the Calgary Eye-Opener, Mr. Bob Edwards, brought out his paper when he felt like it, and when it came, the newsstands had a rush sale. People stood on street corners to read it, anxiously, for no one was safe from his shafts of ridicule. Yet I cannot remember that anyone resented. Bob Edwards belonged to us, and he could make fun of us if he wanted to. And he certainly did. Belonging to Calgary, he directed much attention to the rival city of Edmonton, always conveying the idea that the latter city was still in the small town stage. I remember one of his advertisements read—"Edmonton, Jasper Ave., Opening for a good blacksmith."

Mr. Edwards excelled in his report of public meetings. When a chairman stole the time of the speaker, as chairmen sometimes do, Mr. Edwards reported the "address" of the speaker as "214 9th Ave. W.," and that was all.

There is much humor in public meetings, and as a people, we are devoted to this form of social activity.

At a meeting of the Agricultural Society in one of the Western towns the hour of midnight was approaching. There had been a baseball game at five, a supper at seven—the meeting had begun at nine, and there would be a dance afterwards. So as midnight approached, the young people were impatient, fiddles were being scraped behind the scenes, and the old people were thinking wistfully of their beds. Then the chairman announced, "As a last number on our program Miss Flossie Fairbanks will sing again by request, 'I Know Not Why'."

We did not know either!

John Duxbury, of London, England, whose public readings gave us great pleasure some years ago, used to tell of staying at the home of a little girl who had been in his audience when he addressed one of the schools in Toronto. When she came to the dinner table she recognized him as the story teller of the day before.

"Oh," she said in greeting. "You are the man who told us the story of Jean Val Jean yesterday."

"Yes, my dear," said Mr. Duxbury, pleased to meet one of the listeners. "I tried to."

"But you couldn't, could you?" said the innocent but terrible child.

There is an unconscious humor that is plentiful in any country, and I think we have our share. Since our discussions on the scarcity of humor in Canada, I have been listening attentively to the casual conversations which one can hear in railway stations or street cars, or any place where people gather. Last night I sat in the C.N.R. station in Winnipeg, waiting for the West train. Two women were talking behind me, as I sat looking at the beautiful picture of the Quebec bridge which always brings me delight. I was so absorbed in its spacious uplands, its blue shadows, its brooding clouds, the sweep of the bridge itself, that the story going on behind me was well advanced before I tuned in.

However, I got it all. The narrator had the short story technique. She began in the middle, and worked both ways.

It appears that she ordered a suit in the little town where she lives, from a traveller who was showing suits at the General Store ... When the suit came it was a terrible fit. (I gathered from her description that it was really more of a convulsion) ... The manager of the store was appealed to. He admitted it was a bad job. He told her to take it to the local tailor. She did this but the tailor would not touch it. She came back to the manager of the store, and he said he would send for cloth and have a suit made for her. He said satisfied customers meant more to him than money.

Her companion praised the manager. The story teller praised him. I thought he was all right, too, from my side of the seat, though naturally I did not say so. But wait! I knew there was more to this story for it had been skilfully told with an element of suspense.

"And then," said the aggrieved one, "what do you suppose happened? The very next day before he had time to send for the cloth?"

We held our breath.

"He died," she said tragically. "Died. Dropped dead. Can you beat it! ... I knew there would be a catch in it some place.... Say, I have the meanest luck. When I invest in stock it goes down. I bought a house once and it was struck by lightning. But this is the first time I ever had anyone just up and die on me like that!"

Her story had been told seriously up to that point. Then something happened. She began to laugh. So did her friend. If I had been an accredited delegate I would have laughed too. But I knew my limitations as an eavesdropper, so I merely moved away.

PERFECTION

Once in a while we see perfection, and perhaps it is as well for us poor mortals with our limitations that these times are rare. The rainbow and the cuckoo's song! Moonlight and roses! The first day of summer! The blooming of the dogwood! A harvest scene, on the prairie, with miles of golden wheat dimpling under a light wind! A winter night, bright with stars and a frosty moon!

The first hot day of summer came this year to us on a Sunday, and made a complete and impressive entry with sunshine, skylarks, soft breezes, and bursting flowers. It had more than that too, for it felt and smelled of summer. In deference to the day, the sea ceased from tossing, running only stray ribbons of ripples here and there on its placid surface. Cherry trees and apple trees in full bloom stood at attention, hardly letting a petal fall.

We knew summer had come that morning as soon as we looked out; there was a heavy expectancy in the air, a feeling that something was going to happen. Life would never again be dull or disappointing.

I spent the golden afternoon lying in a hammock and looking out across the cherry blossoms to the sea. Beside me on a stand there was a bowl of tulips, on which the sunshine fell, lighting them into flame. Some of them were the sealing-wax red, and in the light they glowed like jewels. I knew I was having more than my share of beauty—but I took it. Before me the young gladioli, pushing up from the earth, were thronging their little green swords—I could shut my eyes and see them like a serried host, drawn up in rank after rank, a poignant reminder of battles and hatreds, and bloodshed and dangers which darken even our gladdest hours.

But I refused to let them spoil my afternoon. I was seeing perfection and I would hold it as long as I could. I knew I was holding it in trust for a succession of people. Other people had looked out on this scene of fairy beauty, had seen these very trees in blossom, had seen the odd petal fall, had loved the bowl of tulips and listened to the larks—the same trees, petals, tulips, larks, at least the same in color and sound, indistinguishable if not identical. Only the observer changed and passed! This was my perfect hour and I would hold it in trust. Remembering Walter de la Mare's warning I "would let no night seal my sense in slumber until I have paid my utmost blessing," for—

> "All things thou wouldst praise
> Beauty took from those who loved them
> In other days!"

I saw perfection again the day we crossed from Nanaimo to Vancouver later in the month, and it was on a Sunday too. Sunday can never be just like a day on a calendar to me. It is more than a day, it is a feeling and a memory.

We had been at the church service in Duncan on our way, the Mothers' Day service, and heard a girls' choir sing a lovely anthem set to Rubinstein's Melody in F.

> "Humble my Saviour, we kneel at Thy throne,
> Craving Thy mercy, Thy mercy alone!"

The music and the picture were unforgettable, the altar banked with flowers, the church full of people, beautiful youngsters, unconscious of their beauty, singing because they loved to sing.

All the way from Victoria to Nanaimo we had been seeing the dogwood in bloom—great trees embroidered with creamy white stars. They brightened the roadside and made tents of white on the hills. They hung reflected in the streams and ponds.

We got the boat at five in the evening at Nanaimo, just when the light was beginning to pale. It was a big boat with its salon all in one room with long plush seats, where one could see at least half of the passengers at one time. Every seat was full, and the space below packed with cars. The evening came on in blue grey twilight and the lights on shore began

to turn amber and gold; blue and grey mountains folded back on each other with misty valleys and peaks where the last light lingered—a big boat passed us, a freighter, cutting the water into white foam, its mast lights bright against the blue sky like little balls of fire. There were gulls crying, sweeping, circling, and in places water falling down the steep sides of mountains to the sea!

The scene had in it the elements of perfection. I can always think better on a train or a boat than anywhere else. The changing beauty of the scene makes a background, which clothes all the common-place happenings of life with beauty, like great music from an organ.

In this exalted mood I looked about me. Over in a corner, four people were playing bridge. The woman beside me was reading a book called "Great Trunk Murders," a married couple was staging a one-act family row—and did not care who heard it. He did not pay the rent after all, and she had given him ten dollars toward it ... money she could have used ... An old lady was explaining to two friends why she kept roomers ... it was not for the money. Her children give her plenty of money ... let no one ever think they don't ... she had good children if she did say so herself. She likes the roomers and that's why she keeps them. They're company now that her own are away.

I took a walk around the boat then and talked to a woman who was going over to Convocation to see her son and daughter graduate. It had been a struggle, but it had been worth it all. I noticed how carefully she was dressed and how frugally. She had other uses for her money but her face and carriage gave her distinction. A minister, young and sunburned, worked on his notes. He was going to speak at a Young People's rally. His face had a sort of rapture as he talked.

Here was a cross-section of life, with its hopes, fears, perplexities and aspirations. Disappointing, sordid in spots, but breathing and vital and full of promise. I withdrew my gaze from the uplands of beauty, and settled in with the people, my people, glad to be one of them and able to feel the surge and tang of life. No, we do not need to see perfection every day.

RAIN IN THE NIGHT

When the Eastern people think of Saskatchewan, I am afraid the only picture that comes to their mind is that of a dry country, parched and dusty. But, travelling by the C.N.R. from Winnipeg to Edmonton on a warm day at the end of May, I saw a bright land of promise where lovely young poplar trees edge the cultivated fields, and the ploughed land is so richly black it has a shade of purple in the furrows. The trees have their gentle shade of green that Emil Walters put in his pictures of the prairie in the spring.

There seems to be no problem of moisture here in northern Saskatchewan. The ditches are full of water and away to the north I could see lakes and ponds glinting in the warm sunshine. These, no doubt, supply the clue. There is plenty of evaporation from these reservoirs to form the rain clouds, and then the showers descending, water the earth and fill the pools again. There is no mystery about it. It is just the natural sequence of water, evaporation, clouds, precipitation. Of course there will always be the odd shower, in places where there is no surface water, for clouds will go wandering out of bounds.

The south country unfortunately is flatter, and has fewer trees than the northern part, and so the water made by the melting snow runs away in a useless flood. If the south is ever to be redeemed, it will have to be by the building of reservoirs to hold this run-off. Last year would have been a favorable time to begin, for the snow came down in abundance, standing up in some places to the second storeys of the houses, filling all the railway cuts, and blocking the highway for months.

Northern Saskatchewan, rich in water surfaces, has an air of activity and confidence. Cattle graze on the meadows, contented and peaceful and stand silhouetted on the grassy hills against the sky. Men are working in the fields now with six-horse teams, and women with shawls on their heads plant potatoes. These are an industrious people, as shown by the

borders of stones which edge the fields, lying prim and set, with no hint of stonebruise and backache. I wonder about these stones! I hope the people who carried them had something pleasant to think about ... the horizon is dotted with little houses, shapes rather than color against the sky. Occasionally I saw a big red barn, though not many of the little farmhouses are painted. No doubt there are new houses in the minds of the people and that's why they have not painted the old ones.

There is an air of security in the little towns, with their carragana hedges and trim gardens; piles of lumber and shingles all ready for building; horses tied to wagons, new cars, freshly painted signs, red-roofed service stations with their picturesque pumps; a few new cars in front of the General Store, many horses and buggies; groups of children of pre-school age playing with little carts and balls. I like these little towns; they radiate a cheerful contentment. The people, I know, have money in the bank or in a sock or some place where they can lay their hands on it, and why shouldn't they? They get rain in its season, so all these things are theirs—peace—plenty—the pursuit of happiness. They should look happy and relaxed, and carefree, these favored ones who live in a part of the world where rain falls in the summer time. So sure are they of a crop next year that they were burning their straw stacks the day I passed through. I could see the white smoke billowing up into the sky.

Later I spent four days in Regina, that stately city of the plains, into whose building much thought and foresight have gone. Regina did not just happen. There was no following of winding ox-cart trails in Regina, no following the line of least resistance. It has the beauty of a formal garden, with its lovely park in the centre crossed by concrete paths as symmetrical as the spokes in a wheel, with stately buildings grouped on its borders, and straight streets lined with trees at regular intervals; the dome of the Parliament Building in the distance; church towers pointing heavenward; educational buildings set on great shaven lawns. Nature did not do much for Regina, but its people have done much. Having the matter in their own hands, they drew careful plans and followed them. Someone suggested that a lake would be nice for boating in the summer evenings, and that was seconded and carried. Now Wascana Lake actually rolls great waves when the wind blows. Its banks are beautiful with flowers and shrubs and there are bathing beaches and boathouses, and a promenade pier.

Hard water, black mud, had no terrors for these city builders. They put in water softeners, and turned the black mud into green lawns, smooth as velvet. They garden scientifically and with fervor. I have seen as lovely dahlias, peonies, delphiniums, sweet peas and roses in Regina, as I have ever seen anywhere.

One thing baffles them, and that is the dust! It comes from the four corners of the world, sifting, stinging, searing, seeking out the weak places in their houses. They have ingenious ways of defeating the dust, but even these are not always successful. There is only one sure cure, one way of escape, and that, of course, is the rain—and in Regina, city of hope, they always know it is going to rain. Even when the wind is roaring through their streets, carrying its full content of dust, they do not speak of it. They discuss books and art, and poetry and music. My last sight of this dauntless city was at the time of sunset. The dust was rising in clouds, darkening the evening before its time for darkness. Great clouds of dust rose into the air as if the tortured earth were beating itself with many cords in supplication before the Gods of Rain.

Two nights afterward as I travelled westward, the rain came, wakening me with its soft murmur as it streamed down the train windows. Its sound filled the night, sweeter than the song of any bird, or any peal of music; more odorous than a bed of wallflowers at evening; the blessed healing rain, laying the dust as it fell on the parched crop and gasping fields ... making pasture for the cattle.

There is magic in the rain, which only those of us can know who have looked for it, as shipwrecked sailors look for a sail. There is magic, and music, and healing in the rain.

Siegfried Sassoon must have lived on a rainless prairie some time, too, for in his poem written in 1917, he tells of the death of a young soldier, through whose delirium there came the merciful sound of rain, which drew the fire from his wounds and gave him safe passage from this world of pain.

"Rain ... he could hear it rustling through the dark
Warm rain on drooping roses; pattering showers
That soak the fields ... a trickling peace
Gently and surely washing life away!"

"THRUMS" GORDON HEAD

There is a substantial stone house on Ash Road in Gordon Head which looks out across an orchard to the sea. In one season it becomes a show place, where garden lovers come to gladden their eyes with the sight of a whole field of langorous Regal lilies, whose petals are thick and soft as duchesse satin.

The house is made of dressed stone, quarried and cut by the owner, who took the stones of his own land and lovingly fashioned them for the building of his home, spending five years in doing it. The house, which is a large and handsome one, is finished inside with Douglas fir, also home grown, and every vibration in it gives a feeling of home and harmony. "Things have a dreadful permanence when people die." So it is with the stone house, which now stands solid, secure and ageless, but the skilful hand that fashioned it has turned to dust.

However, George Watson's memory will be green and fragrant for many years to come, for he has left other monuments which, like the stone house, will resist the erosion of time. He served this community long and well in many capacities. While he was a member of the Council of Saanich he was closely identified with the march of progress, and it was he who fought for the water supply which we enjoy here now. "Watson and Water" was the slogan at many an election.

Banshee Lane, that delightful woodland path mentioned in the first chapter of "Leaves from Lantern Lane," was given to the people of this neighborhood by George Watson, who bought a strip of land fifteen feet wide and almost a quarter of mile long, and another neighbor, Miss Finlayson, who donated fifteen feet beside it, from Ferndale Road down to the sea. So this became a path to the beach for all the children of the neighborhood, and Mr. Watson stipulated, when the gift was made, that this would always be a path and not a motor road, so that the young bathers now run safely down to Margaret's Bay with their towels under arms.

On June 19, my mind suddenly turned to the stone house on Ash Road, when over the radio I heard that Sir James Barrie had just died in London ... I knew the message would bring "muckle" grief to the family there, for the name on the gate is "Thrums."

I went over to see Mrs. Watson and Marjorie, her daughter that night, when the word came. The rain was streaking the windows and guttering down the drains to make ponds in the freshly ploughed land. Ferndale Road was shining like a mirror, and though the night was heavy with clouds, the long summer evening was still light. It seemed fitting that the sky should be sorrowing for the passing of James M. Barrie, that spirit of the Eternal Child, who had "plucked at the skirts of the grey old world all these years, coaxing her to come and play with him"—the strange little Pied Piper whose sweet music has set all our hearts dancing.

Mrs. Watson and Marjorie had heard the sad word, too, and when I joined them by their cheerful fireside, we talked about him and his books.

"My husband was James Barrie's cousin," Mrs. Watson said, "and he, too, was born at Kirriemuir—and in the same tenement. The Barries lived at one end and the Watson's at the other. My husband was ten years younger than James, but age was nothing to James. All the children and young people loved him, and when he came back from London it was like a visit of royalty, and him so humble and sweet and always a little sad, as if the world even with all its applause and success was still a perplexing place. But he always had stories for the children and he was full of games and fancies!"

Two of Mr. Watson's sisters had gone from Canada and had visited at his London house on Robert Street where he lived with his wife for fifteen years, and had received a warm welcome both from Sir James and Mary Ansell, his wife. She was a lovely woman, much younger than James, and the Watson sisters had nothing but good words for her, though they could see neither of them was happy. In some ways James was always a child and in other ways an old man, but always the soul of kindness, and when his wife left him, he gave her two houses and a great fortune.

Then we talked about his books and what wonderful women he had created in them. "And they are all patterned after his mother, Margaret Ogilvy," Mrs. Watson said, "And my husband said his picture of her was exactly to the life."

Then we talked of Jess and Leeby, and the window in Thrums and all that Jess saw as she sat there, a prisoner in her chair.

We talked of poor Jean Myles who had made a bad match when she married Thomas Sandys, and went away with him to London to live in dire poverty, and of the letters she wrote back to Esther Auld, her girlhood friend, telling of her coach and pair, and her elaborate wardrobe bought for her by her devoted husband, and of how sorry she was for all the humble folk who had to bide in Thrums—while all the time her poor sad heart was breaking for a sight of her old home and its kindly people. Her son Tommy had caught his mother's spirit of indomitable, if mistaken, courage, and so when he went down the passage in the miserable lodging house, he called out, when appetizing odors floated out to him, "I dinna want none o'yer stew. My mother says I am no hungry!" And when Shovel, a man of the world, aged seven, his companion on the stair, bragged to T. Sandys, aged five, that his (Shovel's) father had once gone to see a man hanged, T. Sandys was ready with an answer which shattered Shovel's boasting. "It was my father that was hanged," said Tommy. And that might have been the truth, if everyone had been given their just desserts!

We talked about his love of children and of how he had adopted a family of three boys, one of whom was killed in the war, and one lost his life in a drowning accident, but the third one, Peter Davies, was the man who sat with him at the end; and of how he dealt so kindly with women in his books, even the Painted Lady of Double Dykes with her graceful little airs. When profanity poured from her lips, he said, she "swore like a bairn who had been in ill company."

"Scottish women are independent and resourceful," Mrs. Watson said. "Reverence, and independence and backbone were the cardinal virtues of these humble folk." Then she told of the Sabbath and how it was kept. "Not a beast was ever put to work on that day. People walked six miles to church while their horses grazed in the fields. There was none of this racing and tearing on the Sabbath in a vain search for pleasure. When we came back from the kirk at home and had dinner, we often walked to Lynn Falls, if the day were pleasant, a great band of us young folk, and everyone sang to the falling water. Everyone sang. George was called the 'silver tenor,' and sang in Dundee and Edinburgh, and the cornet band to which he belonged played at Glamis every Saturday."

Then she showed me a picture of the Lynn Falls, where a film of water, thin as lace, came over the rocks and fell foaming into a pool below.

Our talk shifted then to the beginnings of the Gordon Head settlement, and of how she and George thought nothing of putting the baby in the buggy and coming out from town, six miles through the bush. Her people, the Grants, who still live here, owned many acres of this lovely country. This was long before the forest was cleared away.

On one of these six-mile trips the Watsons saw the spot on which the stone house stands, and suddenly knew it for their home, but it was not for sale. Some man had built a little house there and called it "Jersey Hall," but he was gone and no one knew who had the selling of the land. But one day, Willie, her brother, came in to see them in town and announced that "Jersey Hall" was for sale, and if they did not buy it, he would. He named the price, at which George Watson exclaimed, "It might as well be a million. We haven't the money!" Then spoke up Elizabeth, his wife, in true Thrums style. "Who says we haven't the money? We'll take the place, Willie, but first I have to put my bread in the pans. I'll go and see about it then."

"By night," she went on, with a quiet chuckle, "it was ours."

"And where did you get the money?" I asked, forgetting my manners in my interest.

"I had it by me," she said. "I saved $10 here, $5 there, and we all had a little income from Scotland when we came. I just put mine by, thinking I might need it for something. No, George did not know about it and he never asked."

Barrie did not create the resourceful, keen-witted Scottish women who grace his pages—he merely recorded them!

WHEN THE DOCTOR RETIRED

Dr. Gibson had retired. He was through with sickness, and nerves, and broken legs, tonsils, and infants—through with them forever. Thirty years is a long time to serve your fellow men on a twenty-four hour shift, and this he had done faithfully. He had ploughed through snow, mud or dust, according to the season; rode horseback, walked, gone on snowshoes, and of late years driven a car, but it was all over now. Young Dr. Hunter was installed in the little red office on Trent street, and a carefully worded announcement had appeared in the Times telling of Dr. Gibson's retirement and the young doctor's promotion.

Too active to settle into idleness, Dr. Gibson had bought a farm, fifty miles nearer the mountains, and on the very day of his retirement he drove out to take possession. His wife would follow in a week. But the doctor could not wait any longer. He wanted to sleep in peace, in a quiet room where no one could call him,—a long night's sleep. How he craved one peaceful uninterrupted night, away from the clang of a telephone bell.

As he drove over the mellow harvest fields a great contentment came over him. It is a fitting time, he thought, for a man to retire. After the harvest,—rest. Even the fields have rest. Leaves fall, and grass dies down. So it would be with him after his thirty years of practice. Thirty years in the midst of alarms!

His little bag lay beside him on the seat of the car. He had unconsciously thrown it in as usual. He put his hand on it affectionately. "We're through," he said, "you and I. Let the young fellow carry on from here. We've done our bit—I'll take out all the instruments, pack them in an iron box and use the little bag to carry eggs to town, for I am a farmer now—with hayseed in my hair. Eggs to town! No—I won't go near the town—some one would ask me to look at his tongue. I don't want to see anyone's tongue, I don't want to see people."

When he arrived at his new farm he found the people had not vacated the house, which was just as well, he thought, for he did not want to get his own meals. His room was ready for him, and the high feather bed looked comforting and secure. He was glad to hear there was no telephone in the house, for he knew he would spring out of bed at the first peal.

He went to bed early and had just closed his eyes when he heard a commotion in the yard. A man on horseback had arrived in haste. He heard excited voices downstairs and a delightful feeling of this being no concern of his, came over him. He could sleep no matter how loudly they talked!

Then a heavy knock sounded on his door, and a strange voice said, "Say, doctor, can you come with me? We're in terrible trouble. Just heard you were here, and came right over."

The doctor was on his feet in a moment, getting dressed.

The man went on talking outside the door. "My team ran away and threw out the old man when we were on our way to town, and then Grace took bad—and my sister is subject to fits. She always gets them when she's excited."

Over five miles the doctor drove his car, five miles of terrible road—deep cuts and muskeg. "A man just happened to see you go by with your little bag beside you," his companion was saying. "We knew you had bought this place but did not know when you would be moving out. It seems like Providence is looking after us, even in our bad luck ... We live pretty far out and the roads are bad, but still it seems we always manage somehow to get help when we need it. The Lord always provides."

What about me, the doctor thought to himself. Who is looking after me?

When he reached the house of trouble, he found the misfortune had not been exaggerated. The old man lay unconscious due to the fall from a wagon; the daughter-in-law, Grace, was in labor pains, and another woman whom they called Maud, was having nervous spasms from the excitement. The contents of the little black bag were hurriedly put into action, and all night long the old fight went on—from one to the other of his patients the doctor went calming their fears, soothing their pain.

Just as the morning broke there came a lull. Grace lay at peace, with her first born beside her; the old man had quietly breathed his last and thus rounded out his eight-five years of active service. Under a hypodermic, poor Maud was released from her fears and phobias.

Outside in the shivery dawn the doctor washed his hands at a basin which stood beside the door on a packing box. He looked at the sun edging up from the horizon bringing in a new day. The smell of coffee came to him pleasantly. Grace's husband, his companion of the night before, was cooking his breakfast.

There was a great weariness in his bones, now that he had time to think of it, but a sense of elation was on him too. The muddy car stood before him accusingly—one tire had gone down in the night. The doctor splashed the cold water over his face finding fresh vigor in its coolness. Then he spoke to the car.

"Cheer up, you old stager. What's a tire, more or less, on a night like this? Have you no professional pride? Don't you hear Grace's baby crying? That little fellow is more important than either you or me. We are only incidents. Life's the thing, and it goes on, regardless. Like the Sunrise!"

WE MUST SHARE

This week we celebrated our national holiday, and while the echoes of the speeches and felicitations are ringing in our ears, it may not come amiss to set down in words just what we have to be glad about on July 1, Empire Day and Thanksgiving, and what we should do about it.

I am glad we have plenty of room in Canada. We have 358,000,000 acres of land fit for farming or stockraising, and only one-fifth of this is being actually farmed. On that one-fifth we have become the world's largest wheat growers for export. We are first in asbestos, first in nickel and first in newsprint and second in coal. Britain has only one-sixth as much coal as we have, and it is quite easy to believe that we have more coal than we know anything about. Alberta alone has one-seventh of all the coal in the world—1,000,000 tons for each man, woman and child in the province.

Canada holds so many wheat championships, it has ceased to be news! It is like the victories of the Edmonton Grads in basketball. The girls have to lose a game now and again to stimulate public interest.

And we have reason to be glad that we have in Canada people from other countries who came to us looking not for wealth or adventure, but for homes. There is much to be said against our methods of immigration in the past, but the fact remains, we have received into our fellowship and citizenship many excellent settlers. The first settlers from a far country who came to the west, were the Icelanders, those fair-haired adventurers whose little island lies far from anywhere, and perhaps because of that, the Icelandic people brought With them a sturdy independence, thrifty ways and a love for learning that has made them ideal citizens of this new country. The Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, naturally come to mind as being ideal settlers. These northern people easily settle into Canadian ways.

At this time, when we think of the way we have come, our minds naturally look forward to the future, and we try to look ahead and see what awaits us.

We will get more people, of course. We cannot hold all this territory for ourselves. No country can hold back the urge of nations to expand. It will be a more carefully selected immigration, but we will have to open our doors.

I have just read a book called "The Joppa Door," by Hope Williams Sykes, which tells of the struggle of a German family in Utah, and their final success, won by hard work and patience, which we have seen in our own German settlers here in the West.

I wondered as I read this epic of the soil, what effect it would have if we invited a definite number of German families to come to some of the vacant valleys of British Columbia, and extended the same invitation to the Italian

people, as a friendly act toward the nations who are clamoring for expansion! I talked this matter over with my friend, the retired doctor, and it was from him I received the suggestion that we should encourage Italian settlers. It happened that he had, in his medical practice on the prairie, the opportunity to know the people in an Italian settlement in Alberta. He spoke of their cleanliness, their desire to improve their condition, their devotion to their families. Then he told me a story of the leading man of the district, to illustrate the spirit of neighborliness which prevailed among these people.

It was in the spring of 1921 when the shutting out of Canadian cattle from the American market had caused a near panic among the cattlemen, who found themselves with too many cattle on their hands for their dwindling haystacks. Now it happened that Paul Bassano had six tons of hay, and on the day that the doctor had called at his house professionally there came an astute Canadian trader to buy the hay. He offered sixty dollars a ton, if he could have the whole of the hay. The sick man refused his offer without hesitation. "You have not one beast to feed," said Paul Bassano from his sick bed. "You will buy my hay and sell it for much more money. But I will not sell to you. I will sell to my neighbors myself. I will sell for less money. Fifteen dollars for each half ton. That is a fair price. Sixty dollars a ton is robbery."

Yes, I know there are objections to a stimulated immigration policy. There are those among us who fearfully say we must not think of asking anyone to come to our country until we have found jobs for all our own people. Such a time will never come. There will never again be work for all people all the time. We have to work on a different basis than that. There has been no immigration for years, and still there are many unemployed. If the shut-door policy were going to find employment for our people it has had time to work its purpose. We must stop thinking negatively in Canada.

We are the custodians of untold wealth here. Look at the rising figures for this year's output of the forests, mines, fisheries and the fields. All this wealth is a sacred trust which we have been called upon to administer. If we clamp down selfishly on all our wealth, time has a way of dealing with that form of stupidity. There was once a man who said, "Now I am all set for a prosperous time. I have mine, right here in my barns. Let me take my ease from now on"—and the record tells us that that night a summons came which separated him forever from his goods. He could not take one thing. Shrouds have no pockets! This matter of selfish safety was dealt with long ago in one crisp sentence. "He that seeketh to save his life shall lose it," which though a paradox, is sound psychology. Selfishness destroys. All we have is what we give. There is no black art in this, or mystery, or caprice of fate. It is an unalterable law which operates in individual lives as well as in nations.

So let us lay aside our faith in walls, to keep us safe, and turn our thoughts to roads—roads of trade, roads of good will. Let us have done with walls.

"Great roads the Romans built
That man might meet
And walls, to keep strong men, apart, secure,
Now centuries have passed
And in defeat
The walls have fallen—but the roads endure."

THE PENITENT PRAIRIE

I thought I would be too early to see the prairie harvest, but on August 2nd coming across Manitoba, I saw not only the binders cutting down the grain, but a threshing machine at work with the strawblower throwing a stream of gold on the mounting pile. The day was the perfect harvest day of blue horizons and warm scented air; thick white clouds, shot through with blue caverns moving lazily in a clear sky; flocks of blackbirds making flashing patterns against the sky, dissolving and changing into the strings of jet beads on the fences.

It is many years since I have seen the harvest scene in full tide and in its fascination I forgot that I ever had a care in the world. My only sorrow was that I was travelling through it, and all too soon I would be looking at grey rocks and

jack pines, and my mind would have to come back to drab realities.

The great scene is the standing grain bordered with stocks, thick on the stubble, and the binders—(I saw three of them in one field) widening the borders and reducing the centre. When the train stopped, from the station platform I could hear the sound of the cutting blades and could imagine I heard the rhythmic fall of the sheaves.

When we left Winnipeg going east I noticed that the work was over for the day and the binders stood idle in the fields, though the sun was still high in the sky and the evening clear and fine. No fear of rain or frost drives the farmer here to work as long as he can see. I wonder how this has come about. The Manitoba farmer as I knew him "trusted no future howe'er pleasant," but assumed that frost or rain was dogging his footsteps. Is it the weather readings over the radio which assure him of a fine day tomorrow, or is it true that even the farmer is becoming more ease-loving and self-indulgent?

I wonder too if they have a happier time quitting at six o'clock than we had when we worked in the moonlight, counting every round of the binder as so much "velvet," saved from the frost which might come at dawn.

The sloughs were full of water, and the road gleamed with pools bright as mirrors, and the cattle on the meadows were fat and sleek and contented, all over Manitoba, and even in the south where the dusty winds have taken their toll in the past years, grass grows green, and crops dimple in the sunshine.

I have just been reading a story by Frances Dickie of a man who went back after twenty-five years to see his old home; a moving story that twisted my heart strings, for I know every emotion that swept John Kingston as he walked Main Street, and saw the devastating footsteps of the years. "One should not go back," the author says, "for the past is an illusion colored by the mind of youth to which there is no returning."

Perhaps it's just as well that I cannot stay, for I might find myself a grey ghost at the harvest scene. If the men quit work at six, they would not need to have a lunch carried to them at four. That is one of my happy memories of the harvest; driving out with a basket of hot buttered biscuits, and cranberry pies, just out of the oven, and the big tea pot full and wrapped in a shawl to keep the tea hot. How glad the men were to see me! But of that I will not think. What I see in this scene of beauty and abundance is that the lean years with their attendant disappointments have been accomplished and now the good years have come again to this, the oldest of the three prairie provinces. The fertility of the soil has not been lost.

There have been prophets of gloom who said the Great American Desert was creeping northward and that the soil had become sterile. We know that southern Manitoba has had successive failures, and fine farm buildings have been deserted, and dust has filled the roadways, but this year has changed all that with the suddenness which only the prairie knows—and hope has come back. The dry-prairie people have held to the belief that the good black soil would not fail them forever, and their steadfastness and courage must surely register somewhere up among the "gold gateways of the stars." God cannot overlook such optimism and faith. I had a letter from a friend in southern Saskatchewan, and she told me that the rains had come too late for the crops but she said "the seeds we planted in May are coming up which shows the soil is alright. The soil is still fertile, but it must have rain! And it may be the frost will keep up long enough for some things to mature, radishes, lettuce and onions. Anyway it is cheering to see something green! I carried water to them until the well showed signs of giving out, but watering is not the same as rain!"

Then she passed on to discuss radio programs with me. Not a word of self-pity, no railing at Providence.

The crops may fail in Saskatchewan but the people have not failed.

Saskatoon has been hard hit this year, but the faith of its people is undimmed. I talked to a Saskatoon woman who is returning to her home from a visit to the Coast and she told me of the seeds she bought in Victoria to plant in her garden. "Your gardens are lovely," she said, "but I have not seen any sweetpeas equal to ours. The difference is in the soil, no doubt."

I saw beds of petunias at the stations in Manitoba, and great tall delphiniums, and fields of corn and cauliflower. Even the fireweed along the roads is strong and vividly purple and in waste places I saw carpets of wild sage. Soon the

fringed blue gentian will gleam in the meadows, and the Indian paint brush, deep crimson and pink will cover the banks.

It cheers my heart to read of irrigation schemes for Saskatchewan rather than a project of removing the people from their homes; for what has happened in Manitoba this year may come next year in Saskatchewan. The prairie will surely repent of the evil it has brought to the faithful souls who have put the best years of their lives into its development. When the good years come, as they surely will, perhaps the Government will set aside each year emergency stores for the lean years, as Joseph did in Egypt, and not leave to the individual farmer the matter of providing for the day when it does not rain.

THE INFORMAL GARDEN

A gloomy fire is burning in my heart this morning, a sullen fire that may never break into flame. It unsettles me.

Yesterday we had visitors from Edmonton, in Victoria for the first time, and eager to see all they could. To them a flower is a flower, whether it is growing in a straight line with its mates or not. They see just what I see when they look at a garden. They see beauty and growth and color.

Naturally they were thrilled with the delphiniums and roses and fragrant pinks, the new lawn, the bird baths, and half-acre of asparagus. We think it is all very fine too. When you make a garden yourself, plant seed and see it grow, bud and bloom, you are unconscious of its defects, just as the fond mother forgets that her baby is bow-legged as she contemplates his lovely eyes and shining hair!

Even so!

We drove the friends back to town with their arms full of roses and peonies, fragrant and lovely, and afternoon and evening were full of gladness, lark-song and solid mental satisfaction.

But on the way home we met two of our neighbors walking along Ferndale Road, where the broom, now out in all its golden profusion, was holding back the gloom of night. So we stopped to talk and they kindly asked us to come in to see their garden before the light had all gone.

Their garden is a picture of symmetry and discipline. A perfect lawn of thread-like grass which makes a pile like furniture plush; little cypress trees to break the straight edge of the lawn, unreal in their grace and precision; roses on standards, standing up as if wired; a rock garden with bands of color, purple and pink and white, every last little plant in place and standing at attention. Even the rows of potatoes, discreetly divided from the flowers by a white lattice, are in even rows, coming into bloom all at once, no irregularity, no crowding, no speaking out of turn. Over the garden gate there is a honeysuckle falling in a perfect shower of blossoms, symmetrical as an umbrella, not a leaf or branch too many. Not a weed, not a ragged edge, not a false note!

How do they do it?

This morning I went out, as usual, to do my bit of gardening before I settled down to the day's work, and I see now that our method of gardening is all wrong—and yesterday, even yesterday, I thought it was lovely. I even look at the woodpile with sudden distaste, and yesterday I was proud of its proportions and said it comforted me like having the taxes paid and a good line of credit at the store. There it is, in plain view, unashamed and uncensored. It should have a green lattice around it like our neighbor's potato-patch. Beside it stands delphiniums, mixed with poppies. Pansies grow up through the boards of the walk; marigolds and bachelor's buttons elbow their way into the regal lilies, and as I raked the scene with an eye grown critical, I saw a potato here and there buoyantly lusty, and the healthy face of an artichoke that has joined the company, seeing one little open space.

No, it's not a garden, I said sadly,—it's a litter, a medley, a turmoil, an anarchy, a turbulent derangement, a free-for-

all.

And what can we do about it? I know what our neighbors would do!

I make one move anyway. I remove the potato, and the artichoke. But there I stick. The bachelor's buttons are blooming and full of buds. It seems too bad to take out a plant about to bloom, and there's no prettier blue than these—with the white pinks and coral bell they make a lovely bouquet in a wide bowl set on a low table. And all these poppies—these crimson glowing poppies, crinkled like tissue paper with their cross of black, edged with white at their centre! I cannot touch them. The former owner of this place served as a chaplain in France during the war, and brought back the seeds of these—the real Flanders poppies, with their tragic significance. He must have had joy in them to have preserved them all these years. No one can lay a profane hand on Col. Wood's poppies, even if they are crowding up on the roses. We have planted them now on the lower border of the place, and today they are nodding to every passerby on Ferndale Road, a perfect blaze of crimson against the evergreens.

Well, there I go again! Completely lacking in back-bone. I'll never be a gardener and I may as well face it. I won't try to justify myself. I know I am wrong. I know Nature cannot be trusted. I know Nature is the great anarchist, the great leveller, and if she had her way mountains would be levelled and all the rivers received into the sea. Man makes progress by resisting Nature, and occasionally putting her into a straight-jacket—thermos bottles, frigidaires are just that. I know progress means resistance. Houses are built to keep out the cold. Water has to be imprisoned in pipes to make it serve mankind; fire has to be held in place, and under lock and key. No, Nature is no guide. We should be convinced of that now. See how people have been deceived by thinking that Nature's designs should be left untouched. When street-lights were first used, the best people opposed them on the ground that God has divided the light from the darkness, and to break that division was nothing short of blasphemy! Eminent churchmen opposed the use of anæsthetic in child-birth, and quoted Scripture to prove that God intended child-birth to be painful!

Nature has her finer qualities of covering up her scars and hiding her deformities, but we must not let that mislead us.

After careful consideration I have arrived at a conclusion. I cannot be tough with the flowers that come up here and there. I will have to let them come along. But all vegetables must go. That's flat! Turnip, potato, artichoke, squash, even onion!

I heard a radio speaker during Garden Week, who upheld the informal garden; he said it expressed the individuality of the gardener, and I am afraid he is right.

From where I sit now I see a bed of lavender just beginning to show the lovely color, which attracts the bees. Through the filmy green of its swaying stems, pink poppies are blooming, and purple Canterbury Bells. I should take them out, but I cannot destroy anything so beautiful. So I'll leave them there and like them. Farther over I see the tamarisk beginning to turn pink at the end of its branches; and I must not forget to record the planting of the little oak from Windsor Park. It has five leaves on it now and is well surrounded with stakes for safety. We planted it on Nancy's birthday—May 29th. Nancy is one of our neighbors.. To her we have committed the safety of the little tree, for Nancy is only ten years old, sturdy and lovely as a little tree herself, and she will, we hope, be here when we are all gone. Nancy will remember!

So the garden, though a bit dishevelled and blowsy and unauthorized, has a beauty and a significance in its informality.

Its eyes are blue with delphiniums, its cheeks are red with roses and poppies, its hair shines with the glisten of laurel leaves, and is fragrant with peonies, pinks and stocks. Who would be mean enough to notice its bow-legs?

THE FLOWER SHOW

If any of you amateur gardeners, swollen with a few small successes with marigolds or larkspur, or other simple-hearted flowers that bloom in spite of you, wish to know yourselves as you really are, you need only go to a Flower Show in Victoria.

I went last year and I have been a different woman ever since. I am humble, and emptied of self and vain glory. I went and saw, and marvelled. I may as well tell all!

We had sent some gladioli blooms to the show, and went in, a bit pridefully, because of them. We did not see how there could be lovelier blossoms than ours. We had Sonias, and Black Pansies, and Belindes and Roseann, and Picardys, that lovely shell pink which was produced at Cobble Hill. The weather had been perfect. No rain to spot the blooms, and the Flower Show came at exactly the right time.

We went to see the other exhibits first—the beans and potatoes and onions. I could steel my heart then and look calmly at the onions and listen to the glib words of praise which are accorded the exhibitors of Ailsa Craigs, for I had turned to peppers, and had fifty-eight pepper plants all bearing. I took them over when they were poor little shabby things, more dead than alive, and they had responded to hoeing and watering in a way that had comforted me for the perfidy of the onions. I was off with the old love and on with the new.

I lingered for old time's sake, beside the Early Rose potatoes, lying satin-skinned and beautiful on the papier mache plates. I even saw purple potatoes, but they looked too florid, too sunburned, too feverish for me. However, fashions change in vegetables too, so maybe purple potatoes are the latest things, like crimson toe-nails.

An exhibit of indoor plants stood in the middle of the floor, and there I saw plants that looked like the workings of black magic. Foliage plants rivalling in brilliance the rose, or peony. Such reds, greens and yellows. I wish Mrs. Curiston, who lived in the section house in Manitou and achieved great success with foliage plants, could have seen them. The neighbors said she fed them lamp-black and turned them every day, and washed the leaves each Saturday night when she bathed the family.

There was one whose upper fern-like leaves were bright scarlet, falling gracefully down over leaves of soft maroon; another that had braids of pink, cream and green about two inches long, instead of flowers; another had green and white tiny saucers, thick and firm, for leaves.

This exhibit drew the crowd not only with its beauty, but its exotic grandeur. The plants were so foreign looking!

In another exhibit I saw baby's breath, in the pale purple. I had seen this before in bouquets and thought it was dyed, as white carnations are with green ink for the 17th of March, but here it was as nature fashioned it—Statice Latifolia by name.

The new colors in godetia was one of the features of the exhibition. The amateur gardeners always have godetia, it is so dependable and sure and cuts well for the house, godetia in white, pink and red. But at this show we saw godetia in a brilliant shade of pink that had a sheen like cloissonne. It gleamed and glowed as if beneath its surface it had a base of shining silver. And the exhibitor said the only difference was in the seed—it was no more trouble than the ordinary flower. "Kelvenden Glory" is its name and it is surely the distinguished member of the godetia family. I had thought our own godetia was a pretty flower, but with this new startling color in my eye, the common godetia had suddenly paled and faded, like a child's parasol that has been left out in the rain. That's what happens at a flower show!

And then we went to look at the gladioli, and we were so fascinated with the exquisite blooms we saw that we forgot our own.

There was one gladiolus, of the pure American Beauty shade, called Damaris, (who was a daughter of the Gods), that will surely find its way around the world. I wondered how the people who have developed it could be so humble about it. If I had brought that lovely flower to perfection I would want to stand beside it, blowing a trumpet all day long, calling to all lovers of flowers to come and see. And there was another called the "Albatross," as white as snow, that brought me to a sudden stop as my eyes roved over this scene of beauty. Think of a spray of double blossoms, about fourteen inches long, fully six inches wide, each blossom identical with the others and of perfect whiteness, and named

"Albatross," bringing back the whole story of the Ancient Mariner.

Damaris, and the other dazzling brilliant colors, gave me a feeling of Arabian Night's splendor, but the Albatross in its shining purity, made me think of Lake Louise at sunrise, or the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians.

The gladiolus has one quality which appeals to the comfortable lower stratum of gardeners, the people who just want flowers. It is hardy and forthright. It will grow anywhere. Plant a few bulbs, and barring drought or cyclone, you will have bloom. The prairie people welcome this prodigal flower and grow more and more of it. Vancouver Island cannot supply the demand for bulbs which comes from the prairies.

Gladiolus is called so from the word which means 'a sword,' and that describes its long slim leaf, so straight and sharp. The flower grew originally beside the water in Africa, and it is thought that the gracefully drooping upper petal took this form to protect the flower from the falling spray. The blooms, when picked in the hard bud, will last two weeks, and so it becomes a favorite shipping plant. The gladiolus bulbs have been sold commercially since 1889, and may some day be the chief industry of this Island, with its perfect weather conditions.

Going to a flower show, or visiting a beautifully kept garden, does trouble the placid waters of contentment. But, after all, a garden was made for delight, not competition. We all need the comfort of plain green growing things to atone for life's disappointments, and so I am going to keep on liking nasturtiums, and pansies and violas. I'll go to the flower shows just as I go to an exhibition of pictures, and musical festivals, and come back to Lantern Lane without envy. Flowers are like music, they are gifts differing and all have beauty.

The garden here may look like a colt that has run out around the straw stack all winter. But it's a garden and it grows! And at sunset, the night blooming stocks exhale their perfume!

LOVE TO AGNES

People who have missed the joy of life should be thin, and hungry looking, with sorrowful eyes and restless hands, but my little train-friend had none of these. She looked like the small-town belle who had grown a bit overweight because of her own good cooking. She had an attractive face, a fine straight mouth, and the English school-girl complexion. But here is the story she told me as we waited for a train at the Junction.

"I noticed what you said about crooners," she began, when we had exchanged a few casual words, "you do not think much of them, do you?" "Not for my own use," I said, "there are many features I like better, but—," "Yes, I know," she broke in, "but you are ready to concede a place for them. You said young people enjoy them, but I want to tell you there are more than the young who crave what you called a glamorous love song."

I waited for her to convince me, and then I got her story.

"I was brought up in a rectory in Yorkshire," she said, "in the valley of the Ribble, and knew nothing of life or the ways of men. My parents believed in keeping their daughters very innocent and sweet, and we were never allowed to read a novel except 'Thaddeus of Warsaw.' It was an historical novel. But of course we had our dreams. There were five girls in my family. Love would come riding by some day, on a white horse, with nodding plumes. Love on bended knee, with a diamond ring."

"And did it come?" I asked.

"No, something came, but not a knight with plumes. It was a letter from Canada. One of the neighbor's boys, who had gone to Saskatchewan, wrote back asking my father for my hand—remember that, it was my father who got the letter. Cyril did send his love to me, couched in a few dull words which father read to me—'Love to Agnes, and sincere respect.'

"Father thought it over, and accepted the offer. I was nineteen, and I was naturally thrilled that anyone wanted to marry me. I believe there were three letters in all, and a picture of me was sent, but it was father who answered the letters."

"Are you sure father did not send his own picture?" I asked.

"No, I am not sure," she laughed. "Father conducted the whole matter and I had really very little to do with it. I remember father said I should be humbly proud to have the love of a good man. But I hardly remembered Cyril. I think I was twelve years old when he left our village."

"After six months, in which I labored hard at my linen, and all the girls envied me, I was sent out to Canada with a family who were going as far as Winnipeg. The journey from Winnipeg I took alone; the first time I had done anything alone. Father was far way so I talked to a man. He was the first man I had ever met who was interested in me as a human being—interested enough to want to talk to me. I did not know anyone could be so fascinating. I told him where I was going, and why. He did not approve at all of this sort of marrying. He said I had had no courtship, and everyone should have a courtship, with flowers and Valentines, moonlight nights, and sweet words. We had only half an hour together, but he told me I should not marry Cyril when I arrived. 'Look him over first,' he said, and just as the train was whistling for the station he said quite boldly, 'You may not know it, but you are pretty and a smart girl—you do not have to marry this man whom you hardly know. You do not have to marry anyone, you can make your own way in Canada and pick out your own man'."

"I married Cyril. I knew father would be angry with me if I delayed. Besides, Cyril had driven ten miles to meet me, and expected me to marry him. I wore my silk dress and we were married at the rectory, but it rained. Everything was very dull and drab and strange and I cried all the ten miles, and I am sure Cyril was disappointed too, but he just let me cry and did not say a word. One word would have comforted me. I wanted to be comforted."

"Well, I have stayed with my bargain for twenty-five years. We have five children, nice ones, too, and I have real comfort in them. I have not been home. Cyril works, eats and sleeps, and provides for us. I have never known what he is thinking of—he does not talk to me of anything but weeds, cows, cream separator, what do you want when I go to the store? I am happier than many of the women around me. Everyone says Cyril is a good man, so steady and hard-working, good to his horses, good to us, in the same way. Protective and all that. But he is no companion to me. Now that my youngest child is ten, I have more time to think, and I see I have been cheated. There is more in life than just work—I resent the way I was packed off to marry the first man who asked father. The man I met on the train was right. He gave me good advice, which I should have taken."

"But you have your children," I began. "Oh, don't be alarmed," she interrupted, "I'll stay with them. I will never walk out. Life has short-changed me, but I will take the loss. I pick up what crumbs I can. I read now, and listen to the radio. That's what I wanted to tell you. You say you do not care for crooners—and why should you? I presume you had a courtship before you were married, love letters, perhaps an engagement ring—meetings and partings, quarrels and reconciliations—all in their place. These belong to youth, and I suppose if they came at the right time a woman survives them and passes on to other experiences."

I agreed with her.

"But I am still looking for romance," she said, after a pause. "Having no flesh and blood hero, I have constructed one. I have thought of the man I met on the train—the man who said I was a pretty girl, who showed his admiration in his eyes—the only man who ever did. I never knew his name and he did not know mine. But he has lived in my thoughts. When I hear some man singing 'Beautiful Lady in Blue,' it becomes my song, and he is singing it to me, and though I know this is all fancy—all star dust and moonshine, it comforts me. I want someone to call me a beautiful lady, even now when I am forty-four and grey on the temples ... so I close my eyes when he sings and create for myself a new world. It's entirely harmless ... but it helps."

"So do not be too sure that romantic singers appeal only to the very young. Some of their songs are an offense against good taste, of course, but there are others that feed the flame—that little flickering flame of romance which redeems our lives from dusty dullness, and helps us to wash the cream separator and hoe the beets. I shall see that my

family get their chance to live normally—they'll get their romance, in season I hope!"

Before we parted I asked if I might write what she had told me, and she readily agreed.

"Call it 'Love to Agnes'," she said.

JAMES BURWASH, GENERAL MERCHANT

There is a lesson in this story I am going to tell of old man Burwash and his store at Poplar Glen. Opinions will differ on just what it teaches. But here it is:

James Burwash, General Merchant, kept his accounts on two nails driven into the wall above his desk, at the back of the store. The desk was a kitchen table really, but it was always referred to as the desk—and it carried a full load of papers held in place by stones and pieces of wood from the woodbox behind the stove. There was a drawer in the table but it had reached its capacity years ago. Still, James Burwash knew where to find what he wanted. On Saturday night he made certain entries in an old curly-leafed ledger and drew pencil lines through other entries. No one could read it but himself, yet his store had prospered year in and year out.

In addition to the two nails on which he stuck slips of brown paper, he used the back of the door for entries of gasoline sales, after he added a gas pump to his equipment. It was impossible to keep a record of all sales, for the neighbors drove in and helped themselves when he was busy in the store, and left either the cash or an I.O.U. in a cigar box on the window sill. He drove in another nail above the desk to take care of the gas I.O.U's, collecting them from the box almost every day, and his accounts at the end of the week were satisfactory. James Burwash trusted his neighbors. Sometimes people handed him money for gas that they had taken and forgot to pay for at the time.

The wholesale houses extended credit to him year after year and he was always ready to make his payments. Once or twice he had had to get a few hundred dollars from the bank, but there was no difficulty. The manager knew his business was sound and was glad to oblige him. Butter, eggs, live poultry, and pigs came in and were paid for in cash, and shipped to the city and sold at a fair profit. The same produce house took care of his shipments year after year.

Once in a while Mrs. Burwash and Arlotta, their daughter, who worked in the store, went to the city to see the styles, but Mr. Burwash stayed by the business. A trip to the city was just a headache to him, with all its noise and confusion, and anyway he had everything he needed at home. Plenty of work and plenty of company.

When some of the other business men of Poplar Glen invested in wheat and made money, James Burwash was not envious—he was honestly glad, and rejoiced over their good fortune, marvelling at their cleverness. "I get my fun working," he said in his own defence,—"I like to make money as well as anyone, but I like to see the people I am dealing with make it too. That's why I like the general store business. Everyone gains.... I don't want something for nothing. It's not lucky.... And it doesn't take much to satisfy me. A good bed and a good pair of boots is about all a person needs anyway. You're in one or the other of them all the time!" People laughed at him. He was a queer stick to be so easily satisfied, with money in the bank and all! Just an old plodder, that's what he was, with no initiative.

Sometimes Arlotta advocated stock-taking. She was a reader of the Dry-Goods News. Stock-taking should be done at least once a year. How could anyone tell whether money was being made or lost, unless he knew what he had. James Burwash talked back to his daughter. "I know what I have"—he said stubbornly, "Counting it over won't increase it. Didn't I buy it, and unpack it?"

Poplar Glen did not depend entirely on its field crops, and almost every farmer had cows and poultry, so the produce business went on, and James Burwash prospered. He did not need to solicit trade. It came to him, for through the lean years, as well as the fat ones, he paid cash for everything, even when it reduced his savings. He had faith in Poplar Glen and its people. They would pay their accounts. No one was ever refused goods at his store. He was rather

glad when Arlotta went to business college so there was no more need to defend his business methods.

But in six months Arlotta came back and the real trouble began. Arlotta began to play tennis with the bank boys and the school teacher and found that she could entertain her young friends by telling them of her father's parlous business methods. She told about the three nails for bills payable, bills receivable and gas sales. They had a good laugh over her father's idea of Double Entry, as described by Arlotta—one entry on the back of the door, and another on the lid of an orange box. Arlotta achieved the reputation of being a wit, and lived up to it. People said to hear Arlotta tell about her father was as good as a show.

About this time a new manager came to the bank. The old one had loaned money too freely. The new one began to check up on all the accounts. He heard the funny stories that Arlotta told and thought he had better investigate James Burwash, General Merchant, whose note for three hundred dollars would be due December first. He came over one day and asked Mr. Burwash what provision he was making for meeting the note. Mr. Burwash was indignant. The old manager had never questioned him like this. Hadn't he always paid his notes the day they were due? Were they afraid of their money? The manager was polite but firm. Was it true that Mr. Burwash kept no books? Was it possible to run a business that way? Mr. Burwash said he had his own system and had run his business for twenty-five years and made money. No, he had not taken stock and did not intend to. But the bank would get the money on the day it was due!

From this a rumor started that the bank was pushing James Burwash for his money. The sum began to grow. It was easy for three hundred dollars to grow to a thousand and then three thousand. The little town had a new sensation. Old Jim Burwash was in a tight spot owing the bank all that money. Well, no wonder. No one could run a business the way he did, letting anyone have the key to his gas pump and keeping his accounts on the lid of an orange box!

James Burwash was upset and worried when his produce began to fall off. He had given credit to many of the farmers that year and they were to bring in pigs and poultry when the prices were highest, late in the fall. Some of them did not bring him anything—the rumors had shaken their confidence, and the rumors persisted that the bank was after him and would probably seize his stock. When he telephoned to some of the people who owed him the biggest bills, they were evasive. He heard that some of them were doing their trading at Oxner, six miles away. He could not understand what was wrong. His business was as good as ever, but someway there was a falling off in his trade. It began to keep him awake at night, and even his old friends shook their heads. The old man was slipping, they said.

In six months his business was gone.

You can still read his name on the store, just as you cross the tracks and turn east on the main street of Poplar Glen:

JAMES BURWASH
General Merchant

It's faded now, but no one has painted it out. The store has changed hands three times since he left.

The old man—he aged quickly after he left the store—is a night watchman now in the Produce Company in the city. Arlotta married one of the bank boys and the old man is always glad his "failure" did not do his girl any harm. He is not resentful, or bitter—he is just bewildered about it all, and thinks about it in his long nights in the warehouse. Old customers drop in to see him occasionally and tell him the store has never seemed the same since he left!

"It isn't the money," he often whispers to himself as he makes his rounds. "I do not care about the money I lost ... It isn't that ... If I just knew why ... I thought they liked me..."

FOOTLOOSE

Mrs. Andrews looked at the untidy booth from which the last party of revellers had departed, leaving crumbled cake and ashes on their saucers, and a feeling approaching exaltation flooded her heart.

"I know how a bird feels when the door of the cage has been opened," she said aloud, but checked herself hurriedly. Talking to one's self is a bad sign—a sign of insanity. She had read that in the psychology course the Women's Institute put on last winter. But there was no harm in thinking about the day of deliverance which was now assured; and as she straightened the chairs and changed the tablecloth she gave free play to her happy thoughts. This was the last Saturday night she would be clearing up after other people. Now she would be the one who gave orders, and someone else would clear away.

Twenty years she had served the public with ice-cream, canned goods and candies; listened to their chatter, exchanged gossip and small talk and asked them to come again; smiling when her back ached and her feet were sore ... On Saturday night with its rush of people from the country, she often wondered how she could smile another time and not crack her face!

There was no use saying a word. No one was interested. Not even Fred—he could even joke about it. "I've told them to throw their money in the door and keep going!" he used to say. "I don't know why they bother us."

And now it was over. Uncle Abner's five hundred dollars had clinched the argument. They had sold out and were going for an extended trip—destination unknown ... Uncle Abner had said in his will, he did not want any monument but a kind thought in the hearts of his relatives, and to ensure this had left five hundred dollars to each of them.

With the five hundred dollars to her credit in the bank, Mrs. Andrews was able to persuade Fred that they should have a trip while they were young enough to enjoy it. As a matter of fact, Fred needed it more than she, for he was entirely satisfied with his life in Milner, and she was not. She had been longing to travel all her life, and had read travel books in her scattered moments of leisure. Fred was the real small-town man, in all his ways, and lately she noticed he was beginning to stoop when he walked and often listened to people with his mouth open. He would serve customers without a collar if she had not watched him. When a business man, not yet fifty years old, likes to spend his evenings sitting on the back veranda in his stocking feet reading the True Detective Magazine, it is time for a change!

When, a week later, Mr. and Mrs. Andrews drove away from Milner in their new car, they carried a few extra copies of the Milner Mercury containing the story of their departure, written in the editor's flowing words:

"Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Smith Andrews having disposed of their holdings on Main Street, left us to-day on an extended motor trip in Canada and the United States. Their many friends wish them a safe and happy journey and trust that when they tire of seeing strange faces and strange sights, they will come again to Milner, where a warm welcome will await them!"

"What a hope!" Mrs. Andrews laughed as she read these words to Fred. "Why should we ever return to a little place of three hundred and fifty people when the world is ours and we are footloose and free. We are off on a great adventure, to see life as it is in the open; to see how other people live; to smell new smells; hear new words; eat new food. I want to meet strangers, people whose history I do not know. We know too much about the Milner people, with all their sins and sorrows. I know what each person is going to say before he speaks. They know us too well too ... Every time I saw the Millers I thought of the lawsuit my father had with them once, over the brand of a calf. One day now will be as good as a year, seeing new sights, meeting the unexpected, for we live by heart-beat, not by figures on a dial. Do you know that Fred?"

No, Fred did not know it. Fred believed they were both living by keeping inside the yellow line and watching the road signs!

Mrs. Andrews, noting his lack of interest, was more than ever convinced that it was largely for his sake that she had insisted on the trip. Fred was certainly slipping. Living in a small place had left its mark on him.

The Andrews followed the beaten line of travel—cooked at community kitchens and slept in auto cabins. This was the way "to meet the real people, America on wheels," a travel book had said, the one called "Two Vagabonds," written

by two business women who had spent six weeks on the Highway and took photographs and wrote in their diary every day. This book spoke of the "happy, carefree people one meets around the auto camps; people from other countries, bound together by the fellowship of wayfaring, who gaily borrow and lend, sharing their experiences and their equipment."

Mrs. Andrews was disappointed the first night when they drove into Blue-Bell Autocamp and were assigned to a cabin by a shabby, sad-eyed man, who merely collected their two dollars and showed them how to back their car into the space between the cabins, so their gas could not be stolen ... and then left them without a word. Didn't seem to care where they came from or where they were going.

That night they went out to a lunch counter to eat and sat beside people who took no notice of them but ate hurriedly and departed. Mrs. Andrew's friendly words died on her lips, but she was interested to see the hot cakes made on the top of the stove, and the taps which gave out water when the edge of the tumbler was pressed against them. She told Fred again how lovely it seemed to know there were no more dirty dishes lying in wait for her.

The next evening they cooked their supper at a community stove, and there the travel-book's promise of friendliness seemed to hold. A big woman who had just driven in with her family all dressed in slacks, came over and asked if she might use Mrs. Andrews' frying pan. "It seems too bad to be rootin' out mine, when yours is all hot and with its hog's fat all ready." Mrs. Andrews was delighted to lend the pan.

The next morning the friendly neighbor was gone before the Andrews were awake, and the pan had gone with her!

Fred became suddenly interested. "Now we are getting somewhere," he said. "New sights, new experiences. Meeting the unexpected! You could have lived in Milner another twenty years and never have anything stolen, not even a frying pan."

At the Grande Canyon, Mrs. Andrews had the thrill of eating at a Harvey House and seeing the "Harvey" girls, in their neat black uniforms, described by Edna Ferber in one of her stories. Mrs. Andrews told one of the waitresses about the story, and asked her if Miss Ferber came often now that she was living at Phoenix, writing another book. The waitress said she did not know anyone by that name, but would bring the Manager. Mrs. Andrews began to wish she had not spoken about Miss Ferber's story. The Manager asked her what was it she wanted, and when she attempted to explain, cut her short by saying, "I never heard of the lady, and I guess it must have been about one of the other houses she wrote. There's been no complaints since I came!"

She had gone in ahead of Fred to order their meal, and was glad he had not heard the conversation. He had heard too much already!

In Los Angeles they attended the Canadian picnic and saw fifteen thousand people and not one that they knew. That was the biggest disappointment of all. The "Two Vagabonds" had met relatives at the Canadian picnic when they attended, and had so much fun they could not possibly tell it all in the confines of one small book. The Two Vagabonds had met people there who invited them to come and see their ranch. Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Smith Andrews wandered from group to group, waiting in vain for someone to speak to them, and at last sought the friendly refuge of their own car and ate what they had brought—two lonely strangers in that hospitable country of sunshine and flowers.

"Just what we were looking for," Fred said, briskly. "Now we have been attending friendly back-slapping picnics all our lives; with all their old games and competitions, and everybody knowing everyone else. Do you remember when you dressed up as a Gypsy, and told fortunes? And all the old fun over Mrs. Snead's gooseberry pies, without enough sugar in them; and Billy Sharpe pretending his eye had got a twist in it, from eating them, that wouldn't come out; and the lemonade which ran out because someone had carelessly served the lemon ... Of course we never saw such a lovely place as this—snow capped mountains, beds of flowers, acres of lawns.

"It isn't the place," Mrs. Andrews burst out. "It's the people! I never felt so lonely in my life!"

Fred drew out a newspaper clipping and read slowly,—

"And when they tire of seeing strange faces and strange sights, their many friends hope they will come again to

Milner, where a warm welcome awaits them!"

GOING TO TOWN

I knew a woman once who had not been to town for twenty years. She lived eight miles from a town of a thousand people, but her life on the farm seemed to give her all she wanted. At the end of twenty years her record was broken. She did not exactly come to town then, but she drove through. The occasion was her husband's funeral. There was no apparent reason for her isolation. She was a woman of intelligence, a good neighbor, cheerful and sociable.

Country people do not dash off to town on the slight pretexts which impel city dwellers to leave their homes, and wander through the crowded ways of life. We go out when we must and always have a good reason. We will not leave the reservation just "to see the shops," or to match a skein of wool or to change a book. No, we wait until these little chores have accumulated, as they do, on the yellow pad inside the pantry door, and then say, "I must go to town tomorrow. I cannot put it off any longer."

Of course, it is really not so bad, when we make up our minds to go. There are compensations. There is the drive to town, the six miles of sunshiny road, passing small farms with trellises of roses and hollyhocks up to the eaves of the houses. The goats feed along the roads, tied securely. Goats are never allowed their liberty, being too destructive to run at large. Sometimes a goat gets loose and strange tales are told of their depredations. Cherry trees have been eaten by them.

We pass the Gordon Head cannery—a fine community enterprise—which gathers up the products of the fields—loganberries, strawberries and apples in their season, and cans them for export. A bank manager, formerly of Edmonton, is the owner and manager; a man of enterprise and ingenuity, who began in a small way, utilizing a Ford engine and wheels from an old sewing machine. Now he runs three shifts in his busy season and his products find purchasers in England.

Often now we meet the sight-seeing busses and get a glimpse of the eager tourists seeing all they can of our Island beauty. Ninety percent of them are women and of the combinations, I believe, mother-and-daughter is the most common.

The errands we have in town are always interesting. Today I bought cheesecloth to make lavender bags, and lavender bags will, according to tradition, keep moths away. So the bags will be filled with lavender flowers and hung in the closets. They will bring a pleasant odor anyway. I also had to buy tin-tops to put the cherries in. The cherries are ripe at Lantern Lane and the branches bend under their weight. The lane has eighteen trees, nine on each side, and there are other trees around the buildings. Beside the garage a lovely tree stands, resting one jewelled branch on the roof, too heavily fruited to bear its own weight. Another tree throws a black medallion of shadow on the lawn, and in that shade on the hottest day a cool spot may be found, with the bending branches low enough for picking.

Not wishing to deceive anyone, I will hasten to admit that they are all "Pie cherries!"

The native Victorians do not think highly of pie cherries, but to all of us who spent our childhood on the prairie, a cherry, a bright red shiny cherry is a gift from above, to be accepted with humble gratitude and eaten without criticism.

In the stores I note they sell for one half the amount that Bings and Lamberts bring, but I will not let any vulgar consideration of price dim my regard for them. They are cool, juicy cherries, not so sweet as the Bings, but sweet enough. The people here are too fastidious, spoiled by the prodigality of nature. So while they speak haughtily of the pie cherries, we eat them, and find them good!

We think how thrilled we were when the choke-cherry crop was abundant in Manitoba years ago, and if there were pin cherries too, and Saskatoons, our winter supply of fruit was assured. Sometimes the wild strawberries on the school section escaped the late spring frosts. Sometimes there were raspberries growing along Oak Creek. Once, we even found

wild plums along the Souris river, but the whole supply of wild fruit was subject to every bitter wind of chance, and there were black years when we were reduced to dried apricots and dried apples. Pie cherries indeed!

One of the compensations of going to town is to have a plate of chop suey at a Chinese restaurant, where at noon Chinese families may be seen having a meal. Chop suey is served on a platter and makes a complete meal, with its meat and vegetables, known and unknown, but combined with the culinary wisdom of centuries. With it goes chicken soup and boiled rice and Chinese tea.

The children talk English to each other and Chinese to their mothers, and the atmosphere seems always to be gay and harmonious.

We saw Kipling's great story of "Elephant Boy" last week, and "Captain Courageous" too, and were moved by the acting of the Hindu boy in one and the white boy in the other. When the little Toomai received the acclamation of the white man and the great hunters of his own race, having fulfilled all the conditions of being a Great Hunter, and with dignity and humility accepted the honor, no one could resist his appeal. His luminous eyes, misted with tears, would find the way to any heart, and cause even the most complacent Anglo-Saxon to wonder if there is really any great significance in the color of one's skin.

I like going to town when I get started. I like to hear the music at the Empress and at the Show-Boat in the harbor, and see the pipers piping in the boats, and see the foreign license plates on cars, and know that in all this coming together there is being developed a better understanding, and a stronger determination to live at peace with our fellow men.

But I like to come home too, and go out and see that another row of gladioli has broken into bloom while I was away. The charm of the country is its changing scene. The fields change from brown to green and back to brown again; crops come on, ripen and die. We sow and reap, fight against weeds and insects, sometimes winning, more often losing. But always we have, in our hearts, that sense of fellowship with the soil which atones for human frailties.

NEIGHBORS

When the Churches of Victoria sent out an appeal for fruit and vegetables to send to a dried-out section of the prairie, they got a surprise. In fact they got two. The first one was that even with apples lying on the ground and the fields red with ripe tomatoes, it was not easy to collect a carload. People are not mean, but they are forgetful. What is everybody's business is nobody's business, and a need, not seen, can be set aside. Nor does everyone know how to pack a crate. However, with an energetic secretary, notices in the papers and pulpits, the fruit and vegetables began to arrive.

The final day came for the packing, the car was on the siding and expert packers were on hand to see that every apple and cauliflower would arrive in perfect shape. A little anxiety was felt as the hours went on. The smallest car lot is twelve tons and that takes many crates.

In the middle of the afternoon came an interruption. A long truck backed up to the car door; the Chinese driver got down, and presented Mr. Joseph Hope's compliments, and five tons of vegetables and fruit—everything from pears to parsnips—packed in crates, as symmetrical as honeycombs. Five tons! A gift of good-will from The Goldendawn Chinese Co-operative Produce Co. of Victoria to the neighbors in Saskatchewan.

Those of us who know the Chinese know something of their generosity. If you are interested in getting ample returns on an investment, do some little good deed for a Chinese acquaintance. He will never forget.

In Manitou, Manitoba, some years before the advent of radio or telephone, the Missionary women decided to teach the Chinese population to read. The Chinese population, numbered six, four laundry men and two young fellows who ran a confectionery store. Classes were held in the homes of the teachers five nights each week, and every pupil had a teacher. I had an eighteen year old boy, just arrived from China, called Tom Lee. Tom had bright eyes, and hair so shiny

it seemed to be shellacked; and Tom laid hold of the English language with an eagerness that gave me great delight. When we had spelling matches and word tests, I could back my Tom against the field.

In a year he was gone—gone to Morden to cook in his uncle's restaurant, and I had other pupils, but I have good reason to remember Tom Lee.

It was the week between Christmas and New Year's. Cold, stormy weather, with drifted roads. I had six guests coming for dinner. Two of the women were Winnipeg people who had entertained me in their lovely Fort Rouge homes with maids in uniform, monogrammed Tiffany glass, and coffee urns (hitherto not seen by me). I wanted to entertain them, but I was a bit frightened too. However I put my trust in Alice, who was my faithful and efficient helper. We had put a shine on the house and made new cushions for the Cosy Corner. We had a sixteen pound turkey, and flowers ordered from Winnipeg.

At ten o'clock on the fateful day, Alice's brother arrived from Somerset, seventeen miles away, to take her home. Her mother was seriously ill. She was just starting to make the apple pies. I knew she had to go, and at once, for the day was threatening! I could not have held her if I had wanted to!

I had three children then, two, four and six, of the kind that is called "stirring"—I did not know where I could get anyone to help me—I could, I thought, send the children to my good neighbor across the street. Mrs. Mac would keep them and bed them down with her own, but these guests would want to see them—I had bragged about them. That would not do! But how could I cook the meal, dress the three, and serve it.... I could do it, but I would look like Custer's Last Stand when the company came.

In the midst of my confusion there was a knock at the kitchen door, and the angel of deliverance stood on the frosty door step—Tom Lee, dressed in a new overcoat, and grey fedora. To Tom I told my troubles. "I take apron"—he said simply, "You go read a book!"

He took off his suit coat, rolled back the stiff cuffs of his shirt, and my troubles were over. I showed him what we planned for the dinner. "No make pie," Tom said, "I makem good for restaurant, not for swell ladies, I make frozen pudding, Canadian way, Chinese sauce—sweet and hot, and white cake—like feather for light." And he did—a delicious frozen pudding out of macaroons and preserved wild strawberries and coconut. We did not need to worry about the refrigeration in Manitoba, at this season of the year.

Tom made a hurried trip down to his "cousins" and brought back a white serving coat, and some Chinese condiments for the turkey dressing. The dinner was a great success with Tom carrying the plates and coffee cups. I wanted him to leave me the dishes to wash, and join his friends. I knew he wanted to see the boys and show off his new clothes, but he stayed until every dish was back in its place.

This was Tom's holiday—his one day of the year—spent cooking and dishwashing. The cook's holiday!

I knew better than to offer to pay him—service like that cannot be paid in money. But I did try to thank him. He said it for me. "You help me," he said, "with hard words, English words. I help you—with little bit of work. I feel good, and you feel good. You and me—neighbors!"

Neighbors! That's the magic word that stirs our hearts. Neighbors! the world's greatest need. With all our science and invention, and cleverness, we cannot get along without them!

MUST WE HAVE FEARS

In that great book, "Gone With the Wind," there is the story of Scarlett O'Hara's return to her home, "Tara," during the Civil War, where she found the Yankees had come, the negroes were gone, the cotton was burned, her mother had

died, and her father, dazed and stunned, had gone queer! Her mother had taught Scarlett to be gentle and gracious, honorable and kind, modest and truthful. At least she had tried to teach her these things. But now with civilization in ruins, Scarlett realized with bitterness that none of these things mattered. Everything her mother had told her about life was wrong. Scarlett loved her mother, if she ever loved anyone. She did not stop to think that her mother had no way of knowing that her world would fall into ruins with every gentle standard changed into a brutal one. In this mood, Scarlett, with her heart like lead, went to see one of the neighbors, not knowing whether they were living or dead. It happened that the Fontaine's house had been overlooked by the conquering hosts. To Grandma Fontaine, Scarlett told her story. She told of the sights and sounds of the dreadful journey she had made to reach her old home, dead men and horses, hunger, desolation and horrors, and her fear that Tara might be burned. "But," said she, "I knew if I could only get to mother I could lay down my weary load. I thought the worst had happened surely—and then when I knew she was really dead, I knew what the worst was. Nothing matters now!"

Then the old lady spoke. "It's a bad thing, child, for a woman to have to meet the worst that can happen, because after that she never can really fear anything, and it's very bad for women not to be afraid of something ... there's something unnatural about a woman who isn't afraid! ... God intended us to be timid!"

There's a thought for those of us who think we are emancipated. Is it true that women should have fears? Are women happier with a few wholesome, natural fears?

People have always associated timidity with women, and no doubt women who are fearful are easier to control. I knew a woman, brought up in an orphanage, who worked long hours for $5 a month and two dresses a year. She knew there were better wages being paid, but she was afraid to leave the sheltering walls of this poor home for her mistress had told her that an orphan girl "once talked about" might never get a place again. So fear held her a prisoner, and the lady of the house continued to reap the benefit of her ill-paid labor.

Women have been afraid to meet the world! Look at the masculine pen names of the women writers of the last century. Look at the way some Old Country writers even now use an initial to hide their sex. Women have been taught fear—carefully, lovingly, and we need not deny the truth that fears have held back many a man or woman from grave mistakes and errors. There is such a thing as wholesome fear. We do well to be afraid of some things. I am afraid of debt, and old age dependence, and of insincerity, and freak religions, and of cheap optimism—and of those who cry Peace, Peace, when there is no peace. I am afraid, too, of the hysteria of national hatreds.

But there is a way to overcome fear. I mean the narrowing, crippling fear which keeps many women (and men too) prisoners in a free world—the fear to strike out in new paths, the fear of what people may say of you if you hold an independent opinion, the fear of disease. There is a way of overcoming fear. It is this: reason out what you should do, and go ahead without paying too much attention to how you feel. Go ahead, one day at a time.

I remember on one occasion our little town in Manitoba had some cases of a dread disease among children, and naturally the very word struck terror to our hearts, for our children were young. My first impulse was to keep them in the house, closely folded from harm. But I knew that was not right. That would have a bad effect on them. They would have to meet germs all their lives and must be taught courage. So we took special care as to diet, warm clothing, dry stockings and cheerful conversation, and did not suggest that there was any danger.

I had a neighbor who kept her children at home from school from the very first, stayed in herself and hardly used the phone for fear of contagion. Now the story should record that her children got the germ and mine did not. But that is not the way it happened. Mine got it and hers did not, but I always felt that she and her family suffered more than we did, for they were under the blight of fear for the whole season.

I believe in going ahead with what seems right to be done—in faith. If misfortune comes, let us believe we will be able to meet it. Let things happen if they must, and do our best to handle them when they come. Let us remember the old saying that no amount of water will sink a ship unless it gets into the ship!

I believe this is quite Scriptural. We cannot lay up faith for ourselves, as we would lay in a stock of flour when we are afraid the price is going up. But if we step out, the faith will come.

WOMEN TALKING

A speaker at the Pan-Pacific Conference in Vancouver gave out the startling statement that women are to blame for wars, and her course of reasoning though a bit labored, was interesting. She said women had demanded so much of men, so many luxuries and adornments, that war in the economic field naturally follows; and men having had to fight in this way, go on to fight in the way of cannons and submarines. She did not elaborate her theory, but just left the thought with us to mull over at our convenience. She also said that women live longer than men because they take better care of themselves. "Men die at 50, and women go merrily on," she said, "having breakfast in bed and every care and attention."

I wonder if the war in Ethiopia was caused by the Italian women's love of finery. Maybe we have been too hard on the military spirit, the lust of power, and possession, when all the time we should have been attacking our own love for better housing conditions and frigidaires. There may be a point in this argument, but it eludes me.

The military nations are not the nations that pay much heed to what the women want or think. No, the cure for war is not so simple as this negative suggestion that women be less demanding in matters of adornment and comfort.

The same speaker said that women are incapable of sustained mental effort, and are disposed to pass from one subject to another. Their life, with its diverse duties, and occupation, has produced a patch-work mentality. The same speaker told us later in her address, that she has often been told that she has a masculine mind.

I merely mention these things to show that the proceedings at the Pan-Pacific Conference were not deadly unanimous. There were plenty of places for lively discussion.

The outstanding feature of the conference to me was the Oriental women, so calm and capable and beautiful in their artistic costumes. Perhaps they regard time more sensibly than we do, and know the value of meditation. Whatever the cause, they have a poise and a charm all their own.

The past president, Mrs. Gauntlett, is a Japanese woman, who married a British professor forty years ago. She is the mother of six children, one of whom is a missionary, and all of them fill positions of trust in Japan. When she became president of the Pan-Pacific Women's Association she knew the hostility of the Chinese and Koreans, so she visited these countries and asked the women she met to pray with her, saying, "Perhaps as Japanese, Chinese and Koreans we cannot meet in harmony, but we can as Christians, for the fellowship of Christ overcomes all barriers of race or color."

The work of foreign missions has been amply justified in these great women from the Far East, who are helping to build a new world on love and understanding. One of these, a Japanese woman, presented each of us with her printed message, from which I quote a paragraph:

"My homeland is a small country and many people are crowded within it. We know in the past many perils have been repeated by man, one evil begets numerous evils ... Shall we not as citizens of the nations bordering the Pacific, throw overboard suspicion, jealousy and fear, forgetting the past; and as women, work for the establishment of peace. If God be with us, who shall be against us?"

This was the keynote of the convention, this spirit of sweet reasonableness based on Christian ethics.

"Population Pressures" engaged the attention of the conference on one of the days when I was present, and to hear Japan, New Zealand and Australia discuss this problem, which concerns them so closely, was a revelation to me.

I learned that emigration from Japan, on which the Government spends millions of yen each year, does not take away as many people in a year as come in from Korea; and that the number of Japanese who live away from Japan equals only the number of one year's natural increase. So when we speak, as we sometimes do, of growing big-hearted and offering a few hundred acres in some uninhabited valley of Canada to the Japanese people as a gesture of goodwill

to our neighbors across the Pacific, we are offering half a soda biscuit to a starving family. When we think of the increase each year in Japan's population, we stand aghast at the immensity of the problem; 400,000 people seek new positions annually in Japan and this number will increase as the years go on.

Among the Chinese delegates, I met an interesting woman doctor, Dr. Tai Keong Li, a little woman dressed in native dress, who had not been in Canada before. I had read of her in the papers and of the fact that she had brought 5,000 babies into the world. She corrected this report and said the figure should be 4,050. "Newspapers make it too many," she said. She has nine children of her own and she told me of them. "Life has been good to me," she said, "and given me great work to do for my people; and I may make the newspaper story come true yet," she added with a smile.

Among the American delegation Mrs. Ida B. W. Smith impressed me. She is a leader of the temperance forces in the United States, and told me of a film they had produced called the "Beneficient Reprobate," showing the many uses to which alcohol may be put for the benefit of humanity, followed by the other side of the story. Actual photographs of experiments carried on in laboratories show how one drink impairs the sense of balance, or perception of danger. "We have to be practical and scientific now in teaching temperance," Mrs. Smith said. "The young people of today are not moved by sentiment."

The women who came to the conference travelled at their own expense, and some of them had to leave their homes six weeks before to reach Vancouver in time. This was the fourth conference, and they are held every three years. These conferences may seem insignificant in this world of bursting bombs and broken treaties, but there is more in it than just a parcel of women meeting and talking. Every woman represents thousands of her country-women, awaked and watchful and learning. They read serious books eagerly and intelligently. They are facing life's realities squarely and courageously, and to their ranks come the brightest minds of all the countries. People who deplore the entry of women into public life (and there are still some of them left), are too late now with their protests. The trouble began when women learned to read.

Lady Astor made the statement in her recent visit to America, that the nations who deny individual liberty must first reduce their women to a state of subservience and silence. A well-informed, intelligent womanhood is a country's safeguard. Good intentions, homely virtues, devotion to one's family are not enough. There must be intelligence, and the forward look. Every little group of women who meet in mission circles, women's institutes, peace societies, or other groups to study the problems of the world, are helping to bring in the day of peace and goodwill between the nations.

THE VERDICT OF HISTORY

The old school reader may not have been a treasure house of literary gems, but it had one advantage over the publications of its day. It was read, and remembered. It came to us at a time when our young minds were not surfeited with comic strips, or Mickey Mouse, or Silly Symphonies, and its stories registered. I thought of this as I stood one bright day this week on the Plains of Abraham and found I could recall every word of that thrilling story which graced the pages of the Manitoba Fourth Reader, forty years ago, beginning:

"The eventful night of the twelfth was clear and calm, with no light but that of the stars..."

I can see its pages still, with the hard words in two rows at the top of the page set out with definitions. The title was "The Conquest of Quebec," and the style of writing must have been vigorous, vivid and colorful.

It gave us a gripping picture of the English boats floating down the river, bent upon the capture of the French fortress. Wolfe, the English general, is drawn as a man of peace rather than war, for as his boat moves on the quiet surface of the river he repeats a verse of a poem which has just been published, "The Elegy in a Country Churchyard," by Thomas Gray. "The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power," he repeats, "And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave Await alike the inevitable hour, the Path of glory leads but to the grave!"

Now these prophetic words put the young reader in a sad and sympathetic mood at once, and made of Wolfe a great hero and martyr. If we had known that he had burned French villages along the St. Lawrence as part of his plan for taking the fortress, leaving innocent people homeless and desolate, we would not have been so tender toward him. However the text was prepared for British Canadians and so the severities of war, particularly those perpetrated by our people, were even then tempered to our tender years.

This week when I had the privilege of visiting Battlefields Park in Quebec, I was glad to see with my own eyes the precipice that Wolfe's Highlanders climbed to take possession of the Plains of Abraham. It looks like an impossible feat, but it was accomplished and by it the fate of Canada was determined.

And what a battle it was! I saw many grisly mementos of its fury. Cannon balls as big as footballs picked up from the plains and now exhibited in the Museum of the Ursuline Convent, and something even uglier ... the cawthorps of iron, which were flung around the battlefield to pierce the feet of the horses ... a sort of tripod of iron, so wrought that no matter how it fell, one deadly prong would point upward!

All the seats along the top of the promontory seemed to be filled with spectators, and the sight-seeing cars brought more and more visitors who looked with awe and wonder as the story was told to them again. Perhaps it was the heat which subdued their tongues, though I prefer to think otherwise. Anyway I can say that they were a quiet and respectful company of people who stood that night on the Plains of Abraham, on the historic ground where a page of Canadian history was written.

In the Ursuline Chapel here is a memorial to Montcalm, which bears in Latin these beautiful words. "Destiny, in snatching victory from his hand recompensed him with glorious death."

In the museum of the Ursulines we were shown Montcalm's skull, a gruesome relic surely; but a happier memorial is seen near the Chateau beside Dufferin Terrace, where in a beautiful place called 'The Governor's Garden,' a graceful marble shaft bears the name of "Wolfe" on one side, and "Montcalm" on the other, with a Latin inscription which says, in substance—as fate decreed for them the same destiny, so history had given them the same crown.

Montcalm's monument, in Battlefields Park, shows the figure of death crowning him in his hour of defeat, sparing him the humiliation of seeing his enemies triumph, and I remembered that his last words, as related in the Manitoba Fourth Reader, were "Thank God I shall not live to see the fall of Quebec."

In the treaty which followed in 1763, the French were promised that they would be given full liberty in the matters of language and religion, and in return for this they promised their unchanging loyalty, and so it has come about in Canada that we have two cultures instead of one, two languages, and two literatures, for our national enrichment.

In the Ursuline Museum we were shown a beautiful picture, evidently the photograph of a painting of the first English Governor, presented by one of his descendants, and on this picture is, a kindly tribute to Governor Murray's memory which said, "He was a good friend to the French Canadians, and to the Ursulines of Quebec."

The Province of Quebec has a flavor all its own, and a charm which is indescribable. Its capital is the only walled city in Canada. It has beauty, dignity, and the glamor of a glorious past. I was impressed with this from the time I left Montreal and travelled down the St. Lawrence, noting the old fashioned phaetons with brass lamps, drawn by horses, and long white barns with wide red doors—hundreds of them all alike; little houses with troops of children; the old fashioned red rocking chairs on the narrow stoops; some of the windows covered with faded mosquito netting instead of screens; graceful lombardy poplars on the green hills; gardens edged with stones and bright with flowers; people driving along the roads in carts; evidences of industry and thrift, with no desire for change. I even saw wells with windlasses instead of pumps, and the old contrivance of a stone on the end of a pole to help to elevate the bucket. This I had seen in the French village of St. Leon in Manitoba, near Manitou, forty years ago. Particularly in Quebec the visitor feels the weight of the centuries. The past is still here. It still plays a part.

It speaks in the narrow street where old women still sit on worn steps, and talk to their friends across the cobblestones. You feel they have always been there, and always will be. The narrow doors have a panel of glass, with a design of lace. Inside you know there are spinning wheels and samplers. Barrels stand on the street to catch rain water,

washing hangs high above your head. Black cats blink at you from doorways. And over all falls the benediction of church bells!

I talked to one of the Ursuline Sisters, who conducted us through the museum. We spoke through a brass grating; in the wall when we went in, asking if we might go to the Museum, to which a pleasant voice replied that we might, and please go to the left. When we bought our tickets and entered, one of the Sisters appeared from behind a metal lattice and told us about the exhibits. The money collected goes to the support of the Order in Japan. She was a handsome woman with bright dark eyes and as untroubled as a child's. After we had gone the rounds, we stopped to talk of other things. I tried to pierce through her composure, wondering what was in her mind.

"I am happy," she said reading my mind. "Security is mine, for this world and the next. I find plenty to do of work that I love. I have my pupils every day to teach and guide. I see them grow in wisdom's ways. I have no fears and no disappointments, and a great sense of God's presence. How much more have you?"

"But every one cannot take refuge behind convent walls," I said defensively. "We have to meet the world, and try to solve its problems. It's God's world too. He made it."

She regarded me patiently, and with a flicker of amusement, then lifting the conversation out of the realm of controversy, "May God preserve your soul!" she said and was gone!

There is a finality about Quebec, as there is in the words of the Ursuline Sister, and in the frowning battlements. It has the power of passive resistance; the power of the meek to whom a promise was given once about a certain inheritance.

When Wolfe conquered Quebec, he had with him the famous Highlanders who scaled the walls. The Highlanders, fine big fellows with red hair, were left in the country, the British Government believing that they would help to make New France into a British colony in more than name. They would marry French women and spread the English language and the Protestant religion. They stayed. They married French women, and today there are numerous Frasers and MacLeans and McLarens and Macdonalds, living along the St. Lawrence River, but they know not one word of English and eat no meat on Friday!

In the old reader the title of the prose selection was "The Conquest of Quebec."

THE THINGS THAT REMAIN

There has come recently into my hands an old and fascinating book written by one of the Ursuline Sisters of Quebec, in which, by personal narrative and letters, there is revealed the mind of these devoted women in their labors, tribulations and triumphs.

The Ursulines were established in Quebec in 1639 by Mary Guyart, known as Mother Incarnation, assisted by Madame de la Peltrie. These two women living in different parts of France, became interested in the Indians of Canada from reading a document published by the Jesuit missionaries who were laboring in the new country. This is the sentence which stirred their hearts. "O! if the superfluous wealth of some of the ladies of France were employed to further the conversions of the Indians, what blessings would result." These words fell on good ground, and the order of the Ursulines came to Canada to train and educate the French Canadian and Indian girls, and they have carried on continuously since that date almost three hundred years ago.

I was particularly interested in that part of the book which deals with the events of 1759, when the dark clouds of war settled down on the peaceful settlement along the St. Lawrence. The historian of the time wrote:

"For nearly half a century there has been peace on the St. Lawrence. Comforts have come to the homes. Industry and

thrift have brought their reward. But now come dark rumors. England and France are at war. This summer of 1759 has been cold and dark. Grain has frozen in the fields. There will be no harvest, not even of vegetables. The hand of the Almighty is heavy on this land."

... "On the 27th of May a French ship was descried in the distance and the people were wild with joy ... The vessel brought us sad news of the state of religion in Europe and of the great efforts the English were making to take Canada.

... "The news of the fall of Louisburg and the fate of the Acadians fills us with terror. Surely it would be a terrible fate to fall into the hands of the English ... Our only hope was that France will send help. An envoy has gone to the French Monarch with a petition, but alas, returned empty handed. The petition was rejected! ...

"The whole population, facing defeat, and the loss of everything they hold dear rose to great heights of courage and patriotism. Old men of seventy and boys of twelve years have tendered their services, and have not been refused.

... "On the first of July, the English Army was stationed on the Isle of Orleans in the St. Lawrence. On July the 12th it began a heavy cannonade of the city. The Convent of the Ursulines was struck by the first discharge. The red hot balls and bomb shells did their work of destruction and many buildings were set on fire ... We spent the night before the Blessed Sacrament."

The weary siege went on. The city was damaged greatly but not taken. Winter would soon come; the besieged people prayed for frost and snow. The cold would fight for them!

Then came the dramatic climax. Wolfe's men made their daring and successful expedition. Of this the historian writes:

"The silence of the night told no tale of the stealthy march of the five thousand soldiers who scaled the precipice ... The echoes of the cliff brought to the listening boatmen only the necessary pass-word. No rock of the shelving gave way under the quick footsteps of the eager invader!"

"The Battle of the Plains took place before noon of the next day, crowding into the space of one hour events that changed the destiny of New France. Yet history has kept her record and has taught the same lesson as Faith—that all things work together for good to them who love God."

She tells of the desolation—only one house left standing in the Lower Town. There would be no ships from France to bring help—the city was without fuel. Then she writes: "Providence raised up for us protectors from the place where we least expected help. General Murray, entering the city as Master promised protection for all the religious communities. He began at once to rebuild the Convent, and manifested a wish to have his wounded soldiers nursed by the Sisters,—and this was done."

"The Sisters," she writes, "banished every feeling but compassion from their hearts and waited upon these strangers as if they saw in each, the face of their Saviour ... The Highlanders were given the task of finding fuel for the City ... Exposed by the peculiarities of their costume to severe suffering from the climate, they were objects of compassion to the nuns, who set to work to provide substantial hose to cover the limbs of the strangers." The Church of the Ursulines where the Catholic population assembled for the Holy sacrifice of the Mass was occupied at other times for the Anglican rite.

In 1775, only sixteen years later, there was an American Invasion of Canada, begun with the mistaken idea that Canada would willingly join the American forces in their attempt to throw off the British yoke, but this the Canadians had no intention of doing. They stoutly defended Quebec in December of that year against the invaders, and Montgomery, the leader of the American forces, was killed. This was only sixteen years after the fall of Quebec. The old wounds had not time to heal, but, to their everlasting credit, the French Canadians were loyal to the British Crown and so saved Canada from becoming part of the American republic.

When the French Revolution destroyed the religious houses, the two convents of St. Ursula suffered with the others, and the hearts of the Ursulines in Canada bled with sympathy for their friends in Paris. The last letter from the last survivor of the Order is given, an old lady of seventy-nine living on the charity of a friend, in a little hut outside of Paris;

she wrote;—

"What a contrast between our present position and the times when we could make others happy. But we must adore with submission the will of the Divine Providence, convinced that everything which happens in the world is destined to contribute to our Salvation!"

And so in the words of the writer of this book (whose name is not recorded) the moving finger of history is traced. "We know now," she writes, "why God allowed our country to fall into the hands of the English. They are chosen of God to defend the faith."

A letter written by Mother Marchand to a friend in Paris, ten years after the conquest, contains these words. "It is well to be in Canada where we enjoy the greatest tranquillity. We have a Governor, who by his moderation and tranquillity is a delight to all. I know it is not so in Paris, where they are obliged to celebrate Masses secretly. But we have no such difficulty under the rule of England."

I laid down the book with a sudden warming of my heart. It does mean something sweet and precious to belong to a nation where the rights of minorities are held sacred, and every human being has a right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience.

Looking back now at the events which were so vital and overpowering to the people who lived through them, we see that it is the things of the spirit that remain; the kindness of the Governor and officers to the suffering people of Quebec; the forgiving spirit of the Sisters who nursed back to life their former enemies; the loyalty of the French to Canada when an outside danger threatened.

The foundations of our country are securely laid. Now it remains for us to strengthen the bonds of friendship by mutual understanding and goodwill!

POOR FISH

You have heard of people who have lived in London all their lives, and yet have never seen the Tower; or who live in Toronto and have never gone to Niagara Falls. You have even heard of people who live in the two cities of British Columbia, and have never seen the salmon running in the streams, on their way to the spawning areas.

I saw the run for the first time yesterday and now a salmon will never be just fish to me, something to serve with cream sauce and parsley. A salmon is a pilgrim, an historic being, an actor in a Greek play, fighting a losing battle with unseen and mysterious forces but fighting to the last.

Yesterday we drove to the Gold Stream Park, about eleven miles from Victoria. It is a lovely shady place with towering evergreens, whose boles are covered with moss, and from the moss have sprung little ferns, some of them seventy-five feet from the ground. How the seed of the fern could get up so high is a mystery, and we might still be trying to arrive at the solution of that problem, but for the deeper mysteries that were later spread before us.

The salmon were running, breaking the surface of the little stream in the pools, dozens and dozens of them; some of them dark and silver as salmon should be—these were the new arrivals from the sea—some of a sickly shade of green with livid markings; and along the edges of the stream under the brush and logs were the pallid corpses of the dead ones. These were the spawned fish, the "kelts" as they are called, which, having fulfilled their duty to the race of salmon by depositing their eggs, had quietly called it a day—and departed, their Four-Year Plan completed. The final scene was being enacted before our eyes. Farmer's trucks carry the kelts to their last resting place, which is in some one's garden, where their spent bodies still full of phosphates, are used to refresh the weary land.

Salmon, are called salmon, because they are leapers, from the Latin word "salio," meaning to leap. The Pacific

salmon were first recognized in 1735, in the far north. They are not quite like the Atlantic salmon but the difference is a structural one.

All salmon spawn in fresh water, for salt water would kill the eggs, and so to spawn, they make this pilgrimage back to the river or stream in which they were hatched, even coming to the same place in the stream. The struggle we witnessed in the waters of the Gold Stream was the frantic efforts of the salmon to get to the place where they wanted to deposit their eggs.

The female fish takes spawning more seriously than the male. She swims close to the bank, turns on her side, scoops out a place in the gravel with her tail, sometimes bruising and breaking it off in her frantic and convulsive efforts. Then she deposits her eggs, which are about the size of peas and pale red in color. These being heavier than water, sink, and if they have been fertilized by the "milt" from the male fish, they will hatch out in three or four months, that is if they are not eaten by other fish or gulls, or are not washed away by a flood.

The male fish deposits the milt with less bother and with no apparent relation to the deposit of eggs. The whole process of fertilizing seems to be a hit or miss affair, but nature has underwritten this careless method. By the law of averages, a certain number of eggs are impregnated, and a certain number is all that is needed to carry on the race. If every egg were fertile the rivers would not hold the fish. While the females are scooping out the trough and spawning, the males spend their time fighting, and sometimes kill each other after a bloody battle. Even the females fight with each other, but not so viciously as the males, because of the long teeth of the latter. These teeth develop in the males after they reach the streams. But they too, stout fellows though they are, are marked for death. Hardly one of them ever lives to spawn for a second time. This, however, is not true of the Atlantic salmon.

The tragedy of the run is the fervor of their attempt to navigate the shallow streams, or ascend the rapids. Sometimes for a few moments all is peaceful and still—the fish are milling around in the pools calmly. All at once the big push begins—someone evidently cries out, "Let's get out of here," and one makes a leap and a bound upstream, and the whole company goes into action; tails wave, foam flies, and the water is churned by crazy fish, fighting, pushing, darting, twisting. Blood rises from their broken bodies, as they scrape the stones. A few will emerge and make a little distance upstream, then one will turn and go back battling with the fish that are trying to advance. No doubt he feels he has passed the old homestead.

The little red eggs are scattered on the gravel like glass beads. The young fish hatch out inside the little red sacks and cannot move because of this encumbrance, but when they have eaten the sack (which is the food provided for them) they are ready to move around. They stay in the fresh water for perhaps a year, and then they hear the call of the sea, and put out to the "blue" where life begins. Not much is known of their life in the sea, except that they have plenty to eat, and grow quickly. In four years they are mature fish.

Then one day, if they have escaped the killer whale, seals and fishermen, at some mysterious call, they come back. Leaving the "spread table" of the sea, they come to the stream in which they were hatched, and begin their ascent, eating nothing all the way, and it's a long hard journey to take on an empty stomach—but the urge is on them, and that is all they know! They obey the rhythm of life, "a time to build up and a time to tear down." No one knows how they find their way back to the stream in which they were hatched, but they do, and in the place they began life, there they lay it down.

In the streams where there are falls, there are fish ladders to help the salmon make the ascent. The ladders are merely wide stairs, and the fish leap from one step to the next one.

Nature cares for the race, but is careless of the single life. While the salmon are in the river they eat nothing, otherwise the eggs and the little fish would have a poor chance of survival. This long period of starvation, with their frantic efforts to surmount the difficulties of rock and current, accounts for their certain death.

But this is the cycle. This is the play with its tragic ending. The lovely shiny silvery salmon you saw leaping in the placid water of the Gulf of Georgia last summer when you were travelling on one of the Princess boats to Victoria, may put a deeper color in the petals of a rose for you when you come to Victoria next summer.

And so the old ruthless drama of life goes on!

RAINY SUNDAY

The wind and rain tore at the trees, rising sometimes to the volume of a hurricane, and the distracted leaves were driven past my window in clouds like frightened birds—the lovely autumn leaves that should have clothed the trees in beauty for weeks to come, but the wind is a coarse-handed big brute, that does not care about beauty. I resented the treatment given to the leaves. I knew they had to fall sooner or later, but I like to see them fall jauntily, gaily, turning and skipping, just as if they did not know this was the end.

It was a rough ill-natured day, all through and through. I had the strong protection of red brick walls of a Provincial hospital between me and the blast, but I felt no safer from its fury than the leaves. Every sound that came to me was a cruel one; the ice wagon which deposited its load each morning some place below my window, seemed this morning to be running over broken glass, putting my teeth on edge; the traffic roars past the House of Pain from two converging streets, meeting, it seemed, in front of the wing in which I lay, meeting in shrieking brakes and clanging street cars. I thought—what a place for a hospital! Inside, doors slammed and trays fell, bells rang, wheels creaked and groaned, and in front of my door passed an endless tide of hurrying feet, passing, crossing, rubber heels clicking the linoleum.

When I came in, I thought it was a quiet restful place, this hospital room, with its pale grey walls and soft blue curtains, its shining nickel fixtures and the red Virginia creeper at the window. Indeed I had had some ambition to furnish one bedroom in these neutral shades, and get for it one of these adjustable beds that can be rolled up at the head or foot, with a table swung across, and here I could rest and write. I remembered that Cora Harris did much of her writing in bed. And what a nice room it would be for a tired visitor.

Writing in bed has great advantages, not the least of which was expressed by a young woman, whose children were small. When someone asked her when she got time to do her writing, she said she liked best to write in bed, for when she was up her family expected her to do something.

I grew more enthusiastic as I thought of it.

Thirty-six hours later I was lying in this same pale grey room, utterly oblivious of its beauty. The wind raved at the window, and seemed to billow through the halls. The elevators crashed into position on each floor, with great gritting of gears and shooting of bolts. Upstairs in the maternity ward I heard a new baby crying, that terrible sawing cry which seems likely to shatter the little thing. I wanted to cry for it. I suppose I cried just like that in my first hour. If I could have foreseen this rainy Sunday I would have cried harder. An old man in the next room was groaning in misery and crying out that he wanted to die. The shrieking wind suggested an earthquake, and in my disordered mind, I lived again the scenes from the play "San Francisco." I saw the streets heave and open, and the buildings buckle and fall. With the rain pouring on the windows I was able to construct a fairly destructive flood drawn from an old book I once saw on the Johnstown Disaster.

Sin, sickness, death and disaster rode the sky. I tried to pull myself out of the Slough of Despond, which was fast getting me down. The nurses told me the anaesthetic always made people feel queer for a few days. I tried to remember this. Perhaps that was why the Virginia creeper at my window was nothing now but ugly blood-stained claws, menacing me as they swung in the wind. There was a white washing lashing in the wind from an upstairs window across the street, innocent little garments, probably belonging to a bright eyed baby. They all looked like bandages to me. I tried to get comfort from old Omar, but all I got was the confirmation of my worst fears. Life was a piece of insolence which, with all its pain, had come to us without asking. I thought of the potter thumping his wet clay, and how the clay, misshapen by the potter, had cried out with all its obliterated tongue, "Gently brother, gently pray!"

There was no comfort in Omar for me. There was truth but not comfort. Anne Lindbergh had read poetry in her dark hours. I thought of Kipling's acid little verse,

"The toad beneath the harrow knows

Everywhere the tooth mark goes
The butterfly upon the road
Preaches contentment to the toad."

I had been the perfect butterfly. I had preached contentment. I had been as full of good words as a copy book, but now, when I was cast in the part of the toad, my good words and happy thoughts departed like the red leaves before the wind. I was left desolate and wounded, cast down and afraid....

Suddenly a sound filled the room, a great volume of melody that brought me up from the bottom of the well, in its triumphant sweep and majesty. A brass band was playing, almost under my window, and it was playing one of the glorious old hymns of the church, one that has comforted many in their sore need:—

"Fear not, I am with you, Oh, be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, I will still give thee aid."

I could hear the words in the rolling notes, as clearly as I ever heard human speech:—

"I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand
Upheld by my gracious omnipotent hand."

It was the Salvation Army Band, playing for the patients in the hospital. The Salvation Army, that faithful watcher on Life's wall, quick to see the places where the battle is going hard against poor jaded human beings:—

"The flame shall not hurt thee, I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."

There was more than melody in their music. There was healing and power and memory. I had heard that triumphant song sung by great congregations in beautiful churches, and I had heard it sung in country school houses, where two or three were gathered together on cold wintry afternoons with pallid sunshine vainly trying to pierce the frost ferns on the windows. I had heard it sung in lonely little houses on the prairie (all dressed up, with the wood-box freshly papered, and red flannel put in the lamps), where the neighbors gathered to sing hymns when there was no service in the school house on account of the snow. That glorious hymn of triumph, with its ringing message as old as humanity, and as new as tomorrow's sun, had come to me when I needed it, sweet and direct as a letter from home! Not only with its assurances of heavenly aid and comfort, but its reminder that I was being cared for here and now.

All at once I was grateful for the soothing beauty of this room, the skilful care given me by the nurses so cheerfully and willingly, the amazing skill of the doctors. Every sound now settled into place. Eight hundred people under one roof must of necessity make sounds, but they are cheerful sounds.

The old hymn had found me, trying to warm my cold hands at the painted fires of a pagan philosophy, and had wrapped me in its comforting folds, and carried me safely over to this pleasant place, where God rules, and all is well!

THE LONG ROAD TO FREEDOM

It is a long time since Erasmus, in a burst of enthusiasm, said he would wish "that even women might read the Gospels!" but it has taken the full five hundred years to convince the "brethren" and fathers of the Church that women have the same ability to understand the Scriptures as men, and the end is not yet. The road to freedom is a long and winding road, with confusing crossroads and detours, but no short-cuts.

I have been reading about William Tyndale, whose martyrdom took place four hundred years ago, and how he held

to his vision of a free Bible for everyone, in spite of the opposition of kings and prelates. He could see what a source of joy and comfort and guidance the Scriptures would be for the common people, if only they could be translated in English. He was a tutor in the home of Sir John Walsh, and one day, in a dispute with his employer, on this subject, gave utterance to these fiery words—"If God spares my life, ere many years, the boy that drives the plow will know more of the Scriptures than you do!"

Now a man who speaks right out plainly like that, even in a good cause is likely to get into trouble. But though he did get into prison, a particularly cold and disagreeable prison, William Tyndale held to his course, and the last words he uttered were these: "May God open the eyes of the King of England." And so, as one historian writes—"leaning on a flame he smiled and died." Two years later the Bible was printed in English with the "King's Most Gracious License." William Tyndale had won the battle but lost his life. There was no shortcut for him, and he refused the detours. And the only charge against him was that he had translated the Bible into English and wanted to have it printed.

The United Church of Canada took ten years to make up its mind whether or not it could allow a woman to be ordained in its ministry. Every two years the matter came before the General Council; every two years there were speeches made, and committees appointed to look into the matter, and "ascertain the mind of the presbyteries", but finally in September of last year, the last hurdle was taken, and the matter was decided in the affirmative "by an overwhelming vote".

Only one application for ordination has been before the Council meetings all these ten years, and the applicant has not said a word. She has gone on teaching and preaching. She has driven her Ford in the summer over the uncertain roads, and her little horse-drawn cutter in the winter; she has lived with the people she served, sharing their joys and sorrows. Once in a while she has been invited to speak in the city churches, and has done so with a dignity and charm which has made her friends and advocates. Miss Lydia E. Gruchy of Kelvington, Saskatchewan, has a perfect record of eleven years' country service. In July 1936 she was called to be the assistant pastor of Saint Andrew's United Church in Moose Jaw, and her ordination followed.

So the United Church of Canada has at last endorsed what Saint Paul said more than eighteen hundred years ago, that there is no "male or female bound or free," but all are one in the service of God.

Miss Gruchy followed the long road very patiently. She could afford to wait, for she was doing the work she loved. She was helping people around her to lead happier, fuller lives. Whether the Church recognized her work or not, she knew she was right. She was spreading good will.

Some of the roads which seem to lead to freedom end in a blind wall, and some in an open chasm. You cannot trust the road to freedom. It will deceive you. Because you were on it yesterday, and have made no turn, does not prove you are still on it.

There is a chapter in one of last season's books about a girl who declared she would steal something from every store she went into. Her sister, horrified at the thought, said, "You would not dare!", which was evidently the wrong thing to say, for Helen would dare anything. She did her stealing in a few stores, but in the butcher shop it was not so easy. There were people around—there was nothing small enough. However Helen had said she would, and she would. She had thrown aside the convention of honesty to prove that she had a free soul. At last she grabbed a kidney from the marble slab, a loathsome, slimy kidney, and dropped it in her bag. Her sister standing miserably outside was trying to think of something sufficiently scathing to say to her, but at the sight of Helen's white and anguished face, she asked her what was the matter. Helen began to cry, and stripping off her fouled glove, threw it from her! Helen had thought she was on the road to freedom!

The young Edmonton alderman who went to a Peace Conference in Europe and came home telling that she had fired a couple of shots at the rebels in Spain, made the same mistake. Somehow she lost her way. Peace conferences are a part of the world's cure, but the bullet fired at a fellowman is part of the world's disease. Older people than she have made the same mistake. Indeed we are all vulnerable, and will continue to get off on the wrong track unless we obey the chart given long ago. "You shall know the truth—and the truth shall make you free, and this liberating truth is this: Love your neighbor. Love is the fulfilling of the law." It is simple, but not easy.

We have artificially restricted our love. Restricted it within families, classes and nations, and these restrictions cannot be removed by violence or force.

There is only one way.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION

Gold is where you find it. So is good conversation, that good talk which leaves one stimulated and happy, with a sense of freedom and release. I am afraid there is no formula for it, and I am not sure that it can be taught, though I have been interested in the experiment of teaching it on the radio. One benefit results from a discussion of this subject. Our attention is drawn to some of the pitfalls of conversation. The Interrupter is one of the conversational pests. He, or she, is the cut-worm in the garden of conversation. Then there is the person who never stops talking, the Monologist, usually an egotistical bore. In horticultural circles this person would be represented by mildew, or blight.

A man was once reproved for not having spoken to his wife for five years. His explanation was simple—he did not like to interrupt her.

No doubt many a marriage has gone wrong because of wrong conversational habits. The tongue is an unruly member. The fault is not always with the talker. There is a dull silence, a stubborn withholding of speech which is shattering too. Have not all of us seen a dinner spoiled by someone going into a glum silence, and selfishly indulging in a period of detachment just when help was needed?

It is all very well to have deep hidden resources in our souls, bonds and securities in the vault; but we all need some small change for everyday use—and the person who "makes conversation" even if it is light and trifling, for the occasions when people meet together, is a public benefactor, as any hostess knows.

Conversation is subject to atmospheric influences. Some people make good talk possible by their presence, even if they do not say a word. Others kill it by some sort of black art.

I knew a marriage once which ended in disaster, the good ship foundering on this rock of conversation. The man was a brilliant talker, a born story-teller, but the wife had a literal mind, like Mabel in Hutchinson's "If Winter Comes." When he told a story, giving it all the elaboration which a story needs, she proceeded to dissect and analyze it, pointing out the places where he had departed from the cold facts. She believed all communications should be Yea, Yea and Nay, Nay, and whatever was more than this came from evil. The result was inevitable. She deflated his genius and reduced him to a state of dullness which made him angry with himself and with her, and when he met another woman who listened to his stories in starry-eyed wonder, he naturally transferred his affection. His wife could have held him very easily, if she had been even an interested listener.

Listening is perhaps just as fine an art as speaking, and one which we all do well to practise!

Conversation is like the wind—it blows where it listeth. It has an engaging uncertainty. You know not which will thrive, the late or the early sown. Assemble a group of brilliant talkers, and they may get away on the wrong foot and dispute about trifles, or some egotist will do a monologue. But on the other hand a dull conversation sometimes suddenly flares up like a forgotten campfire!

A group of women in a Bible Class was talking one Sunday afternoon about the problem of the foreign born in Alberta. There had been a murder north of Edmonton, an axe-murder. A woman had killed her son-in-law in a family row. Her trial would begin the next day.

There had been many expressions of horror over this tragic event in the class. "How little respect there is for human life among these people in middle Europe." Instances were given of their murderous tendencies. "Should we not make

greater efforts to send more missionaries among them?" one tremulous woman cried. "What a mistake it had been to let them live in a solid bloc!" said another.

One member of the class had not spoken. She had been a teacher in the north country, and had organized a Sunday School in her district, and spent most of her salary for books for the children. She was a saintly little woman with a child's voice. She listened patiently to all that was being said, then suddenly spoke out. "There's one thing I will always be thankful for," she said in her timid way. A silence fell on the class, and everyone hung on her words. What could anyone be thankful for at such a time as this? "I know Mrs. Mutka," the gentle voice went on, "and I know her son-in-law, the dead man, and I am very glad and thankful that Mrs. Mutka was able to lay her hand on that axe just when she needed it."

Talk is liquid. It fills the empty spaces. It runs lightly and easily, accommodating itself to time and place. It requires no preparation, and yet a word may be the pebble which splits the current of the stream.

Every great movement begins in talk. A group of women who had met in a farm house at Stoney Creek, Ontario, talked as they sewed, about the need for greater opportunity to study their problems, and out of that conversation came the Women's Institutes, the largest organization of women in the world.

There are no idle words, really, though that is hard to believe when you listen to what is being said in the next booth in the hairdresser's.

A good talker and a good conversationalist are not necessarily the same. The good conversationalist draws out the thoughts of others, and he or she is welcome in any company, for every human soul craves expression. The person who can cause the shy ones to speak out, raises everyone's spirits when he enters the room, and wherever he sits will be the head of the table.

The best conversation is that of two people (three can never be so free), friends they must be, but not necessarily of the same mind. Thoughts clarify as we express them in congenial company, and we talk most easily in the company of those to whom there is no need to say, "I do not wish this to be repeated." Indeed I have a prejudice against the people who say this. It reflects on the good sense of their listeners.

Friends have other ways than words to carry their thoughts, too. When Dinny O'Neal was laid in his last resting-place, the widow stood beside the grave, and just what her thoughts were none of us knew. But we suspected that there was an element of relief, for Dinny had caused her many a tear and many a heartache. But Mary O'Neal belonged to the race and generation that stayed by their matrimonial bargains, "for better or worse." Beside her that dreary November day was her friend and neighbor, Mrs. Rafferty, who had stood with her on sadder occasions than this, and who knew every foot of the thorny road she had travelled.

I wondered what Mrs. Rafferty would say to Mary O'Neal when the last shovelful had been thrown on the grave—I wondered if she would say the obvious thing—"Now you'll know where he is!" for that was the thought in all our minds. But she said no word as they turned away. She reached down into the folds of her black skirt and handed the widow a peppermint!

I LIKE IT

A candid reader has written me a letter, in which she questions my accuracy in describing the joys of country life. "Do you really like the silence of the country," she writes, "better than the cheerful voices of the city, or are you merely stuck in the country, and trying to make the best of it? I know writers are like lawyers and can make out a case without mixing in any of their own opinions, and so I am writing to ask you to give me the truth as you see it. I am footloose and free, and I am looking for a place to settle down and unpack the hoardings of years, which consist of a few books and a few pictures, and one or two what-nots! I have lived in a city all my life. If you have been telling the truth about

Vancouver Island I would like to see it."

So now, if the truth is in me, I will tell it to my correspondent.

I do like the country and the country people. They are individuals who follow their own desires, and are not guided or governed by fashion, nor worried about keeping up with someone else. In the country neighbors mean something. Human nature is the same all over, but people in the city do not need their neighbors. A few days ago when our car would not start when I was leaving for the boat, we phoned to a neighbor who brought his car over to give us a push. Meanwhile two other neighbors, seeing the commotion, offered to let us have their cars. People do that naturally in the country, and it cements friendship. In the city if your battery is down, you phone a garage and the whole matter drops to the prosaic level of a commercial transaction. People in cities do not know their neighbors as we do, for they need nothing that they cannot buy, except perhaps friendliness and companionship, and these must come as a by-product of something else. I think this matter of by-products explains the charm of country life.

Then country life develops a resourcefulness. You cannot send to town for an electrician every time a fuse blows out, or the cord of your iron burns. You go out to the garage and get a new fuse, or a few tools, and repair the damage, and you feel a satisfaction in being able to do it. And you make many things for yourself in the country, which city people buy, but never own as you own the things that have come from your own hands.

Women who have made their own rugs, quilts, curtains, cushions, hemmed their own table linen, and in the garden have planted trees and flowers, have a "stake" in their home that will hold them to it when storms threaten. But when people live in a furnished suite or house, where nothing has any meaning or significance, it is easy to pull up and get out. There are no ties, no memories, nothing to hold or bind one's affection.

Then in the country we take delight in seeing how much of our living we can make. When you have apples and pears, you naturally make jelly and preserves. And when your cucumber beds bear by the tubful, it is easy to make a few pickles, and right here I sound a warning. Pickling is a form of intoxication. It is a habit-forming occupation. The neighbors contribute to this by giving you recipes, or bringing over a jar to show you just what they mean by "Marrow Curd," or "Mock Capers," made from nasturtium seeds.

I do not know what your attitude is to flowers. But I get a great satisfaction, not only from growing them, but from giving them away. Psychologists will tell you this is a low form of generosity—this giving accompanied by pleasure, and they may be right. I never thought of any reward from this beyond the one which is paid at sight. On the prairie we had lovely flowers, but for a short season. Always above our fairest blossom hung the sword of destruction, and that may be why flowers are so precious to us all. And to be able to cut and arrange flowers and give them to people living in suites, gives me a feeling of exaltation.

Beverley Nichols, in one of his books on Gardening, says that people who plant the seed and watch it through the period of growth, grow peaceful in their minds, and if everyone gardened, everyone, Hitler and Mussolini, and every other son of battle, there would soon be peace on earth.... The contact with the soil, the love of growing things would tame the savage beast.

Certainly, to own a garden, however small, atones for life's losses. There are no apples quite so sweet and fragrant as the apples you grow on your own trees—and everyone knows that the vegetables you go out and dig up or find on your own vines have a flavor all their own. And all this sowing and reaping, even though the reaping is not in direct ratio to the sowing, opens up a new and fascinating world and leads one to Flower Shows and Fairs, where interesting people gather. It makes the farm and garden pages of newspapers come alive and fairly bristle with things you want to know.

I have not said a word about the birds, but they are a vital part of country life. The English skylarks, that fill the air with music from early spring until late summer; (and which are the only skylarks in America, North or South), the humming birds that come when the peach trees on the south wall of the house are in bloom, are a constant source of delight. Then the quail that come in droves, and the lordly pheasants! In the winter the little things are hungry, and everyone puts out grain for them, and what a sight it is to see them feeding in droves. The quail use our lavender beds for their own personal quarters all summer long. Under the leaves and flowers there is a sheltered playground, and here they assemble, big and little, with soft murmurs of contentment.

Perhaps these small delights may seem trivial to the Candid Friend, but under their gentle influence we find life both sweet and satisfying, and it has shown no tendency to grow monotonous. Every morning we welcome the sunrise which comes sweeping across the gulf in infinite variety of color, always beautiful and challenging. And every day brings pleasant occupation! Yes. I like the country, the quiet countryside, where the night-air is soft as velvet, and the moon makes a silver path across the sea!

THE OXFORD GROUP

In a magazine which came in last week I read Beverley Baxter's London letter before I opened my correspondence, for, like the majority of Canadians, I enjoy his crisp, pungent style of writing, and usually agree with him. Now he has told us what he thinks of the Oxford Groups, and I know he has written this with sincerity and kindness, and I believe his criticism will help rather than hinder their work.

I felt much the same the first time I attended a meeting, which was five years ago in Calgary. I thought I could detect a note of egotism, particularly in some of the younger speakers, as they told of their "masks" and their "paganism" and of how utterly the church had failed in its mission and what "cut-ups" they had been. But I did not say a word of this, because it was a glorious sight to me to see such crowds of young people at a religious meeting and hear a discussion of spiritual matters carried on in an atmosphere of complete frankness. I liked their fun, their jollity, their evident good fellowship. I will confess, though, that it was something of a shock to be at a religious meeting where no Scripture was read, and no hymn sung, and no prayer offered.

Soon after that I began to see results. I heard of strange happenings. The most unexpected people had gone "Oxford." I got a letter from a friend in another city asking if I could square my life by the "Four Absolutes." When I last saw her, before she joined the "Group," she was a member of a very idle group of young women, spending her time in bridge and cocktail parties. She had even given up her music from sheer laziness and settled down to as worthless a way of living as any one could conceive. She said in her letter that she had never known before that there could be real joy in religion and advised me to try it.

My first impulse was one of indignation—but I was so glad that she had found something to which she could anchor her soul, that I did not mind the inference. Let me add this: Her anchor has held.

The next case which came to my notice was a dramatic one.

A man on the High Level Bridge in Edmonton, about to commit suicide, was forcibly restrained by a young boy who had taken a midnight walk over the bridge "under guidance" as they say. In three months the man was restored to mental and physical health, had lost the desire for liquor, and had his old job given back to him. This case impressed me greatly. It was merely one of many.

I have been a temperance worker all my life. I have, like many other women, spoken, written, reasoned, entreated, studied charts and diagrams, made house-to-house canvasses, secured names on petitions, and worked to have bills amended in Parliament. Yet there is not much to show for all this expenditure of energy. People are drinking now who did not drink ten years ago. Young people are exposed to its temptation in a way now that causes all decent people much concern. Accidents directly connected with drinking are increasing so fast that even the liquor people and brewers are concerned. They foresee a great upheaval of indignation which will be bad for their business. And besides that, there are some kindly disposed men among them, who are honestly concerned for public safety.

We are in a bad way, with all our progress in science, and great advances in invention. Our spiritual progress has lagged far behind our mechanical progress—and unless we find the remedy, we will be like the clever locksmith who locked himself out of his own house. Man will be destroyed by his own inventions.

The churches are doing a great work, but not great enough. We need a united forward movement, and I believe the

Oxford Groups are giving it. Being composed of human beings—they no doubt make mistakes—Beverley Baxter has done them good service in pointing out some of these. I think he is wrong, however, in saying that Dr. Buchman should render an account of the money received and spent. Dr. Buchman and his followers make no appeal for money. It comes. God touches the hearts of people and they supply the money, with no thought of seeing their names on subscription lists. Money and social position mean but little to these people. In the fellowship of the Group all are equal.

I believe that they have the attitude that Christ had to these things. In the presence of the great issues of life, the lesser things die out.

We are dwelling in the midst of alarms. War in Spain, China, Japan; strikes, lockouts—poverty in the midst of plenty. Everyone knows that these things should not be. But we seem to be powerless to prevent them, yet we know God must have a remedy for them, and it is our business to find it.

Individuals are praying, the churches are working, but it is the Oxford Group which has launched a world-wide movement, in co-operation with every other human agency, to bring in that new day when God will control the affairs of men everywhere, and wars will cease and peace and plenty reign.

Already there are definite signs of a great awakening. The President of the Norwegian Parliament says a "new illumination has come to his country." The Danish national newspaper says "a spiritual revolution is under way in Denmark." The head of a great industrial corporation was "changed" at a house party and seventy thousand employees have had their wages raised.

So what difference does it make if Margaret Rawlings with "her cold, contemptuous beauty" and in "her autumn-tinted voice" did criticize the members for laying bare their souls in public.

In the matter of criticism, the Oxford group has fared very well. They draw their supporters from every religious faith or none at all. Their doctrine is a very simple one. They do not enter into competition with any church, nor offend any creed.

The severest criticism comes from the fact that they live at good hotels, dress for dinner, and travel first-class. People commenting on this remind us that this expenditure would relieve cases of distress and poverty. There is a tendency in our minds to associate holy living with poverty, and people, as a rule, like to have religion remain obscure and humble, modest, unobtrusive, and slightly apologetic.

The followers of Dr. Buchman have a different viewpoint, a wider vision. I quote from Dr. Buchman's radio address of just a year ago:

"A new illumination must come to the world. Everyone can get light to-day, if he makes contact with a power station, and it is just as practical to make contact with God. Steinmetz, one of the greatest scientists, foresaw this when he said that the next great discovery would be in the realm of the spiritual. What we need is a network of live wires around the world, receiving God's guidance ... this is the new philosophy of living, whereby the Cross of Christ will redeem the world!"

[End of *More Leaves from Lantern Lane* by Nellie L. McClung]