

THE
YELLOW BRIAR



PATRICK SLATER

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LXIII.

I hoed and trenched and weeded,
And took the flowers to fair:
I brought them home unheeded;
The hue was not the wear.

So up and down I sow them
For lads like me to find,
When I shall lie below them,
A dead man out of mind.

—*The Shropshire Lad.*

THE YELLOW BRIAR

A Story of the Irish on the Canadian Countryside

BY

PATRICK SLATER

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CHAPTER I.

IRISH EYES



UT in the Ontario countryside, the late spring is a pleasing and soul-mellowing season of the year. It commences once the seeding is done; and lasts until the chattering mower starts to mishandle its pitman shaft. In those sweet-smelling, warm, soft, juicy days of early June, the fields everywhere are bursting with fresh young life. After the dry fodder of a long winter, the cattle have had time to purge their bowels with the rich, lush grasses; and their skins have been softened, and the dirty wartles on their flanks have been loosened by the warm spring rains. The air is as soaked with delicious hope as the meadows with the dew.

It is for such an inviting scene that the silent and wary thrush deserts the South; and it is the rapture of it filling his breast that turns him into the saucy and intimately friendly robin who insists on nesting in the most obvious places about my kitchen stoop. Plain for me to understand, he tells me the time is now at hand to “Cheer up! D’ye hear? Let joy be unconfined.”

Perhaps you think the mellow tones of the late autumn should make a stronger appeal to an old fellow like me. Faith no! Sure an Irish heart is always youthful. Before we grow old, we live in hope of things here: when we are grown old, we live in hope of things here-after. The weight of years that burden the flesh presses lightly on the spirit of an old Irishman.

In this northern clime, harvest-time has always seemed to me a sere and gloomy season. I have seldom seen men come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves—and never in a barley harvest. The nights commence settling down early, and come upon us with an abrupt suddenness. The air bites a bit in the early mornings; and, here and there, the furtive rime marks the midnight prowlings of the frost king, who already plans to reassert his sovereign rights. If the crops have been poor, the scanty contents of the barns distress us; and if Nature has been over bountiful, the prices offered are more

distressing still. The farmer's is a gambler's job. Old Mother Earth rolls the bones for him. In the spring, he has laid his wager, and his hope hangs high.

It is pleasant to watch the young gambol on the hillside pastures and punch the swollen udders of their dams. It is sweet to smell the pungent, homely earth in its creative mood. It is refreshing to feel the mild sunshine strike down, casual-like, filtering through a screen of opalescent emerald. This is the season for loafing a bit about an Ontario farm; and, in the afternoon that now concerns us, I beg to advise that, as for me and my household, we were busy loafing. The hired man was going through the slow motions of mending the orchard fence. His stomach must have stood the cooking we were getting better than mine; because he was whistling some tune about the murmur of a waterfall. I had been down to the lower hundred salting the young cattle. They looked to be doing fine.

About the old lawn and in the fence corners, the stinking burdocks were sticking their miserable snouts up in the air—and looking healthy. It is a caution the things that require fixing about a farm; and continue requiring it. I got the axe from the woodshed, and set about sinking its sharp blade well below the crowns of those burdocks with a view to destroying them utterly and in orderly detail. I have carried on a personal warfare against them on this farm, on and off, for over seventy years. Making rhymes was everyone's foible at times in the early days; and a red-headed hired boy once cracked a good one at my expense:

*On Mono's hills, the farmer grubs along,
And, like the Indian, chants a dismal song.
On rainy days, out you see him stalk
To tomahawk the healthy young burdock.*

That young man's Christian name was Wendell—we called him Peppertop for short. He was discharged before his time was up—not because of the poetry, but because of grey cooties. He went into the milling business, and in after years became a director of a chartered bank.

Several times after absences of years, I have returned to reduce to complete subjection the burdocks on this farm. And it was all to do again. But, lately and right under my nose, they seem to be getting a little ahead of the old man. And this struck me as pitiable in a way. After my battles against her weeds and grasses crowding in upon me, Nature seemed to say: "Ah, ah, old thing! We've got you on the run at last." Even the fields—my beautiful grain fields—have become mere hay and pasture lands; and I have fallen to the low estate of a lean-necked, grass-land farmer. Father in Heaven, what

have I done to deserve this? The soil of this farm has been a lifelong sweetheart of mine; and the glint of a plowshare polished with use once helped me in my courting.

Scalping burdocks is a good job for an old man—if he will stick at it. All it requires is patience; and there is plenty of time for thinking. What a job it was, thought I, for a seedy old bachelor like me to get an orderly woman to stick at housekeeping on a farm. How could it be otherwise—so cold and drafty in the winter time? Now here was the widow Wilkie. I did not like her sloppy porridge, or her sniffing ways. But she put up with my dog in the kitchen; so I put up with her on the farm. Well, anyway, I was master of a home of my own—such as it was—which was more than many the father of a large family could ever boast.

I glanced over my shoulder. Unbeknownst to me, a long, slim, low-hung car had come up the lane and was making a silent stop within a few feet of where I was kneeling. A colored man in chocolate uniform sat at the wheel. There was a detached air of well-groomed luxuriousness about the vehicle. Now I know quite a bit about motor cars myself. I was the first person in this district to own one. I bought a touring car, brand new; and on Sunday for years, when the roads were in good condition, I drove it regularly to Mass. At other times, I hitched up the buggy. I do not drive my car now; but I have it in the barn, jacked up to save the tires. The copper on the radiator is as bright as it ever was, and there is not a scratch anywhere to be seen. And then, for years, there has been an orgy of car buying among the neighboring farmers, who have been busy motoring themselves out of the well-to-do class.

But compared with the cars hereabouts, the motor with the saffron driver was a buxom queen bee to a humble little worker.

“Jimminy crickets!” said I to myself. “Some class!”

I felt a stiffening in my joints in the rising. Then I walked over toward the tipsy old picket-fence.

His nibs in the leggings hopped around to open the door, and out of the paunch of the vehicle stepped a young woman who fluttered over toward me. Not that I could say she was a young person, right off, at first. The way women dress nowadays, it is next to impossible to tell, offhand, how old they are—unless they are over forty.

“Are you Mr. Patrick Slater?” she enquired; and her voice was low and pleasing.

I dislike a woman who uses her nose as a sounding board.

“Yes,” I said. “I am old Paddy Slater.”

Then I found myself chatting with a very lovely young girl whose blue-grey eyes were soft and friendly. She stood as straight as a whip; and she looked me square in the face. I had seen those eyes many a time before. Her mouth was pleasant and sweet. Her clothes every day would be the same as Sunday, with the neatness of the pretty girl—so comely and smiling.

I do not mention her name; because, as they say in the army: “No names, no pack drill.” My young friend may happen to read this, and she might not like it.

It seems her father is a surgeon, practising in Baltimore or some place down there. Her mother, who died at the time of the child’s birth, had been a Canadian girl from near Estevan in Southern Saskatchewan, who went south, quite young, to train as a nurse. And those Canadian girls that train for nurses?—Well, you know what nurses are! Of course, they are wholesome, capable young persons; but I notice they wear nifty little affairs on their heads; and they wear them, I figure, so that they can set their caps for likely young doctors, who are starting up in good practice.

Anyway, the big car had crossed the border at Niagara Falls en route to Montreal and points further east. The young lady had a notion to go fifty miles north from the lake to see what sort of a place it was among the hills that her mother’s family had come from. And youth nowadays must be served—even if a bit impatiently. Some person in the neighborhood had referred to me as an historical landmark from which to take her bearings.

Yes, I told her, I had known her mother’s family. I remembered her great, great-grandmother as a robust young woman. In fact, her people had lived in this very house—not in the weather-beaten old place as it now is, but in the days of its youth and glory. I had come to work on the farm as a little lad fresh out from Ireland; and, on and off, I have lived on the place ever since. It is the only real home I ever had.

I took her around to see a yellow briar bush planted many years ago by a little girl who wore hoop skirts on Sundays. The little gardener, I told her, had been her mother’s mother. As good luck had it, the season being early, the yellow rose-bush was a mass of waxy blossoms and unfolding buds.

Of course she was tremendously interested; but the big car seemed to get a little impatient.

“And where were these folk of mine buried?” she inquired.

I told her she would notice the little graveyard as they drove out to the pike. It now stood, deserted like, in the corner of a pasture field; but at one time its stones had nestled around a Methodist meeting-house.

“But if you go in, be careful of those sheer stockings,” said I, “because we don’t take much care of these little burial places up this way.”

She asked me if she might take some of the yellow roses. I cut off a bundle of the branches with my jack-knife, and wrapped a sheet of newspaper about the prickly stems.

“Put them on the old woman’s grave,” I suggested; “but don’t shake them, because the petals blow and scatter. Your old kinswoman, I must warn you, was a very orderly person.”

“Yes,” she said to me, “you seize the flower, its bloom is shed.”

“Anyhow,” I replied, “briar blossoms never feel the ugliness of age.”

The girl lifted up her quiet eyes to the limestone hills whence has come the strength of my farm.

“Doesn’t that mean,” she asked me, “that they must die in the beauty of their youth?”

“Then they are beloved of the gods,” said I.

And we walked back toward the car.

“And for goodness sake, don’t leave *The Globe* newspaper there,” I cautioned her, “because that old Irish lady of yours had no use at all—at all—for George Brown’s paper or the Reform Party.”

The big car slipped down the lane as noiselessly as the shadow of a passing cloud. I chuckled at the thought of the fit the old relative would have thrown had any young female of the connection appeared before her in the sheer, curve-showing nakedness of the well-groomed young lady of Baltimore who was taking flowers down to place on her grave. But, of course, the old body has been sleeping these many years in a peaceful twilight beneath the clover and the daisies. Not, mark you, that I think shifting customs and styles have any effect on the unchanging heart of woman. A bit of rouge and plucked eyebrows seem no more artificial to me than bustles were and the swish of ladies’ skirts across the grass.

I was startled by the visit of that strange young girl to the old Ontario farm. In the span of my lifetime, I got to thinking, I had seen the huge pocket of British territory that nestles within the arms of the Great Lakes—a

fertile land larger in extent than the republic of France—cleared of its hardwood forests and turned into fruitful farm lands. The hard-working men and women from the British Isles who did this great job were lovers of the soil and they hungered for homes of their own. From their firesides I have seen great waves of young life go out in search of fame and an easier fortune. One would travel beyond Greenland's icy mountains and farther than India's coral strand to find a locality in which a father has not told his son how hard "the old man" made a fellow work on the farm back in Ontario. And I have lived long enough to know that the farm homes of the Scottish and Irish pioneers will pass into the hands of other races and breeds of men whose children have remained lovers of the soil.

I have thought several times since of the quiet-spoken, hard-working women, out of whose decent lives that young girl had come; and every time I think of them, I feel inclined to dodge around and have a look at that simple, old-fashioned, yellow rose-bush. It has stood out there, these many years, untended and unprotected in a wind-swept place; it has learned to suffer and endure—and it still endures. It keeps itself neat and tidy, because Nature mends by subtle art the ravages of time. Apparently the old bush has always been well content with its location and station in life. There is no evidence that it has ever tried to spread out or encroach upon its neighbors. It is well equipped to protect its rights and dignity, and to prevent others from encroaching upon it. At ordinary times, it is a trim, healthy sort of a shrub and retiring in its nature; but when it shows its soul, the whole bush bursts suddenly into a magnificence of bloom.

There were like qualities in the hearts of the Irish women who were pioneering in the timberlands of Upper Canada when Victoria began her long reign. In 1838, a young girl set up the first housekeeping on this farm. Her family were originally adherents of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and had settled as small farmers in County Armagh at the time Cromwell put the curse on Ireland. And I think, sometimes, that perhaps old Ireland also put a curse on them that settled within the pale. There was bred in their children's children a hard, silent, stubborn pride that became pitiable as all Ireland fell upon evil days at the close of the Napoleonic wars.

A high birth rate and young folk who hung around home, instead of whistling themselves over the hills and far away, added greatly to the woes of the cabins and cottages of old Ireland

*—that mournful nation
With charmin' pisintry upon a fruitful sod,
Fightin' like devils for conciliation
And hatin' each other for the love of God.*

The result was rack renting and the splitting up of small land holdings. Owing to its over abundance, farm labor in that fertile land became less efficient than anywhere else in Europe.

The Irish Protestant families that pioneered in the backwoods of Upper Canada in the thirties were driven out of Ireland by forces as cruel and inexorable as were the troopers of bloody Cromwell. Their women folk had learned in Ireland to skimp and suffer, and still endure; but they had endured there in a grim and haughty silence. I never met one of them, in the early days, whose grandfather had not apparently been the proud possessor of an entailed estate—I suppose of four acres and a cow. These landed gentry had dined on potatoes and hake, one day; but to keep up the family standing, they varied to hake and potatoes, the next. As for the rest of us in Ireland, we lived in those days on potatoes and point. You get that? The children stood around the table at mealtime, eating potatoes—boiled with the jackets on. To get a flavor, they pointed the tatties at the bit of salt herring their father ate. Nineteen years was the average lifespan in rural Ireland; and only one soul out of five passed the age of forty.

Coming to Canada, these women continued to suffer and endure as their menfolk cut homesteads on these stony hillsides—but there was a touch of hope thrown in. And where there is hope, there is joy. One of the finest things Canada ever did was to put a kindly twinkle into the blue-grey eyes of these proud, poverty-stricken Irishwomen.

Their tongues may have been tart at times, but they wore their knuckles to the bone in the service of their love. The Scottish Presbyterians may have been the salt of the earth in Upper Canada; but the Irish women gave it sweetness and light. These mothers of Methodist families were quiet, tidy, capable women; and it was a pleasure to watch one of them making ready an evening meal. They were wholesome-minded because they were home-lovers and were busy home-making. And among women, it is the home-keeping hearts that are happiest. The mother of a family was proud of her station as such; and, as a result, she was content to relax and drift quietly into the matron class. Her Irish eyes were smiling. One was not startled those days by seeing the worn eyes of an old woman looking out from a face

made up to recall a youth that had fled. Has not every age of a woman's life a natural beauty of its own?

The bodies of these Irish women may have been stiff-necked with a curious family pride that had nothing much to justify it; but that very pride fortified their unconquerable wills, and helped to keep their menfolk respectable. There was constant in their hearts a depth of love and loyalty; and like my old yellow briar, it burst into bloom at times.

. . . . for her price is above rubies.

She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands

She stretcheth forth her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hand to the needy

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

—THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL

CHAPTER II

THE TAVERN TYRONE



T was early in the spring of 1847 that I first got to know that young girl's family, as I played around the Tavern Tyrone at Toronto.^[1] It is a long journey back, indeed, from life's end to the little boy at the starting of it.

[1] In 1933, the frame structure of the tavern is occupied as store premises 125-127 Queen St. W., Toronto.

My family were of the poor Irish. A sailing vessel, returning to Quebec for timber, that year called at an Irish port to load its decks, as cheap cargo, with famished and wasted emigrants on their wild flight from the famine and the plague. Woe's me! Unspeakable were the miseries of that long, tempest-tossed voyage in a filthy, fever-stricken ship. Half its human cargo were buried at sea; and as the vessel sailed past Father's Point, the waters of the St. Lawrence for miles behind were strewn with bedding tossed overboard by sailors making the decks ship-shape for port. As a flat scow was being towed slowly up the river near Prescott, my poor father was stricken down. He went under shallow earth quickly without benefit of clergy. My mother wailed after the manner of Irish women, and counted her silver. It was a handful of coppers she had, with a few sixpenny bits and a shilling. A steamboat brought the widow Slater and her small son to Toronto. How fortunate it was she had only one child.

My mother took lodgings with Mr. Michael O'Hogan in a small frame house that still stands, in tottering decay, on the east side of York Street, a few doors down from Richmond Street. Our living quarters were upstairs in a small back bedroom, which we shared with a large family. She was only a slip of a girl, and she was one of them black Irish. You know what I mean? There was the mop of raven hair, the swarthy skin and a touch of down on the lip. Beyond the cruel, desolate ocean, there had been a sparkle of fun in her eyes, and the tongue of the laughing little baggage had been always on the wag. But the poor little Irish girl was fair distraught, now, with the outlandish ways of the crazy, new-world town, and sore afraid of its streets

infested with protestants and nigger folk. She was sick at heart; she was homesick for the earthen floor of a sod cabin, with its friendly smell of burning turf and the sour buttermilk.

My mother got odd scrubbing jobs, day work like; and I ran about the street. A little lad of eight or nine years has some clear-cut impressions printed at that age on the tender, unscarred membranes of the brain; and they remain distinct and vivid to the end of his days. I got odd jobs myself, splitting kindling and doing chores in the morning for Mistress Kitty O'Shea, who lived in a little frame cottage where Shepherds Lane now is. She was a jolly, ruddy-faced little body with silver always in her pocket; and she had fashionable ladies lodging with her. On fine afternoons, Paddy Casey would come round with his open carriage and spanking pair. Mistress Kitty O'Shea and her stylish guests were driven slowly up and down King Street to see the sights and take the air. Of course, I did not understand the business at the time; but no doubt my friend Kitty wanted other folk to know the sort of house she was running.

In 1847, there was plenty going on in Toronto to fill a young lad's mind and keep his face agape. We had come from drippy Donegal where, in the little pockets and quarter-acre patches, "the pratties grow so small they have to eat them skins and all." Toronto seemed to me a stirring, big town; and things were in a constant commotion. There were brawls a'plenty for the seeing, and startling street fires by night. Then, too, there were the public hangings. Adventure bunted into a fellow round any corner; and there was lots to eat.

At the moment, Toronto had become a booming frontier town. For fifty years previously, the obscure, isolated, little place had been struggling within its muddy self to keep up the smart military and social swagger of the capital of Upper Canada. Its trade had been obliged to play second fiddle to high-hatted policies of crown government. Things had moved slowly. To amount to anything in those days, a person required an official job or an official connection of some kind.

But rapid changes were now setting in. The magnetic telegraph had arrived; and railroads were things actively thought about. The Canada Company was pushing settlement with vigor. There had been a crop failure in Europe in the summer of 1846; and the rot or curl in the pratties, that brought woe to the thatched cottages of Ireland and the shielings of the Highlands, gave better prices for farm produce to the log cabins of Canada. A flood of immigration set in, which in one season dumped thirty-five thousand newcomers at the port of the placid, little, official town—mostly

wild Irish, but many people, also, from the Highlands and the English counties. Hammers rang early and late, in all directions, cracking up frame dwellings and lodging places. In 1847, Toronto was a town of small creeks, tanbark and taverns. With 17,000 residents, the little city had 136 full licensed taverns and 32 stores with liquor shop licenses. Some of the immigrants brought little gear with them, but they had plenty of hatreds and ugly suspicions packed in their settlers' effects as they crossed the ocean.

A few days after my mother and I arrived, I knocked up an acquaintance with a young lad by the name of Jack Trueman, whose father kept the Tavern Tyrone, a small public house on the south side of Queen Street, just around the second corner. He was a man of great strength both in deed and word. When his temper was stirred, he tossed his beard about with his hand; and he could bandy great oaths with the best of men. John Trueman was a teetotaller, and always wore a boiled shirt. Jack told me he wore it to bed. Himself was a stalky, middle-aged man; and no doubt he died in the honest belief that he had always been the complete master of his household. The family were Protestants, and attended the Church of St. George, the Martyr, on John Street. The tavern was a decent, tidy, well-kept lodging place; and those who frequented the small tap-room facing the street were Irishmen whose views agreed with those held by Himself of the boiled shirt. He had a tart, bitter tongue for the views of all others; and they went elsewhere for their liquor.

I got along first rate with young Jack Trueman, because I let him boss me around to his heart's content. I split kindling willingly for him, and I slopped in buckets of water for use in the kitchen. He was a harsh taskmaster over me, and many a time I got a smart clout on the lug and was told to take that for a dirty little dogan. But at other times, he was open-handed enough and a good sharer. I liked to hang around the Tavern Tyrone; and I paid cheerfully for the privilege. It was young Trueman who showed me the town; and at first I believed everything he told me.

What appealed strongly to my young mind about the Trueman place was a narrow alley-way to the east of the tavern, leading back to a stable in the rear where two cows and pigeons were kept. I liked the job of chivying the cows along Queen Street to a pasture field to the west. One evening the cows got in the way of the carriage of His Lordship, the Chief Justice, and I got a wicked cut from the coachman's whip.

All Trueman's cows were breachy by nature; and for years they were headstrong in the notion that a cow-path should be made across the field in front of Osgoode Hall.^[2] The heavy and formidable iron fence along Queen

Street stands to this day in front of the law courts as a memorial to John Trueman's cows. The law, they say, is tender in its treatment of established customs and ancient ways. For generations, the Bench and Bar of Ontario have continued to sidle and dodge themselves into the precincts of Osgoode Hall through curious stock-yard openings that were specially designed in Europe to keep out Trueman's cows. Some monument to a woman's milk pail! And, by the way, the young lady from Baltimore got her blue-grey eyes as an heirloom from Sarah Trueman of the Tavern Tyrone.

[2] The seat of the law courts of Upper Canada.

On my rare visits to Toronto, years back, one of my pleasures was to take my stand a little before dinner-time at the head of York Street, and watch Her Majesty's Justices negotiate those barricaded openings in their haste to start a heavy day's work. But, latterly, I haven't been in Toronto much. The last Judge I saw doing the trick was His Lordship, the late Chief Justice, Sir Glenholme Falconbridge. The ageing judge was toting a green bag and getting through seemed quite an effort. What a master Falconbridge was of the English tongue, and how sparingly he used it! He liked to catch speckled trout up our way also—if his companion rowed the boat. But if he left it to others to write the long judgments, he did into English an exquisite lyric:

*Come, Lesbia, while we may;
Let's live and love our lives away:
And care not what the old folk say.
The sun that sets will rise again as bright:
There is no rising for our little light;
It sets in never ending night.
Count me a thousand kisses o'er.
Count me a thousand kisses more,
And then, we'll count them o'er and o'er again.*^[3]

[3] Catullus V.

If getting along agreeably with young Trueman was sometimes a problem for me, young Jack often had occasion to scratch his head over problems of his own. His father was a stern, arbitrary man of harsh temper, and sorely set on ruling his son. Many a good beating he gave the boy. One morning I was viewing one of these affairs from the corner of the alley. Jack was hollering blue murder.

His mother, Sarah, a quiet, kindly woman, and a simple soul after all, stepped out into the yard to do something about it.

“Are you aware, Sir,” she remonstrated, “that you are beating the boy unmercifully?”

“Aye, Madame!” said Himself between the whelts, “I am trying hard to do that same.”

The mother’s pent-up feelings hurried her away quickly through the kitchen door. Jack’s collie was also objecting; but he stood his ground, and showed his teeth. After a moment, his feelings got the better of him. He went right in and took a biting hold on the man’s calf. The dog meant business, and the North of Ireland let out a grand howl. The three of us scuttled down the alley.

On the morning of the 24th of May, the guns at the fort spoke; and the 81st Regiment of Foot paraded in honour of the young Queen. It was a gala day for the local gentry. Upper Canada had the spirit and turn of mind of a small crown colony. It had been founded by families who suffered on the king’s side in the old colonies. It had justified its very existence as a protest against American ways and methods. It had grown slowly, leaning heavily on England for spiritual and economic support. But free trade in England had recently knocked the prop from under the Canadian flour barrel. There was the smell, moreover, of radical political changes in the local air. And now people of no account were flocking into the country, more concerned with making a living than in supporting the established order. How necessary that a strong demonstration of loyalty be given!

And the old order extended itself. That evening the people around York Street got full and felt happy; and the gentry drove their ladies in open carriages to a fancy dress ball. Of a sudden it rained cats and dogs. There were many yards of material in a lady’s costume in those spacious days; and when one considers the undies they wore, it is a problem how the young creatures got their things dried out that night to dance the light fantastic.

The festival of St. John the Baptist arrived. Young Jack confided to me there would be great goings-on at the Trueman place that night. Himself and Mr. William Cassidy—him that kept the gaol—were forming a secret society; and the first meeting would be held in the front room upstairs. Some Mr. Grand Lodge in Dublin had written letting them do it. I was impressed with the awful and horrible nature of this business. They would have John McLaughlin at the door to keep anyone from spying on them. They wrote

their names in blood, so Jack told me. They drank each others blood. It was enough to make a fellow's hair stand on end.

If ever a thorough job of house cleaning was done, the Trueman women did it that day. I went around in the evening to look the situation over. The street door of the tap-room was closed. There were Scots and other strangers about the place, all in their Sunday clothes and wearing little pinnies. Everyone of them looked as handsome as the knave of hearts.

Yes, something seemed to be going on in the front room over the bar.

I sneaked upstairs to have a look, but Mrs. Trueman saw me. She said I had better be slipping away home.

I asked Mr. Michael O'Hogan, our landlord, about the affair. He had a drop of drink taken.

"Arrah, my boy!" he exclaimed, "Beware of them cursed Masons."

He shifted his seat on the bench with the slow, clumsy, angular motions of an Irishman whose feelings are aroused.

"Whist lad! they're a crew of black-hearted, murdering scoundrels."

Three or four cronies were with him; and, in their secretive-like way, they had been calavering together. Your Celt makes a secret even of his old clay dolley. It is hidden in the hand and smoked furtively from the side of the mouth. He smokes as if nursing a sore left jaw. We Irish are not very trustful; and sometimes that fact makes us not very trustworthy.

There were slow, knowing Celtic nods in the room as face solemnly answered to face.

"Purgatory is not for the likes of them," declared Mr. O'Hogan, marking the mournful occasion by filling his pipe with borrowed tobacco.

"St. Peter—God bless him—claps every Mason into hell to be boiled in oil."

A long silence set in.

"Aye, the devil keeps a hot flail hanging on the corner-beam of hell for the likes of them."

Mrs. O'Hogan planted herself in the doorway. She wore a dirty short skirt; and her arms were akimbo.

One of the men present observed her condition.

“It is swelled up you are, Bridget,” he told her, as he twisted his neck and spat on the floor. “It is buttermilk you have been drinking.”

“It be,” said Mrs. O’Hogan.

“If it be a boy,” observed Mr. O’Hogan, “Holy Jasad be praised!”

Around the corner from their lodge meeting, the Masons got a thorough going over that night. The liquor Mr. O’Hogan and his friends had drunk ran hot in their veins, and their emotions were on fire. The murder of poor William Morgan was canvassed in all its gruesome details.

“I mind well the said William Morgan,” declared Mr. O’Hogan, after the story had been talked out. “He worked at John Doel’s brewery, not a block away from where you are sitting.”

It was a creepy tale of plotted murder they told. Of course, I do not remember the details as given that evening. But I know the story well enough. How could it be otherwise? For fifty years, the fate of William Morgan was discussed, on and off and pro and con, before every fireside in Upper Canada.^[4]

^[4] Considering its brevity, the account which the late Mr. Slater gives of Morgan’s murder seems fairly accurate. Doubting minds are referred to the History of Free Masonry in Canada by the late J. Ross Robertson, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada (1899), vol. 2, pages 121-140.

Morgan, it appeared, claimed to be a Free Mason from Canada, and a lodge at Rochester was careless and let him in. He proposed to get out a book divulging the secrets of the craft. A hot story was promised the gullible public.

The local craftsmen at Rochester were greatly disturbed. They took immediate action, and as Masonry had great influence in New York State, Morgan was arrested on a trumped-up charge of petty larceny and bundled off to an outside town. The charge fell down; but Morgan was kept in gaol because he could not put up a bond for \$2.65.

On the night of Tuesday, September 26th, 1826, someone paid the debt for him and he was released. Directly in front of the gaol, he was gagged and thrown into a closed carriage. He was afterwards locked up in the stone block-house facing the parade ground of the American fort at Niagara. He lay in an underground apartment used for storing ammunition. Colonel William McKay, a Knight Templar, had him in charge.

At a meeting of Masons, held at Lewiston, it was resolved to discipline Morgan. The meeting was informed the assistance of two brethren would be required. The result of the balloting would remain secret; but the two men who drew marked ballots would be met by another craftsman at 10 o'clock on a certain evening on the plain near Fort Niagara. The pass-word would be "Thomson—Johnson."

Two men met at the time and place appointed. The third man joined them. Johnson was directed to fetch a row boat. The other two repaired to the basement of the old stone fort.

Morgan begged for mercy—but he cried in vain. His body was then placed in a gunny sack, which, being weighted with a chain, made a heavy burden for two men to carry. The boat was rowed out into the river. There was a splash. The boat returned to shore. The three separated without a further word being spoken.

"The dirty heretics!" observed Bridget O'Hogan, calmly. "And it is the likes of them look down on the likes of us."

What seemed to disturb Mr. O'Hogan's mind, in connection with the story, was not the fact that the poor man had been murdered by the Masons—he expected nothing better of them. He was wrathful because Masonry was so powerful that the state did not bring the murderers to justice.

"Oh, yes!" he told us, as he sucked his cutty, "we had midnight burnings and horrible murders in Ireland; but if one peeked through the window, he saw the soldiery leading off the miserable creatures in irons to trial and to death."

The story of William Morgan brought disrepute to the Masonic Order, and an element of distrust to the minds of the neighbors of every member of the craft. I mention it, now, merely because it is a fair example of the unbridled prejudices of the times, which charged against every great body of men the reckless acts of its individual members. Every child knows, nowadays, that the Free Masons have a beautiful system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. In their retreats of friendship and brotherly love, may God be with them. May the rays of heaven shed their benign influences upon them, and enlighten them in the paths of virtue and of science.

But I feel that way toward them, not because of the secret mysteries they hele, ever conceal and never reveal—and which are very suitable for Sunday school instruction—but because they form a harmless and respectable body

of my fellow countrymen. There is no unkindly feeling in my old, Catholic heart toward any of the secret, fraternal, racial, or religious societies that infest this young country. It is only nature for birds of a feather to flock together. Such societies may all have some uses toward a common good; but there is a savour of snobbery at the basis of them all. They tend also to keep asunder Canadians who otherwise might more freely break the bread of patriotism at a common board and offer up to a land of freedom the full measure of their united and sincere devotion. Religious and lodge influences in public affairs have been a blighting curse in Canada. To get anywhere in my day, the aspirant had to be a bigot or a joiner; and, even to-day, there are poor prospects for any respectable loose fish.

There never was any question as to the kidnapping of Morgan. In January, 1827, Edward Sawyer and two other members of the craft pleaded guilty in New York State “to conspiring to seize and carry William Morgan from gaol to foreign parts and there continually to secrete and imprison him.” Sawyer was given a month in gaol.

The other side of the story was that Morgan had been helped to run away to Canada to avoid his creditors.

“But,” as Mr. O’Hogan exclaimed, “if the said William Morgan was alive, why did they not produce the man and save their ugly faces?”

The next morning early I slipped around to see what had happened at the Tavern Tyrone. Himself was about, as usual, giving orders. His daughter, Violet, was making up a feather bed in the double bedded room upstairs over the bar. No sign saw I of ought untoward. The first meeting of King Solomon’s Lodge, No. 22, G.R.C., had evidently passed off without any one being hurted.

Young Jack Trueman may have heard more of that lodge meeting than was intended for his ears; or perhaps he had the gift of a powerful imagination. He claimed to have hidden under the bed in the back bedroom upstairs, with his ear to the partition. In any event, the matter was much on his mind; and, in the afternoon, he herded a dozen youngsters into the Trueman stable to hold a lodge meeting of his own. I was in charge of the door; and Jack had a hammer and an empty beer barrel.

He gave the barrel three smart knocks; and we all came to attention.

“What now, brethren, is our first care?” he demanded, in the heavy bur’r that reminds one of St. Andrews.

I had my instructions.

“To see that the lodge is properly tyled, Worshipful Sir,” said I.

“Direct that duty to be done,” commanded Trueman, Jr.

So I hammered three times on the inside of the stable door, and a little negro boy, posted outside, hammered back three times to tell us every thing was in order.

But young Jack refused to believe his ears. Over and over, he insisted that we holler at him:

“The door is properly tyled, Worshipful Sir!”

So I went out to make dead sure about it; and then I quietly stole away on more interesting business of my own.

CHAPTER III

ADRIFT



ACK TRUEMAN'S dog was a black and tan collie with a bob-tail. His was the general purpose breed of a drover's tyke; and he was all dog. Jack claimed to own the sharp-eyed, self-reliant fellow—but that was a matter of opinion, merely. In the dog's way of looking at things, Rover owned Jack Trueman; and Trueman—he owned me. When a smart, clever dog has something of his very own, you understand,—say a smelly bone or an unruly boy—naturally he thinks highly of his own property. And he puts up with the smell of his own bone and the kicks of his own boy as one of the inconveniences of proprietorship, just the same as you and I put up with taxes.

Rover liked, at times, to have his boy throw sticks for him; and, of course, sticks can not be thrown if they are not fetched. But he only fancied that sort of thing in moderation. When the sport ceased to amuse him, he would cock his leg against a post, and then run away on business of his own. This was clear evidence, you will agree, that Rover was the chief executive.

Jack Trueman had not bought the dog; nor had he been given the dog. One day, Rover had left the drover's team he was looking after, and had dropped in, casual-like, to inspect the alley at the side and the stable in the rear of the Tavern Tyrone. He fancied the look of the place and the smell of the slop bucket. Offhand, he decided he would like to own a boy who lived round an interesting place like that. So the two of them struck up a bargain on the spot,—at least they thought they did. There was a mutual misunderstanding so complete that things worked out all right.

Rover was old enough to have sense; but young enough to be full of devilment. He was a regular fellow. He never got into any squabbles with girl dogs; but the body odors of any gent of his own kind who strayed within a block of the Tavern Tyrone seemed very displeasing to him. And when he fought another dog, Rover stuck right at the job till he gave a thrashing to the son of a bitch or enough silly humans ran together to make it a draw.

Jack and his collie got into street fights daily. I was their partisan and did a lot of grunting for them. The three of us skylarked that spring about the streets of Toronto.

One June day, we were down to the foot of Berkeley Street to see a double hanging; and that surely was one glorious well-filled day. There was a high stone wall clear around the prison which stood close to the bay shore; and the Fair Grounds lay open to the west. Two men, Turney and Hamilton, were to be hanged on a Tuesday morning. To give the public a tidy view of the drops, both before and after taking, a double gallows had been built facing the Fair Grounds and high on top of the prison wall.

Before the early risers were abroad, hundreds of heavy farm carts and lumbering wains came creaking into town with their loads of merry, holiday-making country folk from far and near. Along the muddy roads came also bands of stalky farm lads, faring stoutly on foot, with stick in hand and bag on back, stepping down thirty miles or so to see the doings. Two men were to be killed by the law in the morning as an example to the public; and the schools throughout the district were closed that the children might benefit by so valuable a lesson in morals and good living. That day the taverns of Toronto did a stirring business.

“Your soul to the devil!” said young Jack to me. “Let us hooray down and see the necks stretched.”

The hangings had been set for ten o’clock in the morning; but an hour ahead of time there was a good-natured throng of thousands jostling one another before the grim prison walls. It was the sort of crowd one sees nowadays at a big country fall fair. Neighbors were greeting neighbors, and joshing over local affairs. Men carried their liquor well in those days; and, of course, mothers had brought the young children in their arms. What else could the poor dears do?

A stir among the men on the prison walls told us the death procession was coming. A hush of awed expectancy fell upon the great throng. And this gaping crowd, stirred with thoughts of human slaughter, was standing in the most humane and tolerant colony Europe ever established beyond the seas! New England had been developed by the labor of convicts transported to be sold as serfs on an auction block. We are often told of the Mayflower landing the Pilgrim Fathers on the Plymouth Rock. Oh yes! But we hear little of the fact that for a century every other merchant ship touching a New England port landed a cargo of convicts on the Pilgrim Fathers. The outposts of those colonies were pushed westward by rough frontiersmen who

murdered as they went on frolics of their own. The southern colonies were developed by slave labor, and the full wages of that slavery have not yet been paid. One of the first laws passed in Upper Canada in 1793, provided for the abolition of slavery; and in dealing with another human, there has never been a time or place in Canada, save in her wretched prisons, that any man could with impunity make his will a law to itself.

You ask what brought thousands of people together to see such a terrible sight as a double hanging; and I answer you that fifty thousand of the likes of you would turn out any morning to view a well-bungled hanging to-day. A murderer is a celebrity; and people run open mouthed to see a celebrity, to hear him speak and see him decorated—or hanged—as the case may be. Every crowd hungers for excitement and is looking for a thrill. Every mob is by nature cruel and bloodthirsty. With all his clothing and culture, man remains a savage, a fact that becomes obvious when a few of them run together.

The breath going out of thousands of throats made a low murmur as the murderer, William Turney, in his grave clothes and pinioned, came into public view and stoutly mounted the stairs of the scaffold platform. A priest walked beside him. Behind them strode a hangman, who was closely masked.

It was a matter of good form—and decently expected in those days—that a murderer make a speech and exhort the public. A lusty cheer went up as William Turney stepped smartly forward to make his speech from the gallows. His was an Irish brogue; and his voice was loud and clear.

“Die—like—a—man!” shouted loud-voiced Michael, the smuggler.

Turney had been working the fall before as a journeyman tailor at Markham Village. He dropped into a local store one dark night to get a jug of whiskey to take to an apple-paring bee. As the clerk, McPhillips, was bending over the liquor barrel, Turney stove the man’s skull in with a hammer; and then rifled the till. He turned off the spigot, blew out the candles, closed the wooden shutters, and quietly went home to bed. The dead body was not found till the morning after. No one had seen Turney abroad the night before. He came under suspicion the next day because he rode to Toronto on a borrowed horse, and bought himself for cash money a pair of boots and a leather jacket. But that, you’ll agree, was not hanging evidence.

Turney, however, needed money for his defence; and while lying in gaol at Toronto he got a letter smuggled out to his wife. The poor simple woman

was no scholar; and she asked a neighbor to read it for her. The letter told her the sack of money was hidden under a loose board in the floor of their back-house at Markham Village. He bade her get the money and give it to the lawyer man. So the damaging evidence leaked out. How much wiser to have let the solicitor's clerk visit the privy!

On the scaffold Turney made a rousing speech. He shouted to us that he had been a British soldier in his day, and was not afeared of death. Turney thanked us all kindly for the compliment of coming to his hanging. It was sorry he was for killing the poor man, McPhillips, who had never hurted him and had treated him as a friend. The crime, he told us, had not been planned, but was done on the spur of the moment. The devil had tempted him; and he fell. He had run home that dark night in a terrible fear. The wind in the trees sounded in his ears like the groans of poor tortured souls in hell. Hanging, he told us, was what he deserved. Let it be a lesson to us all.

Turney's feelings then got the better of him. He broke down and wailed loudly, praying that God would prove a guardian to his poor wife and fatherless child. The crowd did not like the tears. The high-pitched cries of women jeering at the miserable creature mixed with the heavy voices of men urging him to keep his spirits up.

"Doo—ye loo-ike a maa-hun!" boomed Michael, the leather-lunged.

In the pause Turney got a fresh holt on his discourse. He went on to tell us he had been a terrible character in his day. He had started serving the devil by robbing his mother of a shilling; and in after years, while plundering a castle, he had helped wipe out an entire family in Spain. He explained that a full account of his high crimes was in the printer's hands. He beseeched every one to buy a copy for the benefit of his poor wife and child. In the hope of getting a few shillings for them, Turney stepped back to his death with these great lies ringing in our ears.

At the foot of the scaffold stairs, the other felon requested the Protestant minister who walked beside him to kneel and have a session in prayer. The murderer seemed in no hurry to be up to finish his journey. The clergyman tried the stairs carefully, stepping up and down to prove them solid and sound. But it is hard to convince a man against his will. The hangman waited a tidy space, and then spit on his fist. He took the victim by the scruff of his neck and the waist band and hoisted him up the stairs, the clergyman lending a helping hand. The crowd jeered loudly; but once up in open public view, the felon's courage revived. Hamilton came forward with stiff, jerky,

little steps; and, in a high-pitched voice, admonished us all to avoid taverns, particularly on the Sabbath.

Then the serious business began. The executioners hurried around, strapping the legs of their victims and adjusting the caps and halters. The culprits assumed a kneeling position over the traps and prayed to God for mercy.

A loud murmur went up from the thousands of throats—"Awe!" as the bolts were shot. The two bodies tumbled down to dangle on the ropes and pitch about. It took Turney quite awhile to choke to death. The other body seemed to drop limp.

This business of hanging folk should be intensely interesting to every Canadian of old-country British stock. The blood strain of every one of us leads back to the hangman's noose. Many a man was smuggled out of Ireland to save his neck from stretching for the stealing of a sheep.

And public hanging had something to justify it. In the olden days, human life was of little more account than it is to-day; and hoisting bodies in the air, and leaving them to rot on gibbets, was thought to be a rough and ready warning to evil-doers. What a pity public hangings were ever done away with! Had they continued a few years longer, the horrible practice of hanging men would have passed away under the pressure of public opinion.

At any rate, Jack Trueman and I profited greatly as a result of William Turney's speech from the gallows. We ran off at once for copies of his "Confessions" to the office of *The British Colonist*, a paper printed on King Street; and we spent the rest of the day crying our wares on the streets and in the taverns of Toronto. We refreshed ourselves with peppermint bull's-eyes made by Sugar John, who combined a tavern with a candy shop on the east side of Church Street.

To make it a perfect day, a fire broke out that evening in a row of frame dwellings at the north-west corner of Richmond and Yonge Streets. The flames shot up quickly, cutting into heavy clouds of smoke. Away every one ran to the scene of the fire. The city had a paid fire marshal and several volunteer fire companies; but fires were frequent that summer; and only heaps of smouldering ashes usually marked their battle scenes.

The engagement opened that evening with a wild charge of one-horse carts. Drunken drivers whipped their old horses into action hell-split, wheeling batteries of water barrels. The first carter with a civic license arriving at a scene of a fire with a puncheon of water got a municipal grant

of £3, Halifax currency. Subsequent hauling was done, however, on a time basis; and the second fillings arrived in a more leisurely fashion.

After a time, the municipal fire pump came on the scene. The hose was reeled off in lively fashion, and attached to a fire plug on the water-main at Yonge Street. The volunteers rushed to man the pumps. They speedily discovered—what everyone else already knew—that there was no pressure in the water-mains after nightfall. A meeting of excited ratepayers was held on the spot to protest against the wickedness of Mr. Furniss of the gas and water company. But he was there himself to tell them, good and plenty, he gave the town all that £250 had paid for. There was a great running together of newspaper editors and a deputation was finally despatched to measure the depth of water in the company's tank. Meanwhile the flames licked up frame buildings at their pleasure; and things got so hot that the municipal pumping equipment itself caught fire. An enthusiastic detail of volunteers were busy pitching furniture out of upstairs windows, and smashing and rifling the contents of dwellings in and near the general direction of the blaze. People grabbed small things and ran home with them to save them from the fire.

I was watching a tipsy carter in a dispute with an open-headed barrel of water, when the scene closed so far as I was concerned. Something had apparently lost its balance in the two-wheeled cart. The puncheon upset and won the argument. The carter disappeared in an avalanche of water. He emerged spluttering and talking loudly to God. At that moment a flying bed mattress caught me fair on; and I went to earth beneath its enfolding arms. I wiggled out, only to dodge a flying jerry mug. I have not crossed the briny ocean, thought I, to have my head cracked with a dirty old thing like that. So I went off home; and called it a day.

A large number of negro families were living in Toronto at that time; and their shining black faces and rolling white eyeballs startled my young Irish mind and held me in a pop-eyed fascination. For years previously, fugitive slaves had been drifting northward by undercover routes; and many of the more resourceful and enterprising of them reached the British line and settled in southern Ontario. Public opinion was such in Canada, at that time, that negroes were permitted to cross the border freely, and, while slavery continued to exist on the continent, it remained practically impossible to extradite a black man out of Canada on any charge whatever. Among the cabins in the southern plantations, there had grown up a tradition that far away under the North Star could be found a paradise of freedom over which a great queen reigned. On first setting foot on Canadian soil, the fugitive slave kneeled to kiss the bosom of a kindly mother; and all would be well

with her soul had every other immigrant to Canada had within him the spirit to do likewise.

Just across the way from Mr. O'Hogan's, there was a colored tavern run by Jim Henderson, a big, black, deep-voiced nigger who told thrilling tales of slavery in the south. Jim had a weakness for fatty fried meats, and to regulate his system, he made a practice, every Friday night, of gurgling down the full of a big bottle of castor oil to the delight of sundry urchins who assembled for the occasion. Rolling his eyes and smacking his lips, Henderson would then shuffle off back for a glass of gin to cut the oil out of his gullet. The negroes in Toronto were a harmless, law-abiding body of simple-minded people. These ex-slaves worked as laborers and teamsters; and a few of them were already property holders, and took part in the stormy elections of the day. Some of their descendants have risen to important positions in Canada; but the climate has proven too rigorous for the majority of them.

Everything is relative in this life, and especially so the element of time. A summer takes longer to pass in the enquiring days of childhood than does an entire decade further along life's journey. As that long summer dragged on, the plague came and hung over the town like the dread, intangible wraith that chokes one in a nightmare. There was fear and dread in everyone's heart; and it was the deep smothering fear of utter helplessness. We all wore little bags of camphor about the neck. The angel of death seemed to mark at random the door lintels of the chosen ones. Perhaps the death toll of 1847 has been exaggerated; but, in a literal sense, the poor died by the hundred. In the summer and early fall of 1847, 863 poor Irish died in Toronto, and of the 97,933 emigrants who sailed from Irish ports for Canada in the spring and summer of that year, 18,625 souls did not live to feel the frosts of a Canadian winter.

The plague was a terrible thing; but kindly in its way because it was swift about its business. One afternoon my poor, young mother fell ill. She was lying on an old straw tick in the corner of the room upstairs. When I found her, she was cold and clammy and in frightful distress. I threw her old shawl over her and ran for water. Within five minutes every other occupant of the house had cleared out. Mr. O'Hogan set off post haste to bespeak the death cart to take her body away. I ran around to get Mistress Kitty O'Shea. I knew she would help me; because she was out night and day nursing the sick. She came right over, and stayed till my mother's body stiffened with the rigor. Poor Kitty O'Shea! She died herself the day the plague struck down Michael Power, the first Catholic Bishop of Toronto; and they both

laid down their lives ministering to the sick on the streets of Toronto. Perhaps He that sitteth in the heavens has found a place among His many mansions for the soul of Kitty O'Shea!

My mother begged for the priest. He put the holy oil on her, and her mind was comforted.

"Sit over by the window," Mistress O'Shea said to me. "Your mother doesn't want you to be looking at her, Paddy. She doesn't want you to remember the look of her face in the sickness."

The dip candle stuck in a bottle guttered and spent itself during the watches of that terrible night. The agonies of the destroying disease were distressing.

As the sky began to brighten with the dawn, the stiffening collapse of the disease overcame my mother's body. Mistress O'Shea crossed herself as she covered the rigid face.

I hoisted the window to let the soul get out.

Two rough-looking men with a one-horse cart came in the forenoon to take my mother's body away. They were gathering bodies of the Catholic poor for burial in a potter's field at the east side of the city. They had started off with a load of empty board coffins, and Mr. O'Hogan's place was the final call on that trip. They placed an empty coffin on the street. They came upstairs with a heavy bag made of ducking.

I knew my mother was not yet dead because only one eye was closed. But they shoved her stiff body into their bag and tied the mouth of it with a stout cord. One of the men shouldered the burden and bore it to the street. The lid of the coffin was hammered on. It was hoisted up into its place on the cart. The cart trundled off up York Street. And I followed after.

As we rounded the corner of Richmond Street, Dick Crispin was opening the bar-room door of his yellow tavern.^[5] Mr. Crispin had been in service with Sir John Colborne, the governor; and his public house was much frequented by official gentry from below stairs. The carter hollered to him for a drink. Coachman Dick brought out a generous flask of whiskey, and set it on the roadway. The body gatherers drank to the souls of the departed, and emptied the bottle. Of course, they had been tight already. But they were brave men, doing a necessary and dangerous duty. Drinking heavily was the only precaution they knew.

[5] In 1933 the hulk of Crispin's tavern still stands, its tidy lines hidden behind noisy signboards.

It was a curious funeral procession that wended its way along Richmond Street, up Church, and east on Queen Street—an old cart full of corpses, two drunken carters, a dirty, ragged little urchin, with tear-stained face and a bob-tail collie that did not understand. The road cleared in front of us; and people closed doors and ducked up alleys as we passed along.

Anyway there was one sincere mourner present, which is more than some great funeral processions have. The whole affair had been sudden, and it seemed terrible to me. I felt sick. There was a strange co-rumbling in my belly. The essence of true sorrow is always self pity. I was not so much sorry for my poor mother. I felt helpless and utterly lonely; and I was sorry for myself because they were taking her away from me.

I followed along after the cart, blubbering and poking my grimy knuckles into my eyes. Rover knew I was in distress, and he wanted to help me.

I was bothered that the old cart made so much noise. They might be hurting her.

I got to thinking that prayers should be said for her. I sobbed out what I could:

*Hail, Mary, full of grace!
The Lord is with thee;
Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.*

The cart rattled onto Queen Street.

*Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners, now and
At the hour of our death. Amen.*

.....

*May the souls of the departed
Repose in peace. Amen.*

They put the load of bodies into one great hole. The cold of the grave was in my heart.

When I got back home, they were fumigating the house and Mr. O'Hogan told me to clear out—I was not wanted there. I asked for my

mother's things. They had all been burnt—so he said; but I didn't believe him.

“And there,” I accused him, “you liar, you have my father's own stick in your hand!”

Mr. O'Hogan chased me out onto the street and threw the stick after me.

I faulted him roundly in Irish as I ran to pick it up; and the man crossed himself.

“What were you saying to the man, little boy?” an old gentleman enquired of me.

“I was putting a curse on him,” I explained, “I was blasting his soul to the devil for a dirty, lying thief.”

I still keep that stick by me, for I hold it very dear. It reminds me of the old, unhappy, far-off days when my father died “evic” and left me as his whole estate his Irish blackthorn stick.

So not a stitch nor token have I to remind me of my mother. But when the sunbeams strike down sudden-like through the storm clouds, I think of the glint in her fun-loving eyes. And when the rain thrush flutes his neat little tune to the clearing sky, I hear again the soft, lovable brogue of that poor, little, forgotten, black Irish mother of mine.

When night set in, I slipped down the alley to the east of the Tavern Tyrone. Rover whined a welcome from the stable door. It is a quality of a dog's friendship that he knows all your secret faults, yet remains loving and kind to be sure; and he will never spitefully use you. I was sick and tired as a child is after hysteria of any kind; and I was actually weak, because I had fasted the livelong day, which is sore against the grain of a little boy's belly. I laid me down in the sweet, crisp hay; and Rover snuggled over beside me. In my utter loneliness, the dog's sympathy and loving-kindness refreshed me; and my body felt warmer. Sobbing, I fell asleep.

CHAPTER IV

THE HILLS OF MONO



EARLY in the morning, Himself woke me right smartly by dashing a bucket of water into my face. He was in the devil's own temper; and he had me cornered. Yet he stood back in the doorway with his chin hoisted in the air, like a he-goat on a hillside. I thought I was in for a beating; but fear of the plague kept him from laying hands on me. I got a tongue-thrashing instead.

Mrs. Trueman came out of the kitchen to see what all the noise was about.

“Dear! Dear!! What can the matter be?” exclaimed the good woman. “Is it a twist of the colic you’re having, John?”

She found her husband calling loudly to his Heavenly Father to show cause why John Trueman’s premises should be infested at night with stray cats and dirty little gutter-brats, messing the place up and spreading disease.

“Why, Lord a Mercy!” Himself exclaimed. “Woman! it’s matter enough!”

The excited man, roaring helplessly at a cringing little urchin, may have felt undignified in the presence of his wife. Off he strode into the house, making strange noises by blowing through his closed lips and tossing his beard about with his left hand. I was glad to see the heels of him.

Sarah Trueman looked me over. I must have been a miserable-looking little waif. All I had on was my ragged pants and a portion of a blue shirt; and one of my shoes was soleless. Well do I remember the peculiar moment in which I was received into the Trueman household—poor and penniless, neither naked nor clothed, barefoot nor shod.

“Paddy, what have you been doing here all night?” she asked me in her quiet, gentle way.

“Sure, Mrs. Trueman,” said I, “my mother died from me, and I’d no place at all to go.”

“You poor child!” she exclaimed, “just bide where you are.”

A wooden wash-tub was landed out into the stable. The Trueman girls fetched out, hanging on a stout pole, a large black iron pot of boiling water. I was sent with a pail to the rain barrel.

“Now scrub yourself, Paddy,” Mrs. Trueman directed me, “and make a job of it.”

Rain water and soft soap are great for a lather; and I did my duty. Half a cup of carbolic acid was added to the tub before I got through. Then I was set to washing my pants and shirt in the curdled water. Old clothes and a pair of boots belonging to young Jack were handed out to me. A pail of unslacked lime in chunks the size of hens’ eggs was sprinkled on the stable floor.

I was given my breakfast in the back kitchen. There were no lumps in the porridge the Trueman girls made, nor was it a sloppy gruel of a lazy housekeeper. Fresh oaten meal was boiled for many hours, cooking slowly in a vessel suspended in the water of a black pot that hung on its hook over the open fireplace. There was a richness to that porridge and the body of it was such that it would jelly as the heat left it.

A big bowl of it was given me; and over the top Violet Trueman poured maple syrup as thick as molasses. I could feel my bowels stirring and stretching up within me and yearning for it. I gave it two or three turns with my spoon to let the sweetness sink into the heart of the delicious mass. Then I smothered it with cows’ milk, warm from the milking pail. It was a food to sweeten the soul; and it stuck close to the sides of my belly. My spirits have always risen with good eating as some people’s do with drink.

“Bur-r-umph!” growled Himself, as he spied me at my porridge bowl. I paid no attention to him.

“She-asses!” he snorted. “No wonder old Job was told to curse God with three hundred of them about his place!”

“Now, father dear,” exclaimed his daughter Violet, as she bobbed him a little courtesy, “no one ever faulted Job’s beautiful daughters.”

His women folk treated John Trueman as something to be put up with, just like the Canadian climate.

Then I got a plate of potato cakes, piping hot with butter melting into the richness of their scabby brown bodies. Sarah Trueman was a wonderful cook; anything she put her hands to turned out well. Her potato cakes were compounded of mashed potato and boiled red salmon; and, cut into round patties, were fried in a big black spider with a long handle. The delight that comes from the taste of things is one of the thrilling joys of childhood. Old age is a mean, dirty robber; but, blast him, he cannot take away from me the memory of the taste of Sarah Trueman's cooking. The width of the world contained nothing like it. All the digestive juices in my old body start secreting at the thought of it.

Somehow I felt during the meal that they were talking about me behind my back. William Marshall had driven into town the day before. His wife was the eldest of the Trueman girls and for years the couple had been busy clearing a bush farm up-country. He was a youngish looking man in the face, but his body was set and stiffened a little with hard work—a kind and mannerly man he was, quiet and sedate in his ways for the huge bulk of him. The Trueman women were right fond of William Marshall. I could see it in their eyes as they moved about. Casual-like, he came out and spoke to me.

After a while, back he came again, and stood looking me over.

“How would you like, Patrick,” he asked me in his slow, deliberate way, “to go out and live in the country?”

“I'd like, sir,” said I, “to have a home; and I'd work hard.”

So the morning after, I rode off in William Marshall's wagon on my way to Mono Mills. The team spanked along the Dundas Road west from Toronto, and, turning northward, we travelled slowly over rough roads to Malton on the Sixth line of Chinguacousy. We lodged the night after at a roadhouse at Tullamore.

Bright and early in the morning, we were up and on our way again. William Marshall was big-hearted enough to be kindly in his quiet way to the little urchin riding beside him into a strange world. The flight of the wild pigeons, and the flow of the cedar-clad water brooks, were leisurely explained as the creaking wagon lumbered slowly along. The country gradually became rough and broken. A great hill stretched up suddenly before us; and along its crest small, fleecy clouds passed slowly by, like a flock of sheep newly washen clean.

“Oh! Sir,” I cried, in childish dismay, “how will we ever get up that powerful big hill?”

“Just bide a little, lad,” the man told me, “and we’ll lick that little old hill once we get a hold of him.”

And true enough the hill gradually melted away, in wondrous wise, to disclose a still greater one to threaten us.

“Oh! Sir,” I exclaimed, clutching his arm, “how will we ever get up that terrible big hill?”

“Patrick,” Mr. Marshall told me, “you and I didn’t cross the great stormy ocean to be scared by little hills, or aught else. We Irish fellows just go up to things like that and give them a good ding.”

The man’s conversations were fine for shortening a journey, what with the frolicking thoughts that chased one another through my head.

Early in the afternoon we pulled up at Henderson’s blacksmith shop. The anvil was ringing—“clink! clank! clink!” at that iron forge at Mono Mills as the smith beat a glowing horseshoe into shape amid a spraying shower of flying stars. Out on the wind to smart the nostrils, drifted the peat-like smoke of the forge and the pungent smell of a hoof burned in the fitting.

Michael Costigan bestirred himself to reset a spare wagon wheel left in for repairs as our team had passed down. The huge Irishman wrought earnestly over the hot tyre, his tongue sticking out the corner of his mouth in a curious way.

His little son, as freckled as a turkey’s egg, was standing by.

“It’ll no holt, Mike Costigan!” the child cried to his father. “It’ll no holt, Mike Costigan!”

“Holt your tongue!” the father shouted back at him. “Faith if you had a band as tight as that around your body at the belly button you’d be a cheap little lad to feed.”

Some one whistled the blacksmith’s tune—



Then Costigan was treated to the song:

*Now who is this grimy-faced man that we hear,
Directing the world as he hammers our gear?
O, the noises he makes would split any one's ear!
Sure it's Michael, the blacksmith at Mono.*

Later in the afternoon we drove to the farm where the yellow briar grows. It was Friday, the 24th of September, 1847, a beautiful day, fair and clear after the rains. At the big log house a warm welcome awaited us.

It was a pioneer farm with ten years' heavy work behind it in the making. But there were compensations. Whatever else they lacked, the pioneers in the Ontario bush fed like fighting cocks. Not for them were the tom-tit-like meals that cook themselves at home while the motor car is gallivanting round to ladies' meetings in the countryside.

There was, aye, an abundance there for supper that night—of cold pork, hot pigeon pie, fried potatoes, green tea, wheaten bread, ginger cookies, hot shortcake and maple molasses; aye, and a jug of milk standing handy on the table.

Mr. Marshall said grace, asking the Lord to bless the food to its intended use, and for what we were about to receive to make us truly thankful. There were eight of us around that kitchen table to be thankful—a young squaller three quarter's old in a basswood crib; Mr. and Mrs. Marshall; a hired man and his wife, both living in; two other small Marshall children, and young Paddy Slater.

After supper I sat on the wash bench by the side of the back kitchen door. Then came still evening on, with the tiny noises of small creatures stirring in the early twilight; and, in between, I could hear the sound of the grasses growing.

Little Charlie Marshall sidled up to show me a big wart he prided himself on. Then I helped the hired man fetch water from the well. It was a curious contraption, that well. A long, stout pole had been teetered on the crotch of an elm post planted some feet back. A bucket and rope were attached at one end, and the other end was well weighted. Letting the bucket down for water hoisted the weighted end of the pole. When the bucket was filled, one just steadied it, and up it came, neat and easy-like, with no strain or slopping.

That night I was sent to bed up a ladder into the loft over the back kitchen.

“Patrick,” Mr. Marshall called up, “I wish you a good night. God have you in His keeping.”

It was lonely up there for awhile, but I soon discovered my little folk had come with me. I could hear the pixies playing about in the walls and every now and again a little fellow went “tick-tick!” like a watch, “tick-tick!” to let me know he was guarding over me. A boy feels all right with friends like that about. It had been a long day, filled with excitement and diversions. I had need of a stretch, so to sleep I went.

One of the fairies pulled my lug in the early morning; but I was slow in grabbing him. When I rubbed my eyes, the windows of the day were opening in the east. All I saw was a fat grey squirrel cocked on a nearby box. By the bigness of his eyes I could tell, however, he had been seeing rare goings-on.

They find out many intimate things about antiquity by digging among its ruins; in like manner the story of any Ontario farm is told by the houses that have been built upon it.

The first dwelling on the Marshall farm was a small log shanty built in the spring of 1837; and when I arrived on the place it was doing service as a pig pen. Its walls were built of cedar logs small enough for one man to hoist them into place. At the corners they were neatly notched. The spaces between them were chinked with moss and the roof of the cabin was covered with slabs of tamarack bark. An axe blade was the only iron used about its original construction.

William Marshall’s father had been an early settler among the Lutherans around Cashel in Markham Township. The family was a large one; and on rising seventeen years, the lad, Willie, went out to work as a hired man. By the spring of 1837, he had laid aside £45, Halifax currency; and with part of his savings he bought a 200-acre homestead of his own in the unbroken wilderness among the hills of Mono. He was attracted to the place by the beech, oak and hard maple, and the floating boulders of limestone, which, to his mind, gave strength to his soil.

Early in May of that year, he got a lift for himself and his dunnage as far as Campbell’s Cross. At that point young Marshall shouldered his axe and a sack of grub, and fared on foot up-country along a blazed trail to conquer his kingdom. The little cabin went up in short order. The rest of his scanty supplies were then packed in; and the lad set to work felling timber in order to make land. His working equipment consisted of two axes, a whetstone, and a musket. Every week he went a tidy step to a neighbor’s for his batch

of bread. His other provisions were molasses, sowbelly and speckled brook trout that fry deliciously, as you know, in a pan over a slow fire. The sweetest meat man ever ate are these little Molly Cailins.

By the middle of August, Marshall had chopped seven acres of heavy hardwood timber; and the field he made stands to this day as evidence of his feat. A rail fence went around the fallow the next spring; and we have been flinging field stones along its fence lines for so many years that no one has since had courage to attempt to alter the boundaries of the field. It was not, however, a case of falling one tree after another. The axeman started at one side of the clearing he was making, and, chopping into the standing trees to weaken them, prepared for a great windfall to start at the other side and lay the trunks in windrows convenient for the burning. It was a job for an expert; but there was an expert on the job.

After Marshall had patiently chopped his way across the field in this fashion, neighbors came over to lend him a hand in starting the falling. The roar was deafening as the trees toppled one another over in their swaying fall.

*Louder sounds the axe, redoubling stroke on stroke.
On all sides round, the forest hurls his oaks
Headlong. Deep echoing groan the thickets brown,
Then rustling, crackling, crashing, thunder down.*

—*The Irish Reader*^[6]

^[6] The late Mr. Slater is mistaken in this reference. See *The English Reader* (1815), a copy of which is in The Riddell Canadian Library.

That season William Marshall chopped and prepared logs for a stable and a house. The frosts of November found him back on his father's farm at Cashel for the winter. On the 7th of December he was at the burning of Montgomery's tavern. What he actually went down to do at that scene in the Canadian Rebellion of '37 has always remained shrouded in a pious mystery. I suspect he was with a party of farm boys who marched down Yonge Street to give Sir Francis Bond Head and his government a taste of their muskets and croppy pikes. On nearing the scene of action, they found the rebels' affairs in such a plight that, to get neatly out of the scrape, the North York yeoman declared stoutly they had marched down to maintain law and order in Toronto town.

The next spring William Marshall was twenty-one; and his father set him up in life after the fashion of the times. For livestock, he received with his father's blessing a yoke of young oxen, a heifer, due to calve later, and an elegant pair of small pigs. His farming equipment consisted of a wagon and its contents. There were a few bags of seed spring wheat and oats, some millet and seed potatoes. For tools he had, among other things, a crosscut saw, a rip saw, an auger, two cant hooks, logging chains, a cradle, and a keg of ironmongers' supplies. Early in the spring, his brother Maxwell went over with him, and the boys put in the first season's crop on the Marshall place. The cattle found good pickings in an old beaver meadow.

The large fallow of fallen trees was as dry as tinder. The lads made ready for the burning. Brush fire piles were laid in a hundred places and flaming torches of dry cedar passed quickly through the fallow. Within half an hour the entire field was a roaring mass of crackling flames shooting up to the sky in sparkling cones of fire. Great columns of whirling black smoke rose to drift in clouds over the valley for miles around. The heat was intense. Flames lit up the sky throughout the night and for days afterward the fire growled and smouldered in the great hardwood logs as it reduced them to powdery ashes.

Then the dirty work of making land began. The field was an ash pit with stumps sticking up in all directions and was littered over with half-burned logs and charred debris of the fire. The stumps could wait for a more convenient season. Scarred logs and great, cranky limbs were yanked into fresh piles, with much prodding of the rumps of the oxen, and the brandings were thus prepared for a fresh burning. Salty sweat stank on the young lads, who fought amid choking dust for every foot of farm land.

By the middle of May that spring the sower went forth to sow on the Marshall farm. The oxen pulled a triangular drag with wooden teeth in and out amid the stumps, scratching the black, inviting earth. The wheat was sown broadcast; and the drag did what it could to harrow the seed in. The oats and millet were sown next—and the land loved them. It was a slow, laborious task splitting cedar rails and fence-making to keep the cattle off the growing crops. And having done some of it myself, I speak with respect of the heart-breaking, back-hurting job of cradling lodged oats on a stumpy hillside. However, the harvest yielded two tidy stacks of grain; and they stood close to a log stable neatly thatched to keep the cattle and calf as snug the next winter as bugs in a rug.

In the fall of that year the first log house was built on the Marshall farm, a one-roomed affair with a ladder to the loft; and it was up that ladder I

climbed the first night I slept on the farm. The Marshall boys had wrought hard, early and late, whip-sawing out the rough planks for the floor and the sheathing for the roof. The shingles were cut on the job. Neighbors lent a hand at putting up the cabin.

Later in the fall, before his brother left him, William Marshall took a week off and went out to look himself up a wife.

CHAPTER V

NANCY'S DOWRY



WILLIAM MARSHALL walked across country by way of Woodbridge to the home farm on the 4th line of Markham; and there, nestled by an orchard, a warm welcome was awaiting him.

Poor, simple Willie Marshall! He was not faring forth to court a girl he loved. The mating season of his life was upon him and was hurrying him out a-hunting a woman to wife. He knew nothing of this specious, modern fiction that a man is only stirred to courting because of the bewitchery of some woman's charms. Neither, perhaps, did he realize that a youth out wife-hunting is as potter's clay in the hands of the first woman he meets who is also mating-minded.

The mysteries of sex influence are, of course, beyond the depth of a simple, old man, always living single; but somehow, old bachelors and bachelor girls spend a good deal of time musing on a subject about which they are supposed to know nothing. And why not? Religion, poetry and art are all saturated with its delightful influences. Heavenly Father, what a waste of driven snow a sexless life would be! The mystery of mating love may have its roots feeding in the earth out of which all life comes, but a flower is unlike the soil out of which it grows. I have observed a dirty-mouthed young scoundrel struck as mute and helpless as any honest-minded lad by a slip of a girl with flat breasts and cheeks as white as milk. I have also observed a bold, bad woman, like Kitty O'Shea, fall desperately in love with a plain, pudgy little man, and be as timid and bashful about her love as any innocent, sweet country maid.

Romantic love had little to do with human match-making until a very recent date; and, even to-day, it seems to be, in the main, a home-smashing infection that catches idle men and silly women after they drift into the dangerous age of the forties. Farm has always married farm among the thrifty rural class in Europe—and the lad and the lass are thrown in with the acres. Bonds and mortgages marry mortgages and bonds among the town-

dwellers; and the poor have always been lazy and listless in seeking far for their mates. Marrying love is distressingly mercenary among the Irish on the old sod. Unless she has a couple of Kerry cows for dowry the emotional Celt demands that his bride be strong in back and legs for the carrying of the creels of turf. And after the songs are sung and the speeches made, something more enduring than love sickness is required to keep a home fire burning brightly in cabin or hall. Love of man and wife is a more sturdy plant. It is a cherishing, unselfish affection that pities, is long suffering—and forgives. “To make a happy fireside clime for weans and wife, that’s the true pathos and sublime o’ human life.”

The matter of finding a suitable wife for William became the subject of a lengthy and frank discussion between the young man and his parents. The matter was canvassed most diligently in the evenings, in that drowsy undertone in which folk discuss intimate things in the dark, after the others have gone to bed. Marriages may be made in heaven, but liveable ones usually require the services of kindly matchmakers, who discreetly steer the young man’s fancy in a direction where a suitable girl is quietly waiting for the likes of him. Now, setting up housekeeping on a bush farm requires more than the cabin and a bride. There is also the bed and bedding, and the kitchen and other household gear the right sort of a father-in-law gives his daughter on her going-out from home. Local prospects were canvassed carefully, but without the Marshalls getting far in solving William’s problem for him. Before he went out to work in service the lad had been too young to be on courting bent. Moreover, he had since been converted; and, after trial, had joined the Methodist Connexion. It was at a camp meeting at Hogg’s Hollow, in a season of great power and glory, that he had been brought under the awakening of the spirit, and had been made the subject of saving grace.

Up at Bradford and Cookstown, where he had worked three years for the Stoddarts, the family had been worldly Episcopalians, who thought themselves some snuff. You understand? They had pewter and flatware, and none but the help ate in the kitchen. Such landed gentry kept a hired man in his place. And the other young people in the district were also sinfully-minded, and indulged in dancing and card playing, which were abominations to the godly discipline of the Methodist Connexion. The result was that young Marshall withdrew himself from such temptations of the flesh, and had spent his evenings reading the Bible and reflecting on *The Commentary and Critical Notes* by Adam Clarke, LL.D., F.S.A., etc.

So prospects did not look any too bright for finding a wife for William. But finally so happy a thought occurred to Mrs. Marshall that her fingers hesitated for a moment in their ceaseless knitting.

“Willie,” said his mother, as she ran a knitting needle through her hair, “you might do worse than go down to Toronto and ask for John Trueman’s Nancy!”

Mrs. Marshall’s maiden name was Cohain; and she was a distant connection of Sarah Trueman. The son felt a religious impediment to marrying a tavern keeper’s daughter, and into the Established Church.

“Aye,” advised his father, sagely, “Aye, my son, to get the right kind of a wife, go to a house that has a good mother.”

So having tidied himself up to look respectable, young William drove off down Yonge Street with his father’s team, and arrived on Saturday morning at the Tavern Tyrone. The great, rough lump of a man was warmly welcomed by Mrs. Trueman, who thanked his mother kindly for the nice firkin of butter. Young Marshall wore a suit of dark-colored homespun, heavy cowhide boots and a shabby, broad-brimmed, grey felt hat, which he had borrowed for the occasion.

Of course, he would be stopping for dinner. Yes, and he might be lodging over Sunday. Himself and the young man adjourned to the tap-room, and fell into the heavy labored conversation of two males, related by marriage, who are anxious to seem friendly to one another, but are racking their brains to talk about something in common.

“It’s hoarse you are, Willie,” Mr. Trueman remarked, after the weather had been talked out. “I’m thinking you’ve got what is called a Methodist cold.” And he winked his far-off eye.

“Well, sir,” said William, in his slow, deliberate way, “I am an adherent of the Wesleyan Connexion, but I never heard tell of that sort of a cold.”

“Ha! Ha!” explained Himself, with his little chuckle, “that’s the hoarseness the saddlebag itinerants get with their roaring and noisy preaching.”

In John Trueman’s opinion, the Methodists were worse than the black-mouthed Presbyterians.

A long pause followed that thrust.

“So they tell me, Willie,” Mr. Trueman, resumed, after a patron had slipped in to wet his whistle with a touch of bitters, “that you have taken up

a farm in King Township.”

“No, sir,” William replied, “but I have started to break a farm in Mono Township, back up over Sligo Hill.”

“Ah! yes, indeed! And have you a house built, William?”

“My brother Maxwell helped me take off a little crop this summer; and we have just finished putting up a small log house.”

Himself considered the matter.

“I suppose, Willie,” he suggested, after reflecting, “you will be looking for a wife next?”

“Well, now, Mr. Trueman,” the young man replied promptly in his throaty voice, “that is what brought me to Toronto. I thought perhaps I might ask for one of your daughters.”

Himself smiled slyly, as he tossed his beard up.

“Oh ho!” said father, “it’s to the girls’ mother you’ll have to be speaking about that, Willie.”

“I shall perhaps have occasion to do so this afternoon, sir,” replied the serious-minded young man; and he slipped off down to King Street to buy a copy of *The Life of Wesley*, by Coke and Moore.

Ah! what a lively commotion then arose in the Trueman household! The eldest daughter, Nancy, was a girl of seventeen, and a buxom, hearty young thing she was, blooming out into womanhood. Himself had recently caught Miss Nancy stepping out with a soldier man from the fort. It is that way, always, in a garrison town:

*Around the corner, beneath a tree,
The Sergeant Major made love to me.
He kissed me once! he kissed me twice!
It wasn't the proper thing to do,
But oh! it was so nice.*

Himself had dusted the young lady’s back smartly, after the approved fashion of irate Irish fathers. Such a job had he made of it that the mother had been salving the whelms on Nancy’s back for days afterward. And for a week’s time, now, Miss Nancy Trueman had been confined strictly within the limits of her father’s premises.

No sooner had William Marshall stepped out the door than the wife and daughter were called to a hasty conference in the sitting-room of the Tavern Tyrone. Himself informed them that Nancy would straightaway marry the decent, respectable young man, and go up-country with her husband.

“But, John, dear,” his wife cautioned him, “the young man has not even looked at the girl yet!”

“She’s too good looking, damn it,” declared John, “for a tavern keeper’s daughter on Queen Street.”

To be treated like a chattel, thus; and thrown into a young man’s arms as from an auction block was altogether too much for Nancy’s nerves. Her temper dissolved in a flood of angry tears.

“Bu-hugh!” bawled the girl, struggling for breath, “and I’ve never even seen the clodhopper myself!”

“Now, my love, treat the young man real graciously,” urged the mother. “You might like him, after all . . . if he’ll have you.”

There was roast beef and Yorkshire pudding for dinner that day at the Tavern Tyrone, and Miss Nancy was a sweet, demure young thing. She was wearing Mamma’s gold locket and chain. So William had occasion to speak to Mrs. Trueman privately. And the good woman was greatly surprised—of course.

She thought the girl was very young, but then, of course, yes, of course! Nancy should consider the matter.

So Miss Nancy stepped out that afternoon to show William the sights of the town. Poor William, prouder was he nor ten peacocks! To his simple fancy her cheeks had a bloom as fresh as the apple. The wife-hunting country boy was fair bewitched; and from the secret places in his heart that had never been tapped before, he poured out on the young girl’s ears all his hopes and fears of things present and to come, how little gear he had, how much he loved her, and how much he needed her. Nancy felt sorry for the simple, awkward, honest, hard-working boy.

As they strolled up Bay Street, past Doel’s brewery, she took his calloused hand, and turned facing him squarely.

“Of course, William,” she told him, “I know you would be kind and good to me; but a woman needs a little time to think things over. Now, I’m going to slip back home . . . alone. Don’t you come in till supper time! . . .

and when you do come in . . . look dejected like, and don't mind if I'll not be speaking to you."

On arriving home, Miss Nancy bolted upstairs in a bound, and slammed the bedroom door. Himself and the wife hurried up after her to see what the matter was. The girl was sprawled on the bed with her face burried in a pillow. She was sobbing in noisy spasms, and carrying on most distressfully.

"Oh! Mama!" she sobbed, "you'll not let them marry me off to a poor, clumsy farmer, will you?"

". . . . And send me to live in a hut in the bush!"

"And no furniture," she wailed, "and only one room in the shanty!"

"But, Nancy dear," urged her distressed mother, "think of all the bedding and linen you have trunked that you can take with you . . . yes, and the tableware . . . the drawn linen tablecloths . . . and . . ."

"And no bed to put them on!" bawled Nancy, ". . . and no table for the tablecloths!"

"Hur-umph! Hur-umph!" expostulated Himself, tossing his beard, "I'll have you know, young woman, that John Trueman will supply his daughter, on her marriage, with suitable household furniture complete!"

And downstairs the good man stormed in high dudgeon.

Mrs. Trueman stayed to calm her daughter, who was sobbing and grunting into her pillow in a noisy way. There was a speedy lull in the tempest, followed by a complete silence. Then Miss Nancy looked up from her bed of sorrow with a saucy glint in her eyes.

"Do you think, Mother dear,"—and Nancy's voice was always clear and low—"I could get that husband of yours to throw in a couple of cows . . .?"

And, of course, Nancy Trueman was truly and sincerely in love. A woman, as you know, does not have to fall in love. By one of the inexplicable laws of her being, a woman is always in love, and is as full of love as a nut is full of meat. A man must find a tangible object for them before his affections are aroused; but a woman's love can flourish and abound in a dreamland all her own. It is as much a matter of chance that her affections settle upon a particular man as that swarming bees cluster on a particular limb of a tree. It is not the limb that causes the swarm, nor the man that makes a woman love.

It is the little folk that do it. Paddy Lapracaun, in his red cap and coat, shins up the bedpost, and anoints the eyelids of the sleeping girl with the honey of the humming bird. The same little red rascal, it is, who sneaks himself tipples of the liquor, and empties the bottle in such mysterious-wise, as it stands late at night at the elbow of a muller of fat and juicy thoughts. When the dreaming girl awakens, she may see other things in their proper light; but she is as blind as a bat to the gross and palpable defects of the first man who comes to woo her. It stands to reason a woman's love is blind! Else how could any man ever get him an honest loving wife? And after the faeries' nectar has lost its potency, anything untoward seldom happens, because woman's pity and the little children cause the wife to play pretend until such playing becomes a habit.

Nancy Trueman was a normal woman, with a healthy impulse to live her life fully, free from sham and in quiet serenity of soul. And any such young creature is jealous of the world for a man of her own. Within the board covers in her days they told tiresome tales of nasty men running after pale, passionless ladies whose inhibitions sometimes produced babies under distressing circumstances;—which raises the problem of how the lily white creatures had conceived without sinning. Nancy was not one of those morbid, prudish maidens. Nor would her character find a comfortable place in the erotic modern epics of the flesh which raise the problem of how women can sin so much without conceiving. Save for a physician to sick souls, there is little of value in the study of the abnormal. A half truth arises from a false placing of emphasis, and is a dangerous lie. Any young woman's body may be as full of sex as are the heavy flowers of a seeding locust. But those flowers, as any eye can see, are incidental in the life of the honey locust, which is a strong sturdy tree as well as a spring time nursery for flowers. A woman builds a beautiful character by fitting together all the elements in her nature in a wholesome and artistic way. It is upon the foundation of elemental passions that her heart and mind build the pure white altar of sacrifice—which is the home.

And along these lines, it was the general opinion of parents in 1838, that a girl of seventeen had reached a dangerous and susceptible age at which it is high time to marry her off to a respectable young man to have her babies. Mr. John Trueman and his wife should not be faulted for subscribing heartily to an opinion that had been universally held in the previous thousand years. So the purpose of William Marshall's visit to Toronto made him very welcome at the Tavern Tyrone. You understand? The Trueman family felt that a tavern keeper's daughter was at a disadvantage in the marriage market—an opinion with which I beg respectfully to disagree. Just consider the

lovely, wholesome girls who have waited on public tables in Ontario and the matches some of their granddaughters have made! But it had been a terrible come down to Mrs. Trueman's connections that John Trueman kept a tavern; and many a time the man regretted the matter himself.

So John Trueman felt young Marshall was a veritable godsend; and that it was his fatherly duty to subdue his daughter Nancy's will to a like way of thinking. And he was a steadfast-minded man, who stood firm and set in his purposes. The girl kept her chamber that Saturday afternoon and evening. Himself gave strict orders that if she abide there it be on an empty stomach. The mother kept a silent counsel, and moved quietly about the house, as subdued and repressed as any dutiful wife. William Marshall came in at supper time to be told that Miss Nancy had a bad headache; and, quite casually by Himself, that such a complaint was a rare occurrence in the Trueman family.

On Sunday morning the Truemans sat down with considerable dignity to the family breakfast table. Miss Nancy was there, looking a trifle pale, but her appetite was in good condition.

"I suppose, Willie," Mr. Trueman remarked after grace, "you will be going to divine service with us?"

"No," William replied, "I am informed that protracted meetings are being held at the Wesleyan church, and I purposed attending there."

"Oh! yes," said Himself, ". . . yes . . . in the dissenting chapel on Adelaide Street. Nancy will step over with you, William, and show you the place."

The girl demurred; but orders so explicit and direct from that quarter were orders to be obeyed in the Trueman household. And after the dishes were rid up and washed, Miss Nancy smiled quite demurely as she told William she would go over with him to the Methodist meeting. She disappeared up the stairs to come down, after a long wait, sweet looking and fresh in her Sunday best. The girl's lithe body glistened with winsome youth; and to William's simple mind Miss Nancy looked like a royal princess compared with any of those Stoddart girls. Not, mark you, that the godly young man had lost his head over external beauty, wotting not of the more precious graces of inner comeliness. So the young couple strolled along Jesse Ketchum's tanbark sidewalk on Queen Street, and on down to the Methodist church, following the other members of the Trueman household who were sedately wending their way to St. James' Cathedral. The old Wesleyan meeting-house faced north on the south side of Adelaide

Street, just a step east of Yonge Street; and out of that honest, wholesome mother of evangelical gospel sprang, in after days, the great Metropolitan Church, to display the wealth of commercial Methodism in its formal cathedral grandeur.

The emotions of the Methodists in the district had been stirred powerfully by special revival meetings then in progress. Many members of the Connexion had come to town to receive spiritual edification from the services. The young couple were beforehand for the preaching service; but they found the main body of the church partly filled, and a thrilling love-feast and experience meeting in progress. A plain laboring man, in rough clothes, was telling the brethren and sisters of the joy of his recent conversion. His face glowed with happiness as he gave them an account, in uncouth words and faulty grammar, of the agonizing exercises he had gone through on his knees, night after night, wrestling with God in prayer for a revelation of peace to his stricken soul. Late the night before, while engaged in prayer, and crushed with a deep sense of his guilty sins and the desperate need of redemption through a Saviour's blood, he had suddenly found joy unspeakable and a holy peace through believing that was pregnant with glory. Class leaders and local preachers encouraged him, and punctuated his stumbling remarks with loud shouts of praise and cries of "glory to God!" for the wonders of His saving grace. With the sudden coming of peace to his troubled soul, the poor simple penitent told them he had felt he was walking on the air, and was "gladder nor to be given a cow."

It was the first Methodist meeting Nancy Trueman had ever attended, and she never forgot the startling effect it had upon her. Two travelling preachers arrived to conduct the morning service. In those days, the Methodist itinerant was a poor man with a large family, and his joints were stiffened and the muscles of his body hardened by physical toil. A shabby black worsted frock-coat, with pockets in the tail, was often the only evidence that he was of the Cloth; and when, as often happened, he preached himself clear out of the pulpit, his rough boots and heavy woolen socks were hanging evidence that he was not serving God for gain. The ministers at the service that morning were downright, thorough Methodists of the Primitive stamp. They were there to proclaim God's kingdom and to bring sinful souls to Christ.

I speak of the early Methodists in their own tongue because I knew them well, and, with great respect, because I know that they deserve it. The feeling that a wrong is being done to a sect is a grand stirrer up of religious zeal. At the moment, one-seventh of all the lands in Upper Canada were

claimed for the English Church Establishment by Bishop John Strachan, who, through his personal influence, dominated the government of the colony.^[7] He was a courageous, determined Scotsman was the said John Strachan, with great force of character. Like any other man who lives to a great age, the first John of Toronto saw the lost causes he fought for bitterly, and the causes he won, all alike fade and die away as uninteresting pother in the minds of a second generation who had developed the middle-age spread both of body and mind. Of course, they did the decent thing by the old fellow at his funeral. A good many of us did not fancy John Strachan's ways; but to see his monument no Canadian need shift his feet; all he need do is look around. The man who founded the University of Toronto needs no eulogy from the likes of Paddy Slater.

[7] In 1838 John Strachan was an archdeacon, but shortly afterward he became bishop, and is usually spoken of as such.

In repelling the attacks made by the dissenters on the special preserves of the Established Church, the bishop had been roundly abusing the Methodist clergy as ignorant, uncouth men, and as spreaders of sedition in the land. Now it is poor policy for any church to get puffed up with worldly pride and concern itself with its vested rights and with property matters to the neglect of the one plain purpose of its being. In the meanwhile, the itinerant ministers of the Methodist Connexion were riding the pioneer roads on horseback, attending to the religious instructions of the Lord Bishop's flock and leading them astray from the Episcopal fold. On the one side of the ministerial saddle-bags nestled the sacred books and clerical linen; but in the pouch on the other side, there was space for things of the flesh; for no man can feed his family on grace alone. Nor was the Methodist minister backward in suggesting to the godly housewives that, on his return home, hungry eyes would be looking into the commercial end of his saddle-bags for a smoked ham or the wreck of roasted chicken. And the circuit rider sometimes found his pastoral calls the more welcome because of the pinch of green tea the saddle-bags yielded to make some poor old body a mild infusion.

The tears of repentance and the joys of forgiveness are experiences common to every religious life worthwhile. It is a sickly sort of religion, to my way of thinking, that does not strike down the human soul and overwhelm it at times with the enormity of its imperfections; and, after cleansing the spirit of the flesh, bring the worshipper at long last a refreshing peace in a vivid, present realization of an actual, personal communion with a forgiving God. But the early Methodists specialized so much in the emotions

of conversion, that they may sometimes have missed the thrill that comes from solemn adoration. But they were not alone in that. Well do I remember driving over one Sunday morning this while back to mass at St. Cornelius' Catholic Church by Silver Creek in Caledon Township. Two farmers strolled into the church vestibule, hotly engaged in making a deal over a yearling colt. The owner approached the fount.

"I'll take her, Pat," said his friend, "for twenty-eight dollars if you'll give me a dollar back on the bargain."

"God damn your lousy soul to hell if I will," said the owner, as he sedately sprinkled himself with the holy water.

The Methodist laymen wasted less time than some other sectarians in piecing dogmas together out of stray biblical passages as old women make up crazy patchwork quilts, using such pieces as fit into the design. The Methodist discipline was a rigid code of penances; and the force of the most vital movement of the nineteenth century among the English speaking spent itself, because, in the easy-going dissidence of dissent, the prosperous sons and daughters of Methodism found more fashionable and comfortable pews in other quarters. Here's to old John Wesley! He was the most catholic of all the protestants.

The manner of public worship among the Methodists was for all to stand up and sing; for all then to kneel in prayer; after which the congregation sat, and the minister rose to take a text and preach a sermon. Rev. James Richardson, who took the preaching service that morning, could both sing and pray with wonderful acceptance. On the opening of worship the congregation rose; and, to the tune of Luther's *Old Hundred*, they sang *Before Jehovah's Awful Throne*.

The preacher took as his text: *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world*. His was a powerful, clear voice; his delivery was good; and he was no canting, long-faced parson with affected religious terms. His hearers were sympathetic—they were not hard to please. What they thirsted for was the simple, old-time gospel. The Rev. Mr. Richardson was esteemed as an ingenious sermonizer; but, on the morning in question, he got so wrapped up in his introduction that by the time he got through it, he had clean forgotten his text, and was unable to lay his hands upon it,—but that did not disturb him in the least.

"If one of the brethren will kindly tell me what my text is," said the preacher, after a short, solemn pause, "I promise, by the grace of God, to preach a sermon that will edify you all."

A brother rose to oblige him; and, as the sermon poured on its turbulent way, the power of conviction descended upon the stricken congregation. At first, the hearers appeared motionless and absorbed. Their emotions soon began to surge. Cries for mercy were heard from the gallery. The moans of sinners in distress and shouts of praise from the believers finally drowned the preacher's voice; and he was forced to give over.

The assisting minister had a most profound, penetrating voice. Waving his long arms in the air, he roared at the congregation:

*There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.*

Then he sprang down into the body of the church to save lost souls and bring them to Christ. Mourning penitents, their eyes glistening with tears, were conducted from all directions to the rail before the altar, where they sobbed out their souls together in prayer. Many of them were elderly people. There was something decidedly infectious in an old time Methodist revival meeting. The worshipper forgot, for the time being, his Sunday clothes and the creaking of his boots. The poor creature realized, all of a sudden, that he was standing in utter nakedness before his God.

“Cry out and shout, O thou inhabitant of Zion!” thundered Rev. Mr. Richardson, as he strode up and down the platform, as was his wont on such a precious, soul-stirring occasion, clapping his hands together and exulting in the victory which was bringing many under an awakening by which their souls were saved. For him, the moment was fully impregnated with heavenly joy.

The surge of feeling waxed stronger and stronger. A small, stalky Irishman, who kept a cobbler's shop on King Street, threw off his coat; and, with arms uplifted, he rushed about pointing penitent sinners to Christ, and pouring out strong cries and tears on their behalf. Wherever he observed a soul hesitating, off he went down the aisle to implore him to seek the blessed balm for his poor, anxious heart, and the joy that is full of glory. The meeting got quite out of control, with men and women exhorting and singing to diverse tunes.

*Signs and wonders marked the hour,
All were filled and spake with power.*

The slain of the Lord were many.

“Do you think, Willie, all those poor converts will stay put?” Nancy asked her escort, as they walked slowly homeward after the exciting service had broken up.

“No,” Marshall admitted, “there are always some backsliders.”

“I thought folk must grow in grace by good works,” the girl remarked, as she mulled the thing over in her mind.

No, William was not of that opinion. He was as serious as the grave in discussing the matter.

“It is by a stroke of divine grace,” he told the girl, “that a soul is saved from original sin. At the penitent bench, in sincere contrition, the soul of a Christian is born again, full grown as it ever will be.”

“Just as the butterfly,” he explained, “is as big when first hatched as it ever will be.”

Marshall quoted John Wesley as an authority that sanctification is an instantaneous work.

Nancy spoke of Martin, the cobbler, expressing surprise at the church work he was doing.

“That little Irishman was right on his knees praying for me! If he had kept at it a little while longer,” said Nancy, “it’s a Methodist girl you’d be getting, William, for your wife.”

Which remark brought the first tidings of a great joy to William Marshall.

Mr. John Trueman married off his daughter Nancy a few days afterwards; and, in getting William and Nancy dove-tailed together, he felt that he had won a splendid victory. In truth, it was a series of stormy defeats so far as his pocket-book was concerned; but in his mind’s eye he had actually dragged his child to the altar, and married her off in spite of her teeth. Nancy was stubborn and wayward to the last. She refused to dress for the wedding ceremony unless she was supplied with a new set of corsets.

Nancy left home with more than the love-light in her eyes; she had silver, gear, and counted kine.

I know all these things well because old Mrs. William Marshall used to chuckle about them, as she sat knitting by the kitchen table where I write. Her voice was still sweet and low, but the blooming Nancy was now a pale-

faced old woman, and her scanty hair was grey. She declared the only thing she forgot to get out of John Trueman was a cradle. But then William, as she said, was always handy. He made their first one out of a sap-trough. Now, an old woman, with dimples and as sweet as that, I know she smiled in her sleep at the strange young girl who came with eyes like her own to bring her the yellow flowers.

CHAPTER VI

JIMMIE'S SPEEDING



THE fat grey squirrel scolded me down into a sweet beulah land on that bright September morning. Everybody about the Marshall farm seemed cheerful and friendly-like. And I had my name in the family pot. Assuredly things are picking up for any Donegal lad if his share of the food comes on the table without the asking.

The log shanty the Marshall boys had put up in the fall of 1838 was now an L-shaped lean-to, in front of which stood a stout log house with a large kitchen occupying most of the ground floor, a general purpose room in which the family meals were laid. In a nook across the end of it stood a stone fireplace with pots and hooks for the cooking utensils. On the hearth glowed the embers of a fire, petted and tended with as constant a care as the sacred flame in an ancient temple. Lucifer matches were things known of in 1847—but as expensive luxuries, and not for the likes of a backwoods farmer. A dead fire in that hearth at the break of day was an awkward household incident, as provoking, indeed, to the good woman as butter that would not come in a churning. Woe's me! The day's work on the entire farm marked time waiting the slow-seeming return of a pail galloped off to a neighbor's to borrow live coals for the makings. So to this day we say to a neighbor who refuses a chair that it must be a firing he has come for.

By the kitchen window stood the spinning wheel and near at hand the reel; and, hour in and hour out, could be heard on the wide, yellow floorboards the steady tap-tap of a woman's feet as she moved backward and forward, humming softly to herself and spinning out the yarn, which, as a perfect life would be, was an even spun thread alike throughout. The outer door of the kitchen had a lower and upper section, as stable doors have to-day, a most handy wrinkle about a farm house, the lower section keeping the little children in and the pigs and poultry out; while the upper section might swing open to let freshness and sunshine in. On the inside of the door was a heavy iron latch wrought by the local smith. Fastened to it was a leather

thong; and in the daytime this whang was poked out through a hole, that the door might be opened from the outside. At night, it was pulled in; and everything was snug and secure. A latch string hanging out was the token of hospitality in those days. Behind the kitchen lay two small rooms in constant use by Mr. and Mrs. Marshall and the small children; but one of these chambers was dolled up with wondrous feather ticks and blossomed out on the occasion of a visit as the spare bedroom that stood idle awaiting a guest. An open stairway led from the kitchen to the loft, which was partitioned into sleeping quarters.

The Marshall farm was indeed a grand place; but, somehow, I felt like a visitor there. In a home there is regular work for one to do and plenty of it. And I was just loafing. After a few days, Mr. Marshall had a friendly chat with me. He told me I was a good little boy and that I was very welcome. But it would be better for me, he said, if we could find a place for me with a family who needed a boy, having none of their own, and where I would have a home to grow up in.

“You know, Patrick,” he said to me, “your folk were Catholics, and I think you would perhaps be better living in a good Catholic family, where you would get religious instruction in the home from your own kind of people and grow up into a fine man.”

He told me he never faulted the Catholics himself, seeing his own people had once been Catholics for many hundred years. A fellow, he told me, should have a sincere faith and stick hard to it. If folk started shifting round from one faith to another they often ended by having no religion at all. And perhaps there was salt in his conversation.

He mentioned a man by the name of Martin Kelly who lived in an Irish-Catholic settlement down in Albion Township. The family were childless and hailed from County Longford. The man was a cobbler; and he had heard they were looking for a young boy. The place might suit me first rate. He would enquire further about it; and we might drive over some afternoon and see them. And the end of it was I went over to live with Martin Kelly—him with the game leg.

At Mr. Kelly’s place, my day’s work started with the dawning; and I wrought as hard as any sinner for the living I got there.

“Hi! there, Paddy! Spring tapper! tumble too!” Martin would shout, meanwhile sprawling in comfort himself on a settle-bed forninst the hearth, and beating an old pan with a stick he always kept convenient to his hand. That brought me down promptly from the loft, to quicken into a blaze the

smouldering embers on the hearth, and then hie away through the bush, calling: "Co-boss! co-boss!" in search of the cows.

The Kelly house was a small log cabin standing in an acre lot on the third line of Albion, near the corner they now call Lockton. Close at hand behind the house stood the stable with a pig-sty leaning against it. From a neighbor, Martin Kelly got the grass for two cows; and it was my duty, night and morning, to bring them up from the clearing, to milk them, and then drive them back again. The cows had no fancy for the long tramp, and one morning I caught the old one, Lizzie, the sly devil, hiding on me with her neck stretched out on the ground to keep her bell from tinkling. She was a drying stripper; and the other one, the O'Leary heifer, was also slackening in her milking. I thought it would have been all right for me to take the pail down and milk the cows in the pasture; but Mrs. Kelly had a strongly set notion to the contrary, she, good woman, being wishful to see all the milk they were giving. So up to the milking baween, I drove the Kelly cows twice daily; but I had a wooden sap-trough hidden back in the bush that helped matters out with my belly. Martin declared that bush to be infested with milk snakes that sucked the cows' teats.

"*Och hone, Machree* (Alas, my heart)," cried Mrs. Kelly, "Jimmy O'Leary's curse, it is, that is drying up the milk of the cows!"

All the day long, Martin sat by the kitchen window, bending over his last. His mouth had a deft way of gobbling handfuls of pegs with a curious clicking snap; and the quantities of snuff he took kept his nostrils as dusty as any man's at a clover thrashing. Yet I never knew him to sneeze. To his customers, Martin's breath always smelled strongly of blarney. A very agreeable man he was with the women and children who came to his place on business errands. They did be glamoured with his taking ways.

"Ah! faith, Mrs. Wray," he would wheedle, squirting out a great spittle of tobacco, "it is a grand job I'll be making of the brogues. Dennis will be pleased with them."

"And what will you be charging the man?" Dennis' wife would enquire.

"Well now, Mrs. Wray," Martin would confide to her after a weighty pause, "if it were any other woman's husband, I would be charging him one and six. But seeing it is you, and a fine girl, indeed, you were—and from the Golden Vale itself—faith all I'll be charging the man is a mere nothing at all, at all—just the trifle of two bits."

“Ah! you old devil!” the woman would cry out with a sarcastic tilt of her nose. “None of the neighbors be knowing at all, the wonder of the world how you do be keeping a roof over your head—you do be giving away so much!”

After I had been knocking around Martin Kelly’s a few days, he sent me down one afternoon on an errand to James O’Leary’s farm on the next line. Mrs. O’Leary was as plump as a sack of grain; and the jolly, good-natured woman gave me a piece of bread with a thick spread of sugar. Her fat face puckered and cracked in a smile like a potato bust in roasting.

It was the very day after I was there that a tree fell on Mr. O’Leary and killed the poor man entirely. With his sons he had been back chopping in the bush. In falling a maple tree lodged on the limb of a large elm. The boys left it suspended thus, and went on to chop a tree standing near at hand. The thud of their next fall was so great that it shook the maple free; and it fell, crushing their father to death.

Of course, there was a wake at the O’Leary’s. The wind of the news was enough for me; and, with the fall of night, I slipped over to the house of the dead to see the doings.

“*Gand e tha hawn, Pat* (how are ye, Paddy)?” the widow asked me kindly as I went into the house.

“*Slanger a manugouth* (all right thank’ee),” I replied, doffing my caubeen.

Then down on my knees I went before the body. My heart was fluttering like a little bird in your hand with fear Jimmie would jump out at me; but I let on to be saying my prayers.

The rough pine coffin lay lidless on a bed in the corner of the ground floor of the cabin. It was a sedate and mournful meeting. With faces long drawn-out, and solemn looking as owls, the men stood lining the walls, uttering pious sighs and, betimes, scratching their polls. The women mourners sat on benches, and every few moments one of them would run her fingers through her hair and shriek out: “Oh o o oh oh! . . . Poor Jimmie!” Her body rocked to and fro as the wail gradually died down. At the end of it she would fold her shawl again across her breast. Betimes of the wailings, the men talked of crops and kine; and glancing now and again toward the body, in low guttural tones, made complimentary comments on the life, ancestry and character of the deceased. On entering the room of the dead, the mourner first knelt before the bier to say a prayer for Jimmie’s

soul; and then a drop of drink was taken. There was tobacco, snuff and whiskey in plenty. Pipes passed from mouth to mouth, and, in the flickering light of the candles, a haze hung in the room like the mist over a plowed field in the plover season.

A queer little old woman came in, all bent double; and after she knelt before the body, she swallowed a tidy drop of poteen, and was given the honor of a chair. Someone thrust a freshly-filled pipe into the ashes and passed it to her.

“God and Mary bless his soul and the souls of all the dead,” she sighed; and seated in comfort at her ease, she withdrew like a turtle within the privacy of her shawl.

The woman was short and dusk like a cold winter’s day; and she needed a pitch-dark night to make her good looking. Mary Doyle went about the countryside taking care of sick folk and minding babies. She got a trifle for attending funerals because she was a special hand at keening. Devil a pinch of sorrow had she in her heart for the dead man in his going. The face of her was enough to sour a crock of cream.

The keen, which is a mournful ballad, has four feet to the line as sung in the Irish tongue; and it is only a diversion that makes an end to the number of its verses. Its general purpose is to excite pity, compassion, or hate; and to my mind it is specially effective when used to curse and blast the cruel and treacherous English. In spirit, both the keen and the wake itself, are utterly and entirely pagan. And why Mother Church let such rites get mixed up with the burial of her Christian dead is beyond me. The Irish keen speaks only in terms of unqualified grief; it has a deep and hopeless melancholy at its basis; and finds no place for the joy of the blessed resurrection. In a low tone Mary Doyle began the funeral song:

Cold and silent is his bed!
Och hone!

*Damp is the dew of night,
The sun brings warmth
And dries the dew.
But his heart will stay cold,
Machree!*

*Cold and silent is his repose!
He is gone forever.
He will return no more.
Cold and silent is his grave!
Och hone, Machree!*

The keener clapped her hands and rocked her body back and forth as the dirge stretched itself out in weird and melancholy repetition. One after another the other women joined in as a chorus; and their long drawn-out, sobbing wails and piercing shrieks rent the night air. Between whiles, a pipe passed along the benches from woman to woman. The creatures were enjoying themselves immensely.

The keening died down as a fresh group of neighbors arrived and attended to their religious duties. Among them was my boss, Martin Kelly, who had enjoyed a lift getting over with his bad foot. The corpse and Martin were boys from the same parish in the old sod. Yet for years back they had never met but the din of their noise destroyed the place, and, in parting, their sticks usually shook at one another. Only recently there had been a bitter riot between them touching the price of the O'Leary heifer.

Martin rose from his knees with tears of sorrow in his eyes. There was something truly affecting as the man stood, nodding his head solemnly, looking long into the face of his dead neighbor.

“Ah me!” said Martin Kelly, “Jimmie O'Leary was a fine man. Ah! Jimmie makes a pretty corpse!”

Then placing his rough hand on the pallid forehead, Martin sobbed out:

“Ah! cold as death is Jimmie's head!”

There are old cart-wheel tracks in every man's brain, and his thoughts slide into familiar ruts without his let or hindrance. As Martin turned

sedately from the bier to take his place in the crowd, the old fire sparkled in his eyes, and, with a toss of his head, he exclaimed:

“But colder was the living heart of him!”

Pete O’Leary, the dead man’s eldest son, leapt in the air like a goat. In the wink of an eye, Martin and he were hoisting their chins into each other’s faces. Pete, who was a chunky young fellow, made a smart pass at Martin’s jaw, but failed to make connections. Martin was an older man and a cripple; but he was slim and long bodied. Quick as a flash, he brought his skull down crack, with a vicious butt hitting Pete’s face on the line where the eyebrows grow. It was a knock-out puck he gave him; and down Pete went to kiss the floor boards.

Trailing his bad foot and coat along the floor, Martin shouted:

“May the devil sweep all the O’Learys together!”

Pete’s wife threw her shawl off and rushed screaming to put the prick of youth into the pride of the O’Learys.

“Holy Mary! Pity my heart to be married to a good-for-nothing-at-all!” the woman exclaimed as she set upon the wounded man and belabored him onto his feet again.

The O’Learys did then be letting manners into Martin Kelly with their sticks; and shellalaghs and wallopers came smartly into action. The women bawled themselves hoarse directing the fray, and men were running about with cracked pates, themselves roaring out they were killed entirely. A fat, little fellow on our side was giving blood like a stuck pig; but the O’Leary faction also had plenty of blood to drink. It was a roaring ruction; and everyone felt afterwards it had been highly complimentary to the corpse we were waking.

The arrival of Jimmie’s cousins bearing an elegant pig hot-roasted from a spit made a sudden diversion that broke up the brawl. Four men were bearing the savory beast on a litter; and the way of the procession was lit by lanterns made by sticking candles through broken bottoms into the necks of bottles. My heart beat like a watch with the delight of the smell of the roasted pig. I sat down on my heels, and kept a cat’s eye on the victuals. Meat and drink were ordained by custom and convenient at a wake. Knives, platters, and the salt stood ready at hand to welcome to the board fatty messes that gladdened the hearts of the mourners into merry talk and stirred up cheerful music as the singers bolted the cracklings and tender meats, and sucked sweet juices out of the bones of the beast. After gorging ourselves,

we wiped our hands on an old towel that was passed around; and to comfort themselves, the men had another drink anon. I curled myself up out in the stable and had forty winks.

In the heel of the evening there came from the direction of the whiskey barrel and its dipper the thumping and squeaking of a fiddle. An old musician scraped away on one or two strings of a fiddle as battered looking as himself. His lean body swayed with his bowing; but the stamp of the man's foot made him the master of the house. Dickens a man or lass in the cabin but began shovelling away with heel and toe! It was Jimmie's daughter Molly that led the spree. What a hub-bub and a clatter! It was enough to hoist the corpse out of the coffin to hear them dancing a four-hand reel.

"Oh o o o oh! Poor Jimmie! Is he so soon forgotten?" wailed Mary Doyle, who was too old and stiff for dancing.

Faith no! Poor Jimmie was not forgotten. The coffin was fetched forward and leaned bolt upright in the chimney corner that the corpse might be observing what was going forward in his honor. The girls bobbed curtsies to the dead man as they tripped by; and some of them asked Jimmie for a dance. Every now and then, he was offered a drop of the hard stuff. During the course of the evening, Martin kneeled down before the fire to redden his baccy pipe by thrusting it into the ashes; and made final peace with his fellow countryman by sticking the stem of it into the dead man's mouth. They made a night till morning of it,—what with drinking, keening, dancing and other tastes of diversion.

By the dawning, the mourners felt cold and stiff, after spending the night seeing Jimmie through the first heel of his long journey; and they were not wishful to burn up much daylight over the dead body of a man who had been called out of the way into glory. As a final mark of respect, bright and early in the morning, the coffin was hoisted on the stout shoulders of the men, who, changing off as the miles slowly went by, bore it at long last, and by the longest route, to its grave up the steep boreen at Centreville. Most willingly did the whole countryside augment the toils of their tired bodies by trailing and straggling after the bier, wailing and chanting their griefs.

During the wake, a tall young girl had sung us a keen of the Cripple Boy in the time of The Troubles, which brought tears to every eye. The deep hood of her dark-blue cloth cloak flung back on her shoulders bared the raven-black hair of a Munster peasant girl. She sobbed the boy's farewell to his old mother as he told her:

*“At the seige of Ross did my father fall.
At Gorrie, my loving brothers all.
I’m going to Wexford to take their place
To free my nation and my race.”*

Then, soft and low, she followed the tramp of his brogues to the church to make his confession to the holy father. The tune seemed to take the natural gait of its subject:

*The boy, he entered the empty hall,
What a dismal sound makes his light footfall!
In a silent chamber, dull and bare,
Sat a vested priest in a lonely chair.
The youth, he knelt to tell his sins,
At CONFITEOR DEO, the youth begins,
At MEA CULPA he struck his breast,
In broken murmurs, he tells the rest.
“I have no hatred against living things,
I love my country above my king.
So bless me, father, and let me go
To die if God has ordained it so.”
The priest said naught . . .
With sparkling eye, the youth looked up.
The robes fell off, and in scarlet there
Sat a yeoman captain in a fiery glare.*

Her voice rose in a wail as the keener told of the heavy-booted soldiers dragging the youth from the altar to be hanged and quartered.

A dirge like that was as a tuning fork in my youth to strike the true note of Irish feeling. In the heart of every Celt whose bare feet had trod on Irish soil there was a hatred of English rule—not of England herself, mark you, nor of the English people—but a black-hearted hatred of English rule in Ireland so sizzling hot that it scalded the blood streams. The causes of Ireland’s bitterness and woes may be arguable, of course; but not with any profit by men of Irish blood whose emotions have been aroused. Nothing then is, but feeling makes it so. [Holy, jumping, suffering cats!—old John Trueman would say to that.] In my boyhood days, every emigrant ship brought to Canada the seeds of poisonous, ancient strifes; and it is the merciful providence of God that such wickedness and bigotry failed to thrive long in the sweet, virgin soil of the most tolerant country in the world.

But in their short day they made an ineffaceable impression on the pioneer life of the Ontario countryside.

Revolt was endemic in Ireland throughout the last century, and English rule was maintained in the island by the constabulary and the military—ably assisted by the esculent, farinaceous tuber. The police and the garrisons cowed the spirit of the populace, and an ill-balanced diet of potato weakened the resisting power of the Irish Celt.

Yet in view of the large Celtic Irish migration into British America in those days, it must be apparent to everyone that Canada could not have survived as a British kingdom had it not been for the sincere loyalty that grew up in Irish-Catholic hearts toward the struggling young country and her English queen. The truth is man is capable of a divided allegiance. He can be an Irish rebel and at the same time a loyal Canadian subject of the king. As with the saddle-bags of the Methodist circuit rider, there may be two separate compartments to the heart. In Canada, and as a Canadian, Paddy Slater never found any trouble loving both his country and his king; because in Canada, the crown stands for nothing less than the decent and respectable public ideals of a kindly-minded and democratic people.

Of course, it was old Victoria Regina that brought this mystery to pass. For sixty odd years the great queen reigned as truly a goddess in the minds of the small children along the St. Lawrence and its great feeding lakes as had the divine Mother Hathor, in old time, in the minds of the Egyptians of the Upper and Lower Nile. Regina was all powerful, and she dwelt remote as a goddess should. The queen stood for every possible sort of goodness. The children prayed for her, and in diverse ways we prayed to her. Her face may not have launched a thousand ships, but it was the face on every coin a youngster clutched in his gummy fist; and in her name, and for her honor, generations of Canadian children had a glorious holiday that ushered in the most beautiful season in the Canadian year. Her transcendent virtues may have been a myth, but as true as God's word, they firmly established a great kingdom in America, which circumstance, as you'll admit, is one of the wonders of the world. Young folk nowadays read snippy things about the old queen, but old men and women will feel what I am trying to say!

So it happened that for years Paddy Slater was a stout tory in Canada, and, in the man's day, a great supporter was I of Old John A.^[8] Yet I found on several occasions that my loyal sentiments would not stand a sea voyage. No sooner did Paddy's feet feel the cobbles of Dublin and the cry of caller herring strike his ears, than the heart of the man gave a leap like a goat, and

he became an Irish patriot and rebel again.^[9] *Boie yuhd, ma vourneen! Erin go bragh!* (Victory to you, my darling! Ireland for ever!) Putting a conquered people to the sword—as the Jewish Jehovah sometimes directed—would have been a deal more kindly than crowding dispossessed peasants into rough ground like Connemara or obliging an entire subject race to live through centuries in the dire misery and carking poverty of the mud tenant hovels of Ireland. The pig, the barley, the butter and the poultry went to the towns and to England to pay the rent; whilst the Irish tenant lived on potatoes and a drop of the buttermilk. Even the year of the great famine saw a heavy export of food products from Ireland. To the great mass of the inhabitants, the British crown has always stood in Ireland for misrule and oppression.

^[8] Rt. Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald, K.C.M.G., D.C.L., LL.D., leader of the Conservative party and Prime Minister of Canada, 1878-1891.

^[9] There is evidence among his papers that the late Mr. Slater made several trips across the ocean, sailing from Montreal on the Grecian, Pomeranian and other boats of the Allan line.

Ireland has made an unhappy front-shop window display of British rule. However, let us thank heaven the arrogant Irish Celt has never had a chance to found an empire for himself—and disgrace us all entirely.

CHAPTER VII.

WHISTLING HILL



ow times change! Nowadays, it is a fat Methodist who comes with a motor hearse to take our bodies to the graveyard; and if the dead Catholic is an elderly man, among the pallbearers you will notice one or two Orangemen looking a trifle awkward. With a sharp eye to business, that undertaker-man sends me a fresh calendar every New Year's; and he has the politeness to mark each fast day with the picture of a little fish.

At Martin Kelly's, every day was a fish day for me. In the spring spawning season, he had bought him a wagon-box full of fish in the sucker run; but the salt had been a trifle late in coming for the curing. Even with a tasty bowl of boiled potatoes sitting beside it with their great brown coats on, let me explain that a piece of soggy bone-shot sucker makes a mean principal meal for the day. Not that Martin Kelly and his wife themselves ate much of the rotten fish. In those days, no matter how humble the Irish Catholic home, hired help and such like always ate at a separate table.

But at that, I made shift to get along on food that was better, perhaps, than Martin himself had eaten as a lad. In the morning, I had my macquashter;^[10] at the noon hour, came the boiled fish and potatoes; and for supper, I had some stirabout with a bowl of buttermilk. Fast days, however, were an extra trouble to me about the Kelly place. There was no clock or watch to tell the time; and, during the day, Martin, for that purpose, considered the place of the sun in the heavens. Before I sat down to eat on a fast day, the man's scruples for my conscience required that I point out to him a star in the heavens as evidence that night had actually come. Did you ever notice that stars have a way of shaking in the sky?

[10] Porridge cake.

I would probably have stayed on at the Kelly place, and grown up to cobble shoes through life, like other great thinkers, had it not been for the

wicked disposition of the O'Leary heifer. At an evening milking, the young cow was cross and uneasy because of an injured quarter. Perhaps I was a little rough in stripping her; at any rate, she measured her distances accurately and by stealth, and then she hit me a wicked kick in the pit of my stomach; a vicious puck it was, that knocked the wind clean out of me, and sent the milk pail flying. As I lay gasping for breath, Mrs. Kelly let a scream out of her at the loss of the good milk; and Martin promptly hauled me into the house by my lug to attend to my requirements. I was given a sound beating; and that night I went to bed without my stirabout.

It was in the full of the moon; and an empty stomach helps to rake up annoyances. No wonder it is a wrinkled, cynical face that leers in through windows in the quiet watches of the night. The man in the moon knows all about the joys and sorrows of the human kind. It is during his hours for riding the heavens that their young are born; and the silly creatures also do their love making in the pale moonlight. In the hour before the dawning, our worn bodies stiffen and our souls depart. The moon listens to the cries of the afflicted; and, like a ghostly father, hears the confessions of our tortured souls. And the bitterest of human heartaches, the moon man can tell you, are caused by the cruelty and injustice of those in authority.

Why, I asked him, should a lad be beaten because a cow kicked over the milk pail? I put a listening ear on myself and waited till the quietness down below was disturbed by Martin snoring fine and easy. No answer being forthcoming to my question, I tied my few things together with a cord, and dropped them through the window. I might have been stepping on eggs so gentle was my tread. I followed after them, and slipped away up the 3rd line, to let Martin Kelly beat his old pan and holler his head off in the morning. In the dint of my long journey, I was scared for awhile because I saw a man walking ahead of me; but I discovered at last it was only my shadow the full moon cast before me on that turning of the road.

At cock-crowing time, William Marshall found me sitting on the wash bench at his back kitchen door.

"I have run away, I have, Mr. Marshall," I told him, "because the man beat me for the cow kicking the pail over." And I showed him the swollen wheelts on my back.

"It's heart-scalded I am to be troubling you, sir; but if you'll let me stay with you, Mr. Marshall," I pleaded with him, "I'll be a good Catholic boy, and I'll work hard for you."

"Don't worry, Patrick, we'll see about that," he told me in a kindly tone.

“Oh! Mr. Marshall,” I cried, crossing myself, “if you only’ll keep me, naught will I ever do to hurt you!”

At breakfast time, Mr. Marshall and his wife were having a quiet talk on the side. Oh! me, Oh, my! those dainty, well-buttered slap-jacks soused in maple syrup!

“Indeed!” said Mrs. Marshall, in a louder tone, “it is not in our house we’ll ever begrudge a child the bite of bread he’ll be eating.”

“You’ll be a good boy, won’t you, Paddy?” she asked me pleasantly, “and you can be doing the chores at the school for Mr. Michael Hughes, and you might rid up his dirty cabin.”

The tongue on that woman did be so soft and sweet that she did be drawing the secrets of the world out of men and little children.

As I lay stretching myself on the broad of my back after the cozy sleep of the night, the thought of the schoolmaster came to scatter the fairness of the morning. So, with an old broom on my shoulder and much fear and trembling in my heart, I set out bright and early to make a call on Mr. Michael Hughes, the local schoolmaster. With any ugly, hard job on hand, I have always figured that nothing much is gained by just burning up daylight. The ground was frozen hard.

A few years before, the settlers had got together and put up a log schoolhouse on the townline, a tidy step down from the Marshall farm. One foot-loose itinerant after another had turned his hand to school teaching, and earned a few shillings the quarter for each scholar who trudged down to his classes to get a little learning. But bright shillings being a scarce commodity in Mono, the schoolmaster shifted round weekly from family to family, fetching the cream of local gossip with him, and getting bed and board to eke out the trifling cash that came his way. And, at the table, the housewives usually found that the man of letters was a man of parts. The younger children were somewhat regular in their attendance; but, in the late fall and winter time, big clumsy youths as a rule went also to the local school to learn to write and figure. Many of them had hair showing on the face, and the diseases were common among them for which scratching and sulphur are the principal remedies. They came packed with a loutish devilment that sometimes overtaxed the strength and courage of the schoolmaster. One after another the teachers had been beaten up, and had left for other fields of effort.

In the spring of 1846, Michael Hughes had drifted into the township, out of nowhere seemingly, and had tackled the job of teaching the Mono school. His was the tall, lank figure of a man, neither young nor old, but of five and thirty, which is, of course, a sere old age to the mind of any child. His body was as lithe as a gad and as supple as the wind. His features were cleanly chiselled on fine, yet robust lines, and a soft, silken-like beard hid a mouth that was gentle, even to weakness. He thrashed civility under the skins of the big yokels that fall; and so established himself securely as master of the school. Old Hickory Mick earned himself a terrible reputation among the plow-boys of Mono as a disciplinarian and wielder of the cane.

The business of boarding around as a nuisance to the farmers' wives did not fit in with his notions of comfortable living; and the master promptly solved the problem by moving into a small log house that had recently been built on a curiously steep boreen hard by to the west of the school. There was little household trumpery about, but sufficient for his purpose. The parents of his pupils paid most of the school fees with food and firing. The steepness of his land was such that no plowman has ever turned any of it over. Years after, the little plot was occupied by Jimmie Buchanan, a cobbler who kept bees; but in the master's time it was covered by a scrubby growth and crowned by a gnarled old thorn-tree. Folk called his place Whistling Hill after *Knock-na-feadalea*, in County Down. All the children knew the master's was a gentle place, and greatly haunted by the little people. One Hallow'eve night, three separate passers-by saw lights, like tiny rishes, dancing on the hillside below his cabin; and there were soft, piping sounds also heard about the place, like the small, thin whistle a drake gives after ducking himself in a pond.

I found the one door of the schoolmaster's house slightly ajar; and, sticking my head in, I saw the man's back as he stooped over the fireplace, cooking his breakfast in a big, black, frying pan. With the broom still clutched in my hands, I stole in, and quietly sat down on a short log. I kept my mouth tight shut to hold my heart from popping out.

In a moment's time, Old Hickory Mick swung round, holding the long-handled spider aloft. He gave his head a startled jerk in the air as he spied me sitting there. He looked like to eat me all up without a grain of salt.

"You little red-headed son of Belial!" he shouted at me, "how dare you set foot in my house without knocking at the door?"

"Oh, sir!" said I, "that's not my name. I'm Paddy Slater, sir; and I've come down," said I, "to look after things at the school, and to rid up your

dirty old cabin, sir.”

The man froze me with a hard stare.

“By the hole of my coat!” he exclaimed, after thinking the thing over, “Who gave you instructions to come down here?”

“Oh, sir!” said I, “it was Mrs. Marshall, sir! She said I might stay at her place if I’d rid up your dirty old cabin, sir.”

There was a pause.

“Are you frightened?” the man asked me, screwing his mouth up with a wry smile.

“Yes, sir,” said I, “I’m scared stiff you will beat me with a stick. But she said I was to rid up your dirty old cabin, sir. So I just upped and inned.”

“Well, Paddy,” the man told me after a further pause, “the Greeks had a brave word for a lad who feared a danger, yet strode out to meet it.”

“Yes, sir.”

“And speaking of words,” he thundered at me, “it’s a careless little liar you are to call my house a dirty old cabin!”

“Yes, sir.”

“It’s not an old, dirty cabin, I’ll have you know, because it is only recently built.”

“Yes, sir.”

“And it is not a dirty cabin, I’ll have you know, because it is sweet and clean—though perhaps a trifle untidy.”

“Yes, sir,” said I.

“And it is not a cabin at all, I’ll have you know, because it has boards on the floor.”

“Yes, sir,” said I.

He shook the pan at me.

“I keep a stick to beat careless, little liars with!”

“Yes, sir,” said I.

“And I’ll have you know, no person comes into my house like an old sow rooting for swill,” he told me. “Get out the door,” he ordered me, speaking very stern like, “and come in with your manners on.”

So I upped and outed; and then I knocked good and loud on his door.

“Oh! good morning,” said the man to me, “I thought you would have run away.”

“Good morning, sir,” said I, touching my cap, “my name is Paddy Slater, sir; Mrs. Marshall sent me down to do you little services, sir.”

“Come in, you unlucky penny,” said the master with a little snorty chuckle, “come in; and, in the absence of anything better at hand, sit yourself down on that short log.”

“Very kind of Mrs. Marshall, indeed,” said he. “She is a very charming lady, indeed, is Mrs. William Marshall.”

“Yes, sir,” said I. “I’d die for her,” said I.

“And perhaps,” he continued, “you might like the price of your trouble for coming down so early in the morning. How would you like a taste of these delectable little trout?” he enquired, poking the pan under my nose.

“Oh! sir,” said I, “I am a growing boy.”

“Very neatly put,” the man remarked.

So clearing the corner of the table, Mr. Hughes used a sheet of *The Globe* newspaper as a cover for two plates.

“Ah! ha!” he told me, “you see how we do things among the hills of Mono:

*The globe is as round as a ball.
Yet we dine on the Globe
In this bachelor’s hall.*

“Draw to! draw to!” he urged me, “and salt and pepper to your taste and liking.”

It was a case of heel, toe, down they go—heads and all.

“If you dine often with me, Paddy Slater, you will soon become a man of parts,” the master informed me, “and to start your education, let me instruct you that such speckled beauties as these were first cooked by Venus with her own hands on the hills of Helicon; whence comes the pretty legend that a mess of them works a love charm.”

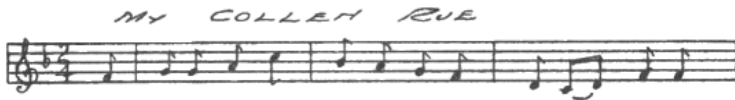
Michael reddened his pipe in the ashes; and the man blew tidy smoke rings as we sat talking and conversing together. It was heart-lifting to Paddy

to be sitting there in the company of the great man without a care or trouble in the world.

On a sudden, the master leapt up.

“Let us be off on our way to the school in the name of God!” he exclaimed.

And the master and I then set off to fix the fire at the schoolhouse. He was in fine spirits, but was singing a mournful song:



*But drearily and wearily
The snow is drifting by;
And drearily and wearily
It bears my lonely sigh,
Far from wild Niagara's roar
To Inny's sparkling wave of blue,
To the homestead in the faery glen,
And gentle Colleen Rue.*

He was a spirited man, and as straight as a candle. To keep up with him, I took grown-up strides beside him, thinking I was now myself quite a man entirely.

It was in this wise that I fell in with Old Hickory Mick, and I served the master faithfully for the next five years. I was the only confidant the solitary man had; and he opened his heart and mind freely to me because he knew I liked him. Yet, to the day we buried him at Centreville, his past remained a mystery so far as I was concerned. My own fancy has always been that Michael Hughes had clean forgotten it himself. Everything in his life story stood out sharp and clear back to a jaunting car ride in Dublin town; but at that point the thread of memory seemed to have broken. The man brought a wealth of learning and personality with him from behind that veil of oblivion; but so far as his personal conscious life back behind was concerned, he knew no more about it than does a babe at its mother's breast. After the fat undertaker gets me, I pray, Father in heaven, that, on my awakening, no such loss of memory may by any chance overtake poor, old

Paddy Slater. The thought is surely cold comfort to me that my spirit beyond may have perhaps forgotten the poor mortal here below.

Michael Hughes paid me in full the price of all my trouble. The man took many pains to teach me. He may have been an indifferent teacher at times over at the log schoolhouse. The material on which he wrought was often coarse and discouraging. From what I saw of his teaching over there, he did seem at times, however, to have the faculty of arousing the interest and holding the attention of the little children. It is true they got their knowledge in small doses; but there was plenty of pep and dash while he kept them at it. And what he gave them was actually theirs for keeps. At the first sign of listlessness, he promptly bundled the small bodies out to tumble about in the fresh air. In his crude and simple theory, the teacher is wasting his time unless he actually holds the pupil's fixed attention. And, in his opinion, twenty minutes was a long time for a young child or an old man to keep his undivided attention fixed on any one thing. In any event, for the first year, I got my instructions at Whistling Hill and not in the classes at the schoolhouse.

"You are very backward, Paddy," he told me, "in your book learning. You are too talkative by far, and you are an annoyance to me in the school. I shall set you your tasks at home. You'd gain very little at the school, anyway. As well might I try coaxing the stars out of the sky into my hand, Paddy, as try pounding sense into those dunderheads."

The first care of a boy like me, he told me, should be to think and speak his thoughts clearly in the simple words of the English tongue. And to do that, the boy must know what his words mean and be the master of many of them.

"I will have no gabble-guts about Whistling Hill," declared Old Hickory Mick. "Tighten up the belt of your tongue!"

The master put me under a rigid discipline; and had great patience with me because he knew I was trying desperately to please him. Ten new fresh words a day—to taste them by rolling them on my tongue, to pronounce them aright, to know their precise shades of meaning, and to use them freely and naturally in conversation—that was my daily task. The whole matter is clear to me now. The human brain cannot reason without words. A man cannot pasture even on his own thoughts save with the use of words. In a year's time, I could quote almost every statement made by Christ on earth. I was learning English grammar, not by committing stupid rules to memory, but by hearing the language correctly spoken. I could, in time, labor through

the stilted, crabbed editorials in the semi-weekly *Globe* newspaper; though I preferred greatly the new story of *Dombey & Son*, which was printed as a serial when not crowded out by other stupid matters. While I was with Michael Hughes, I was carried on some way also into other things; and for a poor orphan boy, I have never felt that my education was sadly neglected.

“One does not get learning in a school for its own sweet sake,” Michael told me one day, years afterward, as we were fishing in the creek for trout.

“All one gets there,” he continued, “is merely the tools that enable the brain to work. Now I would have you observe,” he told me, after a sharp look at his line, “that fishing for these little trout is a real education for any person, young or old. The fisherman, as you observe, gets a splendid training in patience and perseverance. At the same time, the mind is getting a rest and is recreating itself. [Take ahoid, you little devil!] And such an education is practical because its rewards become gross and palpable in the frying pan. [Quit wriggling, my little beauty!].”

“It is possible, Paddy,” he told me, “for the human brain to be so crowded with facts and the trifling gear of knowledge that no space has been left there for sane thinking to be done. Some very learned men, Paddy, have brains like a jackdaw’s nest.”

And he may have had the soul of the matter in him.

“What is the use of much of this knowledge, anyway?” he asked me, as he disembowelled a fat, juicy worm.

“The end of knowledge is to get understanding; and the end of all such getting is to realize, Paddy, that a poor mortal here below can never really know anything surely. We live, lad, among shadows, and our lives are compounded of our feelings and our hopes.”

His was a quaint and curious character. He was neat and particular about his person; and for long spells, he would be very steady in his habits. For weeks at a time, the man’s soul would romp like a laughing child on sunny hillsides; and then suddenly it would betake itself off, to lurk for days in gloomy caverns of dripping, chilling darkness. I got to know the signs that such a spell was coming on the man. First thing, he would go off his food. Then he would stride in and out the house and up and down the road as though the devil was at his heels. And the end of such an attack of the nerves was always a drunken spree at the tavern at Mono Mills.

The first of these excursions I saw, I took very much to heart. I met one of the Allen boys driving a bobsleigh up the townline.

their hearts go out to their enemies; they think every woman delightfully pretty and they shed tears over the hurt feelings of a little dog. They moan and groan because nobody loves them.

Michael insisted on singing a song:

*Whiskey! soul of revelry,
Low in the mud you sent me
Possessed with all your devilry,
I challenge foes to beat me.*

*Behold my coat to shreds is done,
My neck cloth down the wind has run—
But I'll forgive the deeds you've done,
If you to-morrow meet me!*

*What quarrels dire we both have had
This year of sorrow sable!
But oh! my bounding heart is glad
To see you crown the table.*

*Dear fondling of the nuptial nest,
My father kind, my mother blest,
My upper coat, my inner vest,
I'll hold you while I'm able!*

Mr. Murphy, the tavern keeper, came in and spoke to me.

“Faith happy I’d be, little lad, if you could get Old Hickory out of the place and keep him away from the tavern forever. But I know the man. He’ll not budge out the door this night, unless he is thrown out. Run away home! The drink is already starting to gnaw at their innards; and they will soon be rough and quarrelsome.”

One of the Irish kings from Adjala Township was busy singing Colleen Rue. Michael was insisting that the man shut up.

“Have some of his friends come for him in the morning,” Mr. Murphy asked me, as I set off for home. “It’s a sick man they’ll be finding!”

Mr. Marshall sent the bobsleigh over next morning to bring Michael back to Whistling Hill. The groans of him were filling the whole tavern. Hunched down in a chair, the man looked as weak as a wet rag. His face was

chalky and dripping with clammy moisture. Mrs. Murphy was coaxing hot green tea into his rebellious stomach.

“Oh! God have mercy! Woman, I am a sick man! Oh! God, I am a sick woman!” he wailed, holding his pain-wracked head, and retching without throwing up the rubbish.

“Yes! cry out, you scoundrel!” she scolded him. “Sure, a bawling calf always finds its mother first! Hear him cry! You act like a woman having a baby. ‘Never again!’ the creature screams as the down-bearing pains strike her! ‘Holy Mary, ever Virgin! Never again!’ But with the first change of the wind, the silly thing forgets the whole matter entirely.”

Poor Michael got a swallow of tea down him.

“And you will be up to your tricks again, too, Michael Hughes,” she warned him. “But don’t be coming back here disgracing a respectable public house!”

We bundled Michael up and drove him home. Mrs. Murphy slipped me a small flask as we were leaving.

“Don’t let him smell it or it will sicken the man entirely,” said she. “But put a few drops into his tea on the side like, to-day; it will help to numb the gnawing of his innards.”

It was a miserable time the man had while his body was purging itself of the poisons; and Michael always came out of a debauch with a humbled heart and a chastened spirit. He consoled himself for a week afterward by reading the Georgics of old Virgilius Maro, and wearied me with the sound of them.

In the course of my duties at Whistling Hill, I got to know a lot about this business of whiskey drinking. I am not, of course, referring to the steady, sedate, daily drinking of hard liquor, which becomes a regular habit with many men, some of whom live to a great age and go to their graves as respected and successful members of their communities. A true history of the British Isles would demonstrate that every high office under the crown has been occupied, one time or another, by a gentleman who made a regular practice of consuming over twenty ounces of Scotch whiskey a day—generals in charge of armies in the field, judges of high appellate courts, prime ministers—is it necessary to name them? My concern was not with a man who took alcohol in such regular dosage that his body tolerated it as a food.

Michael Hughes was not a tippler. He never kept a drop of liquor about the house; and at ordinary times the very smell of it was unpleasant to his nostrils. The condition of his nerves seemed to create at intervals a craving which he fought for days, but which usually overcame him. Like a journeyman barber of to-day, he usually held out till a Friday. And when he drank, he poured hard liquor down on the quivery and irritated nerves of a cross and empty stomach. A rebellion promptly broke out. In consequence, Michael Hughes was a drunkard; and in the end, he broke his neck by falling through an open trap-door in a tavern.

He would have come to a sad end at an earlier date had Mrs. Murphy not given me some sound advice.

“Keep him away from here as long as you can,” she urged me. “When you see the fit coming on, dope a spoonful of brandy into his tea. That will give him a false appetite. Then feed him thick pease soup and put butter into it with a heavy hand,” the kind woman advised me. “A man with a good scum of oil on his belly lining can drink a whole company under the table.”

Which I still think was expert advice. And speaking of destructive and perverse habits and appetites, a fine young lady teacher in the same school section killed herself, years afterward, by eating sour pickles and chewing chalk.

CHAPTER VIII.

BOB O'NEW PITSLIGO



AND in another way, I got bonus pay for the trouble I had in the schoolmaster's service at Whistling Hill. From that humble job of doing fatigue duties for him, came a reflected authority over the other youngsters that was as refreshing as a whiff of smelling salts to my young Celtic nostrils. In the inner cockles of his heart, any Irishman dearly loves to be a boss; and it is a heavy-handed taskmaster he usually makes. Watch him strutting on a policeman's beat; listen to the talk of the man, and observe the way he swings the stick of the law. May the Good Lord deliver all poor creatures from an Irish factory foreman or section boss! But, of course, if they get sick or fall down entirely, the man, being Irish, may become tender-hearted. What arbitrary creatures have been produced by a race that for centuries has been in spiritual revolt against all authority! Even if I had to split the wood to warm the children at the school, I got a deal of satisfaction out of the sweet, tasty thought that the whole kit and dice of them were being ruled by Old Hickory Mick and me.

And my heart was fortified by the wholesome, friendly good humor of the Marshall farm. Mrs. Marshall was as kind to me as a mother. And, after a fashion, I was greatly taken with little Charlie Marshall. The lad was a tow-haired youngster, much younger than myself—in fact, as much as seven months younger. And then, of course, he lacked my wide experience in the world, being born as he was on a farm, and only once, since a child in arms, having gone as far as Toronto.

Built with the labor of toil-worn hands, it was a big, sound, wholesome thing, that pioneer farm about which Charlie and I romped and played together. Each winter's work had brought fresh acres under the plow. The young apple trees already gave timid promise of paring bees bye and bye; and there was livestock a-plenty about the place. Their first yoke of oxen, stall fed over winter on mangolds and oaten meal, had brought awhile back the tidy sum of £23, Halifax currency; and chunky farm horses now filled

the places of those laboring cattle. To William Marshall and his wife, their farm was a constant source of deep family pride as something worthwhile already done; and within their honest kindly hearts glowed bright hopes of great things yet to be. In the fancy of William and Nancy Marshall, their rough clearing in the backwoods of Canada would grow with the years into the landed estate of a proud Irish family. And, on a pioneer farm, there must, of course, be a son to bring such fond hopes to a rich fruition. And Charlie was the only boy in the family.

Such an only boy on a farm usually has a lonely time of it. The men folk are too busy to be bothered with him. His little sisters are a tag-after and a nuisance. And the women about the house keep calling to him to close the doors. No one took the time to probe into the curious ideas and odd humours of a healthy young lad, who ate a-plenty. But I proved a good listener. So for awhile, I filled a great want in the heart of the quiet, self-centred little boy, who boasted stoutly to me of his marvellous feats in uprooting great trees and upsetting buildings. Charlie had been driven to live very much to himself, and, as a result, had constructed a beautiful dreamland of make-believe, where he had the power to do anything he wished and to get anything he desired. And we all, at times, play at the same game. The books we enjoy are the ones that do our day-dreaming for us. Stories of wild adventure appeal to timid little clerks growing bald-headed and fat-bellied in stuffy offices, and cynical erotic novels are for readers whose lives have been colorless and repressed. But Charlie Marshall went further than most of us; he carried his world of imagination with him into his world of fact.

About the time I first went up to Mono Township, Mr. Bell, who had a wood-turning shop on Victoria Street, in Toronto, had recently invented a reaping machine, which he had on exhibition, and was offering for sale for £49, Halifax currency. Men up-country, who had never seen the Bell reaper, were scratching their polls at the possibilities of this great labor-displacing discovery of the age. Charlie Marshall's young mind was greatly impressed, and, with a few rusty bolts and a short board or two, he was busy fabricating a machine that would, he told me, make Bell's reaper look like sixpence. And, though I failed to grasp them, he insisted like every inventor in explaining his ideas to me in great detail. Since then, I have driven the distance of clean round the world, with one horse or another, on the excuse of getting spare parts for farm machinery; but I cannot yet grasp the ideas in the heads of their makers, who put cheap iron castings in the vital parts of a machine built for heavy field service. As the maker of a farm implement, I fancy little Charlie Marshall's chief lack was the two pots of paint, one red and the other green.

There was a little four-year-old in the Marshall family; and Betty had laid claim to me, will or no, the second day I was in Mono. The child was standing by the kitchen doorway, swinging on one foot and with the corner of her pinny in her mouth. She had evidently been looking me over, but the first time I took notice of her existence, her eyes were on the floor in that demure, shy way women sometimes have before they lose their milk teeth.

“You no scratch—me . . . Paddy?” she asked me, as I passed out with the water pail.

“No . . . why?”

“You a cat—lick!”

“Come on, little girl,” I said, taking her hand, “come on and help me get the water.”

After the pail hoisted itself up, I treated her to a cup of the cold, clear water.

“Shame on you!” said I, “sticking your nose in the cup. How can I drink after you,” I asked her—“you sticking your nose in the cup?”

I could see that was a poser for her; and I rinsed the cup out carefully three times, before treating myself to a drink.

“Oh ho!” she hollered, “your nose sticks in, too!”

And I was hauled around straightaway to see the broken crockery where her mud pies were made. I did not sample her wares, but if I were giving her a reference as a cook general, I would say that she seemed a swift and confident worker, but a little wasteful in handling her supplies.

Betty was a winsome child, and, in proof of it, I can produce a faded photograph of her young ladyship at the age of six. There was a copper sheen to her little pigtails, and her eyes were then a true blue. Of course, getting a likeness taken in those days was a full-dress parade, and the judicious will not be deceived by the extreme neatness of Elizabeth Ann in her Sunday-go-to-meeting best. The laces of her shoes, let me tell you, were usually dragging, and her drawers would often have been the better for a hinch. Her body was as supple as a rope, and she threw it around with an abandon which held bruises and scratches of no account. The bodily agility some children have can only be explained by reference to universal joints. Betty was a fearless little dare-devil, always getting in the way, and scampering out in front of an excitement. Hers was a fiery little temper that did not dissolve in tears.

Times without number the child had been warned to quit riding astride the old black sow, and one morning the pig put a stop to the practice by dumping Elizabeth Ann into a soft, juicy wallow hole.

“You are a bad little girl,” I told her, as she sat scraping the mud off her.

“You no like me! . . . me no like you!” and quick as a flash she shed a shoe and flung it at me.

But it was a moist, little hand that was shoved into mine as the smiles suddenly played on the dimple again.

Betty had a gift of the gab, and her explosive spirit earned her many a smart spanking.

“Close your gabble, and hold your laddle!” Sarah Duncan would exclaim, as the child’s limber tongue wagged on incessantly.

The quiet of the Sabbath’s blessed rest was not broken in those days for the countrywoman by noisy parties of city friends driving up the lane with a hungry look in their children’s eyes. But the Reverend Mr. Berry, the Wesleyan Methodist minister, had the annoying habit, now and again, of bringing his dear helpmate and all the little Berries with him to his morning preaching appointment at the local meeting-house. And before the service, he would drive up our lane to let Mrs. Marshall see what she was in for. Of necessity, she invited the minister and his family to dinner. And, of course, the Rev. Mr. Berry told dear sister Marshall not to go to any special trouble. And, of course, Mrs. William Marshall knew, and the Rev. Mr. Berry and his wife, and all the little Berries knew—and the Stationing Committee of the Methodist Church—and all the world knew—that a Sunday dinner for a Methodist minister’s family was a formal and heavy affair with its chicken soup floating the dumplings, its two vegetables, and a large roast, followed by hot pies and puddings.

Many a Sunday morning, I caught a couple of hens on the run to wring their necks for the material good of the Methodist Connexion; and if the Methodist ministers are able to run heaven the way they try to run things down here, I sincerely hope these chickens will be counted to me for righteousness. On one Sunday visitation of this kind, little Betty, who was then rising six, helped me pick and shell a big mess of green field peas. The serving of the dinner was delayed owing to an unexpected after-meeting at the church; and the aroma of the kitchen had meanwhile stirred up lively yearnings in the stomachs of the Marshall children. Just as the spread started to come to the table, it suddenly occurred to the Rev. Mr. Berry that there

should be a short season of family worship. So we all pulled our chairs back from the table and knelt sedately as the minister led us in prayer. The reverend gentleman could be counted on to garnish every discourse with a reference to “the weary, wistful, waiting world,” and to work in a phrase about “the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds.” You know the type?

And after that came a bible-reading, in which king David told God about the bad disorder he had, which made his friends shun him and was rotting his bones. As we started to put the chairs back to the table, the Rev. Mr. Berry started off afresh on an extended news summary for God of all our local needs in a spiritual way.

Betty Marshall became quite weary with wistful waiting.

“Good Dod, mamma!” she exclaimed. “Is him going to pray again?”

Which remark sent an empty pinny from the family table. If Betty’s feet did not kick up a protest, it’s not day yet.

The next summer at the age of seven, Elizabeth Ann had her first spasm of philosophic doubt. The child waylaid me one morning on my way up from the stable.

“It’s a great liar you are, Paddy,” she accused me, “saying there are faeries.”

“Well,” I inquired, “what about it?”

“Sarah Duncan says there ain’t any!”

“How does the woman know?”

“She says she never saw any.”

“Well,” I replied, “there are lots of things old Sarah Duncan never saw. She never saw God, or the blessed angels, and yet she believes in them. She never saw the ghost down by the cedar swamp, and yet she is afraid to go by there in the dark.”

“Cross your heart, Paddy, are there faeries?” the child asked me.

“I’ll not be denying them,” I told her, “or the little people might let me fall down and hurt myself.”

“Why, Betty,” I went on earnestly, “the world wouldn’t get along at all without the faeries. It’s the faeries that keep the little birds and bees from getting lost. It’s a faery that teaches a little calf to bunt and wag its tail in

order to get the milk. Come down with me,” said I, “and I’ll show you the faeries at their work.”

As we entered the stable door, the swallows were skimming in and out from their clay nests stuck on the ceiling beams.

“Just look at that,” said I, “it’s Irish faeries that taught the birds to build their neat clay cabins up where everything is safe and dry.”

“Oh,” Betty questioned me, “but the swallows always did that?”

“Oh no!” I told her, “they couldn’t do that till the Irish came into the country and built the stables for them. And, of course,” I proceeded, “the faeries we brought with us from Ireland knew all about mud cabins and such like. . . .”

The old sow, Sally, had farrowed that morning, and I had just left her sprawled contentedly on her flank, with a mass of squirming black sucklings pulling at her dugs.

“Just look, Betty, at the faeries teaching the little pigs how to get their bellies full of milk,” I told the child.

“Oh! Dod, how many are there?” she exclaimed, as she hoisted herself on the side of the pen.

“Twelve,” said I, “and a runt. And each one knows offhand his own proper drinking place, and watch him fight for it. Now that,” said I, “must be the work of the faeries.”

“Why, Betty,” said I, “you wouldn’t be denying your own little faery? She comes to you when you are all alone, and tells you you are a bad little girl, and makes you feel sorry.”

“Well,” Betty confided to me, “I never right heard her talking, Paddy, but I do feel her whispering to me . . . ee.”

“There you are,” said I, “your own tiny pixy may be too small to be seen, but she’s round with you all the time, is your little Colleen Rue. Just leave old Sarah Duncan to mind babies,” I told her, “and come to Paddy Slater for reliable information about the little people.”

Time flew by like a bird on the wing. In the spring of 1850, Bob O’New Pitsligo came to the Marshall farm in Mono; and he stole away from me the heart of young Charlie Marshall. Two seemed company for them—but three a crowd. Bob was a black collie with tan markings, and the white collar on his neck stood out like the ruff on Queen Elizabeth in the old history book.

He was a collie pup of high degree, with but one year to his credit; but, as for seeing the world, the young dog could do some stout boasting. The best blood of Scotland, ye ken, flowed in his veins. James Duffus had brought the young dog out with him that spring from New Pitsligo, in Aberdeenshire; but the Scotsman tired quickly of farm conditions in the colony, and, on returning to Scotland that fall, Duffus had given the dog and the boy to one another because of the warm attachment that had grown up between them. It was a fast friendship that lasted till death parted them. The two were chums who knew no quarrelling; there was never anything between them to forgive or forget. Of course, the normal lifetime of a dog is but a brief space. He reaches maturity at eighteen months; at which time he has got his learning and his habits are formed; and the infirmities of old age creep upon him after the tenth year.

I say little as to what has come out of Aberdeenshire; because I find the Highland Scots well able to blow their own horns. Even their oats, they'll tell you, have more heft and are more nutritious than the chaff-like things we grow hereabouts. Yet it is a thing out of the ordinary, I'll admit, that the best beef cattle in the world, the Shorthorn and the Angus, were bred up to perfection in a rough shire that can also boast good dogs and many bonnie women. "Facts are chields that winna ding and 'durna be disputed."

The Scotch collie was the dog of the Highland shepherd; and a pure, honest celt was he. For centuries, his forebears held a gentle dominion over the timid, black-faced sheep in the North. Life in the open, during the nights of a thousand years beside the plaid, gave him a fine silken undercoat of thick fur. On his native heath, he knew one master only; and the very life of the dog hung on serving in an acceptable way the great, inscrutable, hairy-legged creature who was helpless and forlorn without him. Even on the Lord's Day, the Scotch collie took his shepherd to church; and he had the decency to put off private affairs and dog fighting until the psalms were sung and the benediction said. Centuries of such intimate, personal, working contact with dour shepherds, in a great quiet world of flocks and winds, subjected the young of the collie breed to a slow, stern process of selection under which the witless and the wayward died on the lonely heath, and did not live long enough to reproduce their kind. If a collie bitch let her love fancy wander to another type, it was a pitiless world that faced her mongrel brood.

And the body of the Scotch collie, and his mind also, are the result of centuries of training. In eastern lands, the sheep follow the shepherd's rod and staff; on the Scottish Highlands, great flocks roamed leisurely over

rough, broken pasturelands; and it was the lonely shepherd's dog who guarded them as they lay in green pastures, and led them beside the still waters.

Bob's body was built to answer the needs of such a life of service. His ears were small and erect, save at the tips. With body long and thin flanked, and legs strong and muscular, the shepherd's dog was fleet on his way, and swift as a flash of light. His small, keen, sharp eyes, set slightly oblique on a long pointed skull, followed his master's signals from afar.

One would have to renew within himself the heart of his childhood to realize the thrill it gave Charlie Marshall, a quiet-spoken, barefoot boy of ten, to have as his first, and as his special and very own possession, a big, fun-loving, brown-eyed dog like Bob. There was a riot in their play; and a noisy climax to the tricks they put over on one another. While the pup pretended to be keen on a bone or busy about affairs of his own, Charlie would make speedy tracks to the barn; and shinning up the ladder, slip through an opening in the loft and down a rope to find a hiding place behind some stump or boulder. Off Bob would then dart, his face beaming with excitement, to work out the problem of the broken trail, and with a joyous bound to spring upon the fugitive, pulling at the boy's pants and poking a long, wet snout into his lugs. A trail broken by wading up the creek was a smart trick; but Bob solved it. It strikes me that what a dog once learns he never forgets.

Charlie and his dog proved a useful pair about the Marshall farm. It had been the boy's job to bring the milk cows home; and, in some seasons, that had been quite a task for the little lad; because the cows wandered far to find green pickings in sheltered, hidden places. But Bob now went with him, which made it a simple and pleasant matter.

One Saturday afternoon, Charlie slipped off a beam in the barn, and his ankle was badly sprained in the fall. This caused a delay in the cow-bringing job; but not to leave things in a lurch like that, the dog quietly went back to the bush and brought the cows up on his own account. I do not, of course, ask you to infer that the dog was doing any thinking; he may have been an automaton guided by some blind instinct. But an interesting point is that Bob did not bring up all the cattle. He did not bother his head with Buck and Bright, nor the other young stock. No! Bob just brought up the cows that required milking. And after that the collie made a practice of going for the cows himself; and night and morning, and right on the clock, the string of sedate matrons wound slowly into the stable yard. And the dog made it a friendly, leisurely business. As you know, a milch cow's nerves should be

calm and restful at the milking time, because she actually makes the milk while one expresses it from her. Unless she is in a mild, patient and benevolent humor, her milk glands become stingy with their secretions. Bob saw to it that there was no dogging of the Marshall cows.

One morning, Bob brought up an excited roan heifer to the milking yard.

Marshall smiled.

“So, Bobbie, you think Flossie’ll be needing the milking, too. If you’ll help me, we’ll just slip her into the stable, and after she gets a bit more impatient, we’ll follow her down and find her calf.”

It was a highly excited heifer that was let out, after what seemed a long wait, to run bawling down the lane toward the bush where her treasure lay hidden. But it soon became apparent to Marshall that the young mother had no notion of leading the two brutes to the hiding place of her precious, little, saucer-eyed calf. She was on to their tricks; and time was not the essence so far as she was concerned. No! let that wicked man run his legs off chasing a loving mother over fallen trees in accessible gulleys!

And a pale-faced human makes a poor fist of finding anything in unbroken timber lands. He has only his ears and eyes to guide his quest. And a young cow, who has gone wild at calving time, hides a calf that crouches mute and still as a granite boulder until hands actually laid on its body prove that the game is up.

Bob finally tired of watching the antics of the excited heifer and the silly goings-on of the man. He jumped up on Marshall and whined at him, inviting him to exercise a little commonsense. Then he led the man in quite another direction and far off from the cow, and there across the creek and over a little knoll, the excited heifer, chasing after them, saw the two brutes find her hidden calf.

Now, you apprehend, gentlemen, I am merely summing up the facts for your guidance; and from these facts you will draw your own conclusions. I am not suggesting that Bob thought the silly, little, soft-skinned calf would be safer in the farm stable than lying unprotected in a lonely bush. Neither am I asking you to find on this evidence that Bob wanted the calf at the homestead because that would make it a simpler job for him to drive the mother up there twice daily. I do not say that Bob wanted the calf taken up at all. I should, however, point out to you that the uncontradicted evidence discloses that the dog showed unmistakable signs of delight as Marshall hoisted the eighty weight of young life across his shoulders, and gripping

the soft legs, trudging homeward followed by the excited and wild-eyed mother. As I said before, I am merely summing up the facts for you.

It is, of course, merely a play of fancy to attribute to a dog the thoughts of the human mind. What the woman he loves really thinks of him is past any man's finding out; and, next to that, comes the mystery of what is going on in the mind of his own dog. The human cannot even know what sort of a world it is a dog thinks he is living in. The creature's concepts of time and space may be different from ours. Objects may have other color tones for him; and sounds that please some human ears are often painfully distressing to a dog. Neither the master nor his dog can ever know the physical world save as thoughts floating on a stream of consciousness. If that world exists other than as thought, neither of them can know anything about it; and since they cannot talk the matter over and compare notes, the dog and his man can never be quite sure their separate dream worlds are similar in kind to one another.

But a man does know and can understand the feelings and emotions of his dog. He knows, for instance, that the dog has a conscience, and is sorry for his sins. He knows that for the dog anything is a sin that displeases his master; and that in the dog's life such sins are usually committed because he does not understand. As with the dog, so with the human, sin is caused by lack of love or by ignorance.

Well, up on that Mono farm, time kept flying by; and by the spring of 1854, we had buried Old Hickory Mick, the Catholic school-teacher. The Orange families in the section felt easier in mind, now, that they had for master a good Protestant like Nathaniel Carson, who did not believe in a god at all. Meanwhile, Bob O'New Pitsligo had grown into an orderly and quiet dog. Once in awhile, he might go off for a day or two, to come back with the fatigue of love in his brown eyes; but the days of joyous play and romping were no more for Bob; nor for his boy, Charlie, who was now a sturdy, serious-minded lad of fourteen. They remained as great friends as ever, but neither saw any occasion for displaying feelings that were deepening with the passing years. Charlie had developed into a regular, thorough-going, young farmer, much to his father's pride and joy; and Bob still brought the milk cows home.

Yes, time kept slipping away like dry sand through one's fingers. Rev. C. M. Clarke came to the Mono Wesleyan circuit to carry on what he called his peripatetic ministry. He was a well-educated young Englishman from the town of Bristol, full of enthusiasm and painstaking to a fault; but he was a greenhorn on his first preaching appointment in Canada—and he was no

horseman. He arrived at Mono Mills on foot; and the local Quarterly Board directed one of its brethren, Thomas Henderson, to secure the new minister a horse to bear him over the long stretches between his preaching appointments. The minister thanked the board kindly, but begged them earnestly to secure him a quiet, docile beast. They finally bought him a bay mare from a farmer down Sand Hill way. Several of the brethren had on occasions observed the shabby old mare standing untied on the village street, patiently awaiting her master's pleasure; and they all agreed she would make a reliable mount for the inexperienced young clergyman.

After powerful assurances had been given him, Rev. Mr. Clarke was hoisted into the saddle and set off on his way. The mare, Meg, was gentle with her shaky charge, and faithful enough to be sure; but she pulled up sedately at the first tavern door on the 6th line, and not a step farther would she budge for him until her rider had dismounted. In those days there was a tavern every mile or two on any road on which teaming was done. The indignant clergyman left his gift horse standing at the third tavern door and fared away stoutly on foot. Nor could he ever be induced to mount a saddle again.

Throughout the year, there was a constant pressure of heavy work to be done on the Marshall farm. Even the floating field stones were turning into silver, as saleable grey lime, in rude kilns that kept crying out for hardwood, and were never satisfied. The Canada Jay came around each spring to tell us to get the buckets out and tap the sugar maple bush. There was a steady throng of work; but there always seemed to be plenty of hands to do it. A neighbor's daughter was helping in the house; and Sarah Duncan, with her sweet, homely old face, was up from the village half the time, doing the family sewing and mending. The Marshalls always kept a hired man and wife who lived in; and in the fall of '54 William Edwards and his wife were completing their second year of service on the farm. They had come from down in New York State; and when their time was up that fall they decided to go down home for the winter.

One gets to know people well after living on the same farm with them for two years. Edwards was a quiet-spoken man, clean and tidy in his personal habits, and gentle with every creature about the place. The children liked him, and tagged after him in his work. His wife, in Mrs. Marshall's opinion, was a bit scatter-witted; but she was a caution to work, and she did not talk back. Edwards, himself, was religiously minded in an emotional way. He made a practice of praying aloud; and he made special efforts that God would hear his prayers. As a devout, Primitive Methodist, he stoutly

maintained we should have cold victuals on the Lord's Day, which always struck me as a curious notion for a hired man to have. I shall always remember his appearance; because he had the high-domed skull of Arthur, the Duke of Wellington. His principal worry in life seemed to be the bald spot that was spreading from his forehead back to the quarters where the pig brains lie. To remedy it, he was using "Closehugh's Tricopherous," a sovereign, patent medicine for bald heads in those days, guaranteed to quicken the hair roots into active life and to grow a healthy swath after the third bottle.

Everybody about the place felt sorry the young couple were leaving. The sugar maples were turning the time Edwards was paid off, and the couple prepared to go on their way. Above the faded green of the late summer, patches of golden ochre and of brilliant crimson were showing on the wooded hillslopes. And, here and there, the frost had dashed the foliage of a spreading branch with the carmine of dark scarlet wine, which was fading at the edges into the rich brown of dead leaves idly fluttering down.

The night before they left neighbors dropped over to wish them god-speed; the respectable young couple were well thought of in the little community. And you know the sort of thing it was. The men cracked butternuts before the big fireplace; and the womanfolk amused themselves in their simple way. Hymns were sung and some victuals were served before the party broke up. Oh! yes, Mrs. Edwards would write—she was one of those giggling women—and tell the folk all about their trip.

It had been arranged that Charlie Marshall take the wagon and team, and give the Edwards a lift as far as Toronto. And I wish you to know this was a mighty important affair in the eyes of young Charlie. He was being trusted with that valuable team of bays—all on his own, as you may say. He was taking some produce down to his grandma at the Tavern Tyrone—a firkin of butter, hams and a few dressed chicken; and he might stay with her for a day or two. So he was all spruced up for the occasion. The harness had been oiled and the wagon wheels greased. Charlie's boots were shined to perfection; and Edwards had given him a dandy hair trim.

The party set off bright and early in the morning. They left with every one in the best of spirits, save Bob O'New Pitsligo. The dog had planned, of course, to go along; but, at the last moment, Mrs. Marshall played a dirty trick on him, and tied him up. But a wise dog knows it is a long lane that has no turning. Bob amused himself cracking fleas during the long day, and consoled his soul in patience.

The time came for bringing the cows home for the evening milking. So, of course, they let Bob loose. But the dog's mind was not on the cows. He quietly trotted down the lane, and took the first turning to the left. Paddy was sent for the cows; and the milking was late.

At daybreak the next morning, Bob was back scratching at the kitchen door.

He looked a bit travel-worn; and his muzzle was stained. Marshall scolded the dog harshly.

“Oh! let poor Bobbie be!” said the wife, “he is greeting for his lad.”

Mrs. Marshall brought out Bob's pan of porridge. The dog wagged his long, tipped brush; but stood back, acting nervous and strangely distrustful. He had no intention of being tied up again.

“Well, Bob, you scoundrel, be off after the cows,” said Marshall, as he stepped into the house for his breakfast.

The dog whined once or twice in a fretful, bothered sort of way; and then trotted off round the front of the house.

Late that afternoon he was seen again, standing out in the lane. His coat was soiled; and he had the hungry, furtive look of a strange, tramp dog.

The Marshalls talked about him at the supper table.

“You know, Nancy,” Mr. Marshall remarked in his quiet, hesitating sort of way, “the Brechons are talking about dogs worrying their sheep. I saw another dog around here the other day”—and the man paused at the ugly thought—“you don't think the two of them might be . . .? I saw some suspicious stains on his . . .!”

“Oh! no,” Mrs. Marshall objected, “indeed no! Bob would not be doing the like of that.”

It became apparent that evening that the collie was laboring under distress of some kind. He was whining and whimpering, and running up and down the lane. Yet he snarled if anyone approached him.

“That dog has gone clean out of his head,” said Mrs. Marshall. “Not a spark of sense has he! You better chain him up, William.”

“Just catch him for me and I will,” her husband told her; and he swung himself into the saddle on old Gunpowder to ride back to find out what the dickens was keeping Paddy and the milk cows.

That was all too much for the worried dog. As Marshall turned the old mare's head toward the bush, Bob's shoulder hair bristled. His long, slim snout went up in the air; and he gave the long drawn, high-pitched cry the hills of Mono had often heard. It was the wild, weird howl of a wolfdog calling his mates. Then Bob wheeled and ran toward the road.

"I think, Nancy, the dog wants me," said Marshall, "I'll be back for the milking."

And William Marshall trotted the old mare down the lane after the excited dog. It was the time the wild pigeons were uniting their flocks for the migration south. In the forest lands that nestled within the arms of the Great Lakes, the wild grapes were ripe; and beechnuts littered the ground. Dense clouds of the plump, fearless, fluttering birds hung in the air, and swung low down over the rider in a wild, reckless, whirling mass of life.

With every evidence of relief, Bob waited for the horseman at the lane gate; and the two of them trotted off down the road together. Quite a ways down, a rough corduroy bridge crossed the trout creek; and just beyond that point the dog turned aside from the roadway and followed a snake rail fence that climbed up through a heavy wooded knoll. Marshall threw the reins over the horse's head and followed the dog. It was the late afternoon of a beautiful autumnal day. The squirrels in the grove of old beech trees were chiding Bob for disturbing their industry among the beech and hickory nuts.

Marshall found the dog pulling and whining at some object that lay hidden behind a mound a great decaying log had made. For yards around, the dog's feet had padded down the black mould and packed it flat and firm as a beaten path.

No cows were milked at the Marshall farm that night. Yes, Bobbie had found his lad, but he had found him sleeping in a twilight that does not rise or set.

Edwards had pushed on quickly with the stolen team by way of Hamilton; and he was arrested at the border. In those days, all the desperate man needed was an extra day or two to carry him fifty miles south to practical safety. It was another crime committed on the impulse of the moment. Charlie had seen a fat, black squirrel on the snake fence; and, grabbing one of the guns, had run over to take a shot at him. With the other gun, Edwards had followed for the fun of the thing. And there being no one by, the devil tempted the wretched man with the team of horses. As Charlie kneeled to take aim, the man shot the boy's brains out.

It was indeed a terrible tragedy to the whole countryside; and neighbors and relations from far and near poured in to sympathize with the poor mother and family. I went around with William Marshall arranging to get the grave dug, and things like that. No one seemed to pay much attention to the father; because, between men, grief is always inarticulate. But he was the one I was sorry for. After the affair was all over, I found him one day sitting alone out in the barn; and the tears were coursing down his rough and haggard face. In a sort of an apologetic way, he took my hand in his, and the two of us lay down in the straw together. We had a fine cry, and it did us both a lot of good. The truth is William Marshall's heart was broken. The miserable man, Edwards, had destroyed two lives, that of the only son and that of his sire.

It was a happening of the long ago; and a simple old man cannot rake the moonbeams playing on the waters of fancy to give with convincing detail an account of a senseless and wanton tragedy that caused many a Mono mind to doubt for the moment that the Methodist God was in his heavens and attending to his business.

In his funeral sermon, Rev. Mr. Clarke got over this difficulty by taking for his text the resolute cry of a brilliant old man who was sorely afflicted: *Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him; nevertheless I will maintain my own ways before Him.*—Job XIII:15. That text—and particularly the latter part of it—always seemed to me to express the true essence of Methodism before wealth corrupted it. The Reverend C. M. Clarke was an ambitious young preacher, but the stationing committee never gave him another preaching circuit. At the age of twenty-eight, black diphtheria promoted him from the hills of Mono to the way of all truth.

Oh! yes! they hanged Edwards; and it was an atrocious job the law made out of its part of the killing on that occasion. The hangman had too much slack on his rope; and, in the drop, a loose twist caught under the felon's arm. Edwards' body dangled there until the hangman shinned down the rope and loosened the hitch to let the noose get a proper choking grip on the man's neck. The law with its hanging only lengthened out the tragedy and added to the weight of it.

A grain of dust will spoil the working of the finest watch a craftsman ever made. And why not admit that, on a sudden impulse, the human brain sometimes also goes out of order? It is nothing short of the pitying mercy of God that stays the horrifying impulses that surge, one time or another, through the brain of every saint and sinner. He is a brave man who frankly examines his own naked soul. "Ample space and verge," he'll find there,

“the characters of hell to trace.” Oh, yes! what shows above the surface may be as bright as a glistening iceberg in the sun of general approbation; but three-quarters of the mass lies below in dark, surging, treacherous waters. And man kills the thing he loves in diverse ways other than by the shedding of blood. In the pale moonlight, the soul of every man swings in clanking chains on a gallow’s tree.

I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the Saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech blessed Mary, ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles, Peter and Paul, and all the Saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

May the Almighty God have mercy on me, forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant me pardon, absolution, and remission of all my sins. Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

BETTY MARSHALL



THE seasons press upon the farmer, each with its special throng of work, and do not loiter to give simple country hearts the time to grieve. The winter set in shrewdly in the fall of '54; and for hours, early in the mornings the snow fell in dry, drifting flakes to block the roads in the hills of Mono and add greatly to the winter labor of teaming the grain out to market. The crop on the Marshall farm that season had yielded 1,500 bushels of fall wheat of high milling quality; and, as a result of the road conditions, this grain was hauled down the 6th line and stored till the spring in Isaac Chafee's warehouse at Tullamore.

On a farm, in those days, it was usually the boss himself who hauled his grain to market. The rest of us made a higgledy-piggledy job of it, cleaning and sacking the wheat that another load might be ready by the time his returning sleighbells tinkled up the lane. In the cold, blue, starry glare before the dawn on a snowy night, Mr. Marshall would bundle himself up in fur coat and blankets, and again head a fresh team on the eighteen mile lug. I assisted matters by taking a part of his load over the hilly north end of the road where the going was specially heavy; and, for the purpose of this three-mile lift, it was necessary, of course, to bestir the tired, sleeping team of yesterday out of their comfortable dreams of mountains of hay and oats and of pleasant valleysides where the sweet and tender blue grass grows. Owing to my trip being a short one, I was careless about wrapping myself up snugly, and I often came back stiff and half frozen.

The cold, ill winds of that winter blew some good into the Marshall exchequer. The Crimean war having broken out, in the late fall of '54, wheat sold for \$1.40 a bushel on the Toronto market. It was during that year that Lord Elgin made his famous journey to the south to float a reciprocity treaty through Washington on a flood of champagne. Of course, anything as remote as seventy years back in Canadian affairs has usually a musty flavor—but that may be because of inexpert decanting. The northern states, he

found, were somewhat favorable to the treaty as the first step towards the annexation of the British colonies. The Southern slave-holders were strongly opposed to such annexation, which would increase the territories and power of the anti-slavery states. Lord Elgin persuaded the southern senators that a free entry into the union for its products would destroy any desire for annexation in Canada. And one result of such ingenious diplomacy was that late in the spring of '55, William Marshall sold for \$2.50 a bushel at Tullamore the wheat which the rough winter had obliged him to store there.

For years back, Upper Canada had been experiencing rapid growth. Farm produce of every kind had commanded a ready market at prices that were steady. Fall wheat of good milling quality had regularly brought the farmers four and six a bushel; and in those days of hand-cradling, this farm could produce more grain per acre at half the cost per bushel than it can today. Good eating potatoes, the pink-eyed ones, fetched 60 cents a sack, and dressed pork sold readily at \$6.00 a hundredweight. And such steady prices were satisfactory at a time when the farmer who got it placed the dollar in his pocket as his own. Taxation was not burdensome; and revenue exceeded public expenditure. Farm lands were increasing rapidly in sale value. The Grand Trunk was spending English money in railway contracts at the rate of £10,000 the mile. There was plenty of work to be had; and a steady stream of immigration was flowing into the Canadas.

It was a season of prosperity—not because there was great wealth, but because everyone felt there were good times ahead. While a person or a community have hope before them, they may properly be said to prosper. It is not the wealth they already have, but the wealth they confidently expect to gain from their efforts that floods the human heart with a comfortable joy and quickens the life of the community. Any simple old man, like Jimmie Buchanan who kept bees, has observed that it is not the stored and capped honey in the comb, but the discovery of a fresh honey flow, that gives a contented hum to a hive. And, as it is with the bugs, so it is with men. We buy our joys that are worth while, and we pay for them with pain. Nine-tenths of the pleasure of the human heart springs not from having things like a grunting porker in the abundance of his pen, but from the struggle to get the things we desire.

And the progress of Upper Canada was mirrored in a small way up in Mono Township. The McLaughlins had a flouring and grist mill on a branch of the Humber at Mono Mills, C.W., which lay in the meeting corners of four townships and was rapidly developing into a thriving market town. There were already four taverns, a tannery, a blacksmith shop, a church, a

chapel, an Orange hall, and three general stores, which were truly departmental, having everything in stock from ladies' dress goods to chewing tobacco. The hamlet had been surveyed and subdivided into town building lots that sold for a price equal to \$500 an acre. The coming of the railways shortly afterward, by diverting the trade routes, blighted the hopes of Mono Mills, which had already become a widely known place. One of its young men, while working down on the Mississippi, once wrote his girl up north, and this is how he addressed the letter:

*Speed on thou little messenger
To Canada's fair land—
To Mono Mills among the hills,
And my dear Sarah's hand.*

And it was the talk of the whole countryside that Sarah got it.

The hamlet of Mono Mills lives on in the shabby respectability of a wearied old age. Occasionally a cow strolls through the crumbling stone entrance of an old-time store or over the debris of the tavern where Old Hickory Mick lost his fights with John Barleycorn. Yet Mono Mills has an industry all its own. Under many acres of artificial shade they grow the ginseng plant, the roots of which as children we searched for in the shade of the hardwood trees of long ago. Every five years or so, the snarled, crabbed little roots are dug and dried for shipment to China for medicinal purposes. Elderly gentlemen boil the root in rice water, and drink the infusion to renew their youth and potency. Poor old Mono Mills! Her drugs may cure old mandarins of the infirmities of age, but herself she cannot save!

The tragic death of young Charlie Marshall made a wide-open gap in that Mono home which healing time could never fill; but, in the work-a-day things about the busy farm, it made an opening for my strong young back and arms which I filled well enough to bind me firmly to this farm for life. I was rising fifteen years at the time. It is really difficult to state precisely what my position was. To be accurate, I was of the family, but I was not one of them. I was, as it were, in the blue lodge, having slipped in so young that no one black-balled me, but being a Catholic and a stranger in blood, its higher and more intimate mysteries were not for me. The collie and I were perhaps in the same class. It was our home—and we were both loyal to its interests. I was not a hired boy because I was not treated as such; and it never occurred to anyone's mind that my time would ever be up. I can never remember William Marshall ordering me to do anything. He had such an

intimate, kindly way of talking of the things to be done and suggesting how we do them that it was a pleasure to serve the man.

I had a room for myself, fixed up dandy, over the back kitchen, where the things I treasured were never disturbed. The books and trifling what-nots a growing working boy has a fancy for were not only supplied me freely, but many of these wants were anticipated in a way that kept my heart from becoming lonely. The first kerosene lamp in the locality was sent up by Mrs. Sarah Trueman as a present for Paddy. By its novel and garish light, I read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to an appreciative household. It was an early English printing of the book, and, in a board cover, it cost me one shilling and sixpence. My word for it! We grazed every printed thing so closely in those days that not a pick of stubble was left. That lamp created a lively interest in the neighborhood, and the first night we got it set together correctly and burning in all its glory on the kitchen table, Jimmie Buchanan and Mr. Carson the schoolmaster were present to admire the invention and discuss its merits in a learned way. There may have been faulty refining of the crude oil in those days; and the liquid gave off a pungent odor. Jimmie thought the coal oil had a stinking smell.

“And why not?” exclaimed the schoolmaster, with a sapient nod of his head, “does it not come out of the bowels of the earth?”

But if I never got any orders from her father about the barn, for the sake of peace and quiet, I took plenty of them about the house from his young daughter, Elizabeth Ann. At that time Betty Marshall was a growing child of eleven, and in that unfleshed condition in which the stretching bones seem to drag all the strength to themselves. But if she was skinny and muchly of legs and arms, her body was set up straight and the way she would strike out down the lane to school was clear evidence the little girl's will power was not under-nourished.

Quite apart from any deliberate intention on her part, Betty had always been a mimic; and she naturally imitated the mannerisms and humors of any grown-up person who, at the moment, interested her young mind. How shall I explain it? Of course, we are all actors and in our times play many parts. The doctor has his bedside air, the preacher his pulpit manners, and the way Wilfrid Laurier^[1] handled his great coat on a public platform was an example of consummate art. But such tricks and mannerisms are consciously developed for a purpose. A growing child, on the other hand, takes on the color and tone of older people, just as naturally as the skin of a piping treetoad matches the surrounding bark.

There seemed to be a succession of visitors at the Marshall farm; and with every fresh arrival of a buxom aunt or some blooming young lady of the connection, we might reasonably expect, within a day or two, to have a new and changed Elizabeth Ann on our hands.

[11] Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, K.C.M.G., D.C.L., LL.D., leader of the Liberal party and Prime Minister of Canada, 1896-1911.

Her grand-aunt, Letitia—an angular, unclaimed spinster—spent a month with us in the harvest season. She brought with her a supply of peppermint drops and a rabid evangelical turn of mind, both of which made a profound impression on little Betty. She hid the bag of candies behind a large framed picture of Wellington and Blucher, where the child found them; and she dispensed her views on the Roman Catholics with a less grudging hand.

Betty became sincerely uneasy as to the condition of my soul and my prospects of eternal salvation. One rainy morning, I was busy cleaning out a calf pen in the stable when Elizabeth Ann came down to give me a couple of peppermints and hold a serious little conversation with me.

“What do they mean, Paddy?” she asked me, “when they say ‘up the ladder and down the rope, three cheers for King Billy, to hell with the pope!’?”

“Oh, it means,” said I, “they think all us Catholics should be hanged. The ladder is the steps up to a gallows, and the rope has a noose at the end of it.”

The child felt quite distressed. We both knew all about the hanging business.

“But what have you done wrong, Paddy?” she asked me.

“Oh, don’t worry,” said I, “we’re all poor miserable sinners.”

“Well, Paddy,” she advised me, “I do wish you would get converted, and be saved, and join our church.”

“Have you been converted yourself?” I asked her.

“No,” she told me, “I have tried and tried, Paddy—but it won’t take!”

“Sure,” I said, “I know you are not converted, or you wouldn’t be pinching peppermint drops on your Aunt Letitia.”

“But you won’t tell?”

“No,” said I, “mum’s the word!”

Another visitor we had shortly afterward was a stylish young belle from Markham Township. On the first Sunday afternoon after her arrival, three young gentlemen of the neighborhood strolled up separately to the Marshall house. Curiously enough, they had all suddenly been struck with the notion, at church that morning, of seeing how our crops were getting along. They were all invited in, of course, and introduced to Miss Matilda Lea. Why is it, I wonder, that a self-conscious young lady, on such an occasion, gives vent to so much girlish laughter—unless it be to show her teeth? The gathering became quite dull and formal, as might be expected.

The guinea hens, those noisy harbingers of company coming, set up their infernal, peevish chatter of “buck wheat! buck wheat!”

Betty went to the door to look out.

“Here,” she exclaimed, turning to address the company, “is Johnson Potter up the lane. I suppose he is coming, too, to see how our crops are!”

I mention such trifling things as the visit of this marriageable girl to the Mono farm because the only theme I have in this simple narrative is the homely and commonplace in the lives of pioneer Irish folk on the Ontario countryside. And a poor job it is! If I were able, I would make it as clear cut as the toll of their dinner bell, and as transparent as a sheet of polished glass. They are all dead and forgotten; but such simple, natural, wholesome lives make the history of the country where their bodies lie. God bless them! They are all off on the way of truth now.

By his more aggressive tactics, Potter won out in that afternoon contest. He got his spoke in first; and, yes, Miss Matilda would be charmed to go for a buggy ride with Mr. Potter the very next evening—*d.v.* as to the weather. The result, in brief, was that Potter not only had a good many meals at the Marshall table, where he proved a capital trencherman, but he got a wife who made good meals ready for him for the rest of his life.

Young Betty was simply fascinated with Miss Matilda’s charming ways. Straightaway the child was primping about with her head tilted to one side. She was giggling incessantly without any apparent cause, and showing her teeth. The youngster was actually drifting around in a day dream; and her dream, of course, was that she was the beautiful Miss Matilda Lea. When I noticed the young actress was getting picky and fastidious about her victuals, I made it my business to open my mind to her on the side.

“Cut it out, Betty,” I told her, “we all know you have a stomach!”

“Well,” she said, “Matilda doesn’t eat much.”

“No,” I replied, “not while Potter is around; but did you ever notice how she gorges herself in the back kitchen?”

Next spring’s plowing time, the yellow, wide-boarded floor of the kitchen became Betty’s constant care. At all hours, I would find the skinny youngster on her knees, scrubbing the great expanse and giving it the dickens. And she was strongly of the opinion, seemingly, that it was my dirty boots that made most of this scrubbing necessary. For some unaccountable reason, she did not notice the tracks Bob and the children made, or the mud her father and the other men trailed about as they shuffled across the floor for their meals. But if she spied any dirt on my boots, there was a riot immediately.

“Just look at the dirt on Paddy’s feet, Ma!” she would exclaim in despair, as she brushed a wisp of stray hair back into place from her sweaty forehead. “Do I have to scrub this floor again for that dirty clodhopper?”

“Please pass me a bite to eat in the shed,” I would say to Mrs. Marshall. “It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house!”

“But he doesn’t seem to care, Ma, how much work he makes me!”

And she had the pinch of the argument on me; because from the time she was seven, Betty had always darned my socks for me, and seen to it that they patched up my clothes and kept my things ship-shape.

“Well, Betty,” I said to her at last, “you’d better make me carpet slippers; and, by the grace of God, I’ll never touch your dirty old floor without them.”

And the result was she made me an awkward-looking pair, which caused a lot of hilarity in the household. And I kept my promise—but only in muddy weather.

But the carpet slippers only served to transfer the scene of hostilities from the yellow floor to the bench by the back kitchen door. All my life long I have had trouble with my feet in warm weather. So in the evenings that summer, I made a practice of soaking them very carefully and deliberately in a bucket of rainwater and soft soap. And I found a comfortable place to do this was by the bench at the back kitchen door. But young Betty was raising morning glories and wild cucumber vine along the wall; and she complained of the slop I made, and declared the caustic in it hurted her flowers. Where the hired man is to wash his feet has always been one of the weighty problems in Ontario agriculture. Betty insisted that I do it elsewhere. I held to the opinion my feet should be washed close to the rain barrel.

These great issues were joined and went down to trial one summer's evening. Betty's temper had got quite the better of her and she was tongue-thrashing me in an outrageous manner. I slushed the soapy water in her direction, which sent her screaming round the corner of the house. I put a dipper of fresh water in my foot bath; and, as she returned to the fray, I wiggled my toes at her. She promptly let a piece of broken crockery drive at me with one of those underarm, left-hand swings that should in all decency have put it clear over the roof; but the sharp edge of it caught me a nasty dig on the base of my toes at the rise of the instep. A lovely squirt of blood shot out. I always did bleed like a stuck pig. It was a grand shot for an eleven-year-old girl to make.

"Now, look what you've done!" I declared. "You'd murder me, would you, you little she-devil;" and I tipped out the colored water to show her the great quantity of blood I was losing.

"Oh! Paddy," the child exclaimed, "I didn't mean to hurt you so real bad as that."

"Well, look what you've done," I warned her. "You've killed me entirely."

And the next moment, I had a curious mixture of tears, and towhead, and bleeding foot on my hands.

"Oh! Paddy, I'm very sorry," the youngster sobbed, "because I love you so!"

"You show it, don't you?" said I, "murdering me in cold blood."

"Oh! Paddy, dear," she told me, "I didn't really mean to hurt you, because when I grow up, and have long skirts, I'm going to marry you, Paddy, and have babies for you."

"Oh! no, you're not!" said I.

"Ladies with long skirts have babies for their husbands," she informed me.

"Yes!" says I, "but God sends them."

"Well," she pondered, "couldn't He send me a nice red-headed one for you, Paddy?"

"Well," said I, with a mournful sigh, "it's a dead man I'll be by the morning, Betty; and when you grow up to be a big miss, it's Peg-top Carson

you'll have to be marrying. Go, please," I asked her, "and get your ma to give me a piece of white rag."

Sarah Duncan bandaged my foot up in smart order.

"Paddy," the young person remarked, "you can wash your dirty old feet here, if you want to."

"No, Betty," said I, "to keep peace in the family, I'll wash them over by the well where the drinking water comes from."

And I heeled it upstairs to keep from bloodying the steps.

Hours later, Betty called up to me: "Yally, yally you who! Paddy, are you all right?"

"Sure," said I, "I'm fine."

"Has it quit bleeding, Paddy?"

"Sure," said I, "it's caulked up as tight as the inside of a boat."

"Sleep tight," she hollered, "and don't let the bugs bite!"

The morning after, Betty was not even enough interested in the overnight occurrence to ask me how my foot was doing; and henceforward, she treated me with an indifferent civility that gave no occasion for quarrels and scoldings. I was left to shift strictly for myself in the matter of keeping holes out of my socks and losing my mitts in winter time. A lad of the hobbledehoy age is usually sensitive; and my feelings were deeply hurt by this turn of events. I suppose the child had been given a good scolding after the cutting of my foot, and strict orders to quit bothering Paddy; and, as one slams a door after bunting into it, Betty may have felt a grudge against me because of her troubles. At the time, however, I knew I had done nothing to offend the child, and I thought she was following family instructions to put a no-account fellow like me in his proper place. Yet, I didn't let on.

But if I had got out of the pot, it was the schoolmaster who got into the fire. Nathaniel Carson had succeeded my friend, Michael, as teacher of the Mono school. Young Mr. Carson was a good mixer and a nifty dresser. In fact, he was quite a lady's man. Such was his courtesy to every housewife that he could charm out upon her table all the comforts of her cupboard. And in the presence of any young miss who was stepping out, such a soulful light lit up his soft brown eyes that delightful ticklings would quiver down the young thing's being. Not, perhaps, that the schoolmaster was really amatory-minded; nor that the jealous plow-boys of Mono, with rustic waggery, were justified in calling him a kisser, which was as opprobrious an epithet, in those

days, as calling a horse a crib-sucker. To be able to impress the ladies favorably was in his mind an element toward worldly success; and young Mr. Carson was chuck full of ambition. To his voyaging eyes, beautiful things, either on a family table or in a lady's bower, were pleasing enough to deserve attention. At the local parties, he was a regular cut-up; and, at the climax of the jollity, nothing delighted him more than to be called upon for a song. The sound of his voice glamoured the man. He was of that pushful, self-assertive type that is too wise ever to take offence; and, while he hadn't much brains, he was of the sort of conceited climbers who always get along smartly in a raw, young country. Carson was already using the jargon of the law and he afterward went into law and politics. He had a brilliant career until that amatory lady, Angina Pectoris, got her arms around the pudgy old bachelor and hugged him to death. Had she ever had a rival in his selfish heart?—Heaven only knows, not old Paddy Slater.

Betty Marshall had been one of the bright pupils in his school, and the teacher had prided himself on the rapid progress she was making. The child had been desperately anxious to please, and right on her toes to succeed. She excelled at the Friday spelling bees, and cried in heart-broken vexation if anyone spelled her down. But after the New Year of '57, Elizabeth Ann was now thirteen; and curious humours in her mind marked a physical change in her body. She became listless and indifferent in her studies, and took a vixenish pleasure in making snippy and saucy answers. I fear me, Betty was disturbing sadly the discipline of the Mono school. Nathaniel was provoked beyond reasonable endurance and became sarcastic. In the end, the two of them had a complete falling out. The news drifted up to us that things were not going very well with Elizabeth Ann at the school; but, on Mrs. Marshall asking her about it, the young lady tilted her nose in the air; and, indeed, she told us nothing. Without either of them understanding in the least what was going forward, the schoolmaster was bearing the brunt of a petulant revolt in Betty's mind against the authorities of her childhood—a revolt inevitable in the life of every developing girl.

On arriving at school one Wednesday morning, Mr. Nathaniel Carson was rudely shocked by a chalked message spread out boldly on the school blackboard. This was Betty's note—this is what she wrote:

*Go home, old Carson, and go to bed!
A cabbage leaf put on your head
And then you'll know beyond a doubt
That all your brains have frizzled out.*

There was a scene. Elizabeth Ann was called up; and an instant apology was demanded. Her handwriting was hanging evidence against her, and the culprit could not deny the allegation. Betty stood mute in malice, and refused to elect or plead.

“My lady,” said the master, “you have brass enough in your face to make a kettle.”

“And you,” Betty replied, “have enough sap in your head to fill it.”

The teacher got his cane off the three nails and ordered her to hold out her hand. All she did was stick up her nose. Carson lost his temper and gave the pale-faced girl a sound thrashing. Fortunately for Betty there was plenty of red flannel underwear worn in those days. She arrived home breathless in an hysteria of tears and temper.

Mr. Marshall was absent in Toronto; so Bob and I went down right away to see the schoolmaster about it. I was a man of seventeen years, and I had the care of the farm on my shoulders. The scholars, sitting on their long benches, were in a state of pop-eyed tension as we entered the schoolhouse. Bob O’New Pitsligo wagged his way up the centre aisle to the master’s desk. It was like old times for him to be back again; and he radiated most friendly sentiments toward all and sundry.

“What do you mean, sir,” said I to the master, “beating Betty and sending her home crying?”

Mr. Carson pointed his ferrule at me in a threatening manner.

“Will you kindly go home, young man, and mind your own business! Get out of here!” he said to me, “Get out of here, or I’ll give you news to tell!”

“Will you kindly tell me, Mr. Carson, if we are paying you for thrashing little girls?”

Grabbing his chastening rod, the master made for me. Bob was directly in his way; and in striding past the dog to cut me off from the door, the master hit him a wicked whelt with the whip. That was a fatal mistake! His scholars would not have minded in the least seeing me get a good licking. There are always factions about a local school; and, anyway, I had been chief captain of a previous dynasty. There were old grudges that felt the need of a little scratching.

But as for Bob, he was a personage and a hero to the Mono children; and to warm his pelt was as rash an act about that school as to say something bad

about Queen Victoria. As I dodged the master around their new stove, the school broke up tumultuously. The dog had been flabbergasted at the unexpected assault; but he quickly rallied his wits and went after Mr. Carson's legs in a business-like way. As the master rounded a corner, he tripped on an overturned bench and sprawled head downward on the floor. Thereupon I sat down on him. Before one could say "Jack Robinson!" all the exposed surface of the man of letters was being sat upon by healthy young scholars. Someone fetched a red toque with a blue tassel; and I pulled it over the master's head. In a trice he was pinioned and trussed up with mufflers. They were red and piebald and blue with tasty touches of white; and at the end of the matter, Mr. Nathaniel Carson looked like a distended pincushion. Then the scholars all beat it home to tell on me. I walked back to the farm, whistling—letting on nothing whatever.

A constable came for me that afternoon; and at the tavern at Mono Mills in the evening, I was tried by two justices of the peace for assaulting the schoolmaster. I didn't understand just what they all were driving at; but that didn't much matter, because, as always happens at such trials in rural Ontario, the whole case had been thoroughly gone into and adjudicated beforehand. Court was held merely to give the public a little show. Everybody interested in the case had already had a hearing, save the accused; and his friends, of course, had been around giving an earful to the two Jay-Pees. One of the magistrates was the local blacksmith, and the other kept the general store where we dealt. Old Hickory Mick had often declared to me that in Canada justice is seldom blindfolded.

Mr. Carson gave his evidence. He told how I had done this, and said that; and how it was his duty to put me out because I was disturbing the school.

"But, why, Mr. Carson," one of the justices asked him, "did you hit Bob?"

Mr. Carson went on with his speech.

"I think, Mr. Carson," the other justice interrupted him, "you lost your temper very badly or you would not have struck Bob."

The court had apparently decided before it sat that the teacher was the aggressor, and that he should have given me time to get out before attacking me with the cane.

"It was a case of trespass," said one.

“I think it was trespass on the case,” said the blacksmith who had read some law book.

So I was let out; and the Allen boys drove me home.

Old Sarah Duncan wept tears of joy. But Betty Marshall said it would teach me to mind my own business. It was what I deserved, she said, if they had given me penal servitude. I was fairly well satisfied in my own mind that I had made a fool of myself; and when Mr. Marshall arrived home next day, he made me dead sure of it. He explained to me that it was my duty to go down and apologize to the master for disturbing the school. If I wished it, he said he would go down with me.

“Well,” said I, “there’s no use taking Bob along. The dog doesn’t want to apologize to Mr. Carson. He wants to taste him.”

So down we went; and, before the whole class, I told the master I was sorry for what I had done, because I had no right to walk into his school and ask him questions like that. And Mr. Carson made a very suitable speech in reply.

And then a fat, ruddy little urchin from the 5th line stood up and snapped his thumb and second finger at the teacher.

“What is it, Samuel?” the teacher inquired.

“Wh-wh-why di-di-did you hi-hi-hit Bob?” the child asked him.

Which proves, I fear me, that public questions are not settled on their merits, but by little side issues that have a drag on the hearts of the crowd.

Bob O’New Pitsligo never forgot the indignity he suffered in that schoolhouse, and in the presence of his friends; and he never forgave the schoolmaster, whom he ever afterwards regarded as an evil-smelling and treacherous enemy. For Bob, as you know, came from the Highlands, where for centuries men carried the law and the judiciary in the folds of the plaid; and met personal affronts with a quick thrust of a wicked dirk. Sandy Highlander quit that sort of thing after the king’s law and processes ran; but, you’ll admit, there is no court to settle a dispute between a man and an honest dog. So the collie nursed his grievances, and ever sought private occasion to revenge his personal wrongs. In the result, Mr. Carson felt some fear in the matter; and carried a stout cudgel abroad with him. Those who love deeply are the ones who can hate like sin.

CHAPTER X.

THE FARM HOUSE



ETTY MARSHALL had quit the Mono school for keeps. So, at the age of thirteen, the pale, bony, young slip of a thing felt that she must now indeed be a grown-up miss. In fact, she made some motions of doing up her hair; and from her stirrings about one would fancy at times the weighty care of the entire household rested upon her slim, young shoulders.

One of her special concerns was the Lion cooking stove the kitchen now boasted—a black, monstrous creature with thing-u-majigs scalloped on its body. The ravenous maw of the beast seemed always crying out for finely-split, sound body-wood, which its tongues of flame licked up without ceasing; but a grand cooker it was with a handy tank in its posterior for heating water. And the Lion was actually built for warming a room, and not, like the old fireplace, for heating a flue. Betty domeheaded the creature's back till it shone like the hide of a Guinea nigger. And the girl was a rare successful hand, too, at growing fuchsias from slips in old tin cans. But that first winter at home her special ambition lay in getting together the makings for a rag carpet to cover part of the yellow kitchen floor. Betty kept crying out for rags and more rags, and, like the horseleech's daughter, she was never satisfied. Bundles of old clothes came up from the relatives in Toronto. First the garments were taken to pieces and washed; then the lighter colored material went into the dye pot. Finally a sleigh load of rag balls went to be woven at the handloom in the village. We admired the strips of carpet loudly, and, believe me, we treated them with great respect.

There was something of John Trueman's grim wilfulness in the temper of his granddaughter. Two years back the Croziers had planted a row of young maple trees down their lane, and Betty was dead set in the opinion that the Marshall lane stood in need of a like treatment. She harped on the subject from Easter on, but, in the throng of spring work, no one lent her a listening ear. Late one afternoon I spied the young miss dragging a couple of stout saplings home from the bush. Her eyes had been bigger than her shoulders. Heavy storm clouds burst on her with the weight of the rain in

them, but despite the downpour, the determined young creature dragged her loot to the lane gate. Forked lightning struck down sharp enough to kill a pig, but the girl planted her trees in a futile sort of way, and then darted into the house, haughty and disdainful as a blast of wind.

“The old sow will root your treasures out on you,” said I to her. “Your trees should be planted on the field side of the lane fence.”

I got no thanks for my free advice.

“I’ll tell you what I’ll do for you, Elizabeth,” I went on. “Come now! I’ll make a bargain with you. If you’ll get the roots from Mrs. McKim and made a bed of hollyhocks by the gate coming in from the barn, I’ll take the team back to the bush next week and get enough trees for both sides of your lane. But mind now, I want cream hollyhocks!” I warned her.

The young maple trees I planted a few days afterward still stand; and the girth of the least of them at the butt is more than my arms can circle. And as sure as God made little apples, the girl’s hollyhocks were nodding and winking over the fence at me by the twelfth of July of glorious memory.

That was the time of the year that grand-aunt Letitia arrived with her trunk and two hat boxes to make the farm the annual visit that disturbed very much the quiet serenity of its household. She came in on William’s side of the family. You get that! The prim old maid was a regular go-getter, with time souring on her hands; and she was an opinionated female of the type that busy themselves nowadays campaigning for birth control or something. Of course, it had been Letitia’s own fault she never married. Any passable young woman secures a husband if she watches her step and is not too particular as to quality. The grand-aunt had done so much shopping about, I fancy, that she found herself crossing the street when the shops all closed on her, and called it a day.

Letitia lacked the repose of soul that makes a woman a good visitor in the countryside. She was on her feet from morning to night, busy rectifying matters, and cheerfully insisting that everything be done her way. She was a capable woman, no doubt; but to tell the truth, I did not like her cooking. Her pies were of the affectionate kind that stick on the pan. Letitia was a bossy old woman, who stuck her nose into everything. And that, as you’ll agree, is a little trying on the patience of a busy, middle-aged farm wife in the throng of the midsummer work. Not, of course, that Mrs. Marshall showed it outwardly in word or deed—but the strain took it out of her spirit. July is a mean season, anyway, for visiting on an Ontario farm. The intense, enervating heat of midsummer wilts the pasture lands and dries up the wells

in the thirsty ground and the fountains of kindness in the heart. The sun swings low on its blistering journey across hot cloudless skies, and sinks in a sullen stillness that breathes an angry threat for the morrow. The temperature itself may not be as high as in more southerly climes, but there is a wilting quality to this inland summer heat. Settlers take a long time to adapt their clothing and diet to climatic conditions in a new northern land. Because the winters in Canada are cold, men for a century have been wearing heavy clothing in its hot harvest season, and, all year round, they stoke the fires in their bodies with fatty foods. Some day Canadians will drift away from the clumsy, stupid, Irish notion that clothing keeps the heat out. Nothing delights my old eyes more than the sight of the bare, brown, sinewy back of a young fellow, up aloft in a field, building a load of hay. Here at long last is something indigenous to the soil! The sun gives his hide the bronze of an Indian warrior and the gloss of a ripening chokecherry. In my young days, both men and women in rural Ontario were distressingly over-clothed in the summer season.

July of 1857 was a scorcher in Mono. It was hot enough to crack stones, and stray clouds merely threatened rain as they drifted off to the west, leaving a close, humid swelter in their wake. It was a bad season for Nancy Marshall's poultry. The chick of the bronze turkey is the smartest, snappiest, sweetest little bird that ever rolled out of a shell to chase bugs on sturdy legs, but no feathered thing ever had a more witless mother. During the rainy spring season, Nancy trailed daily through the wet grass after her turkey hens to reason with them and to feed the young poults on clabbered milk and nettles. Even at that, the survivors promised pride and profit until the hot spell smote them. At break of day, the crazy hens, with their "click! click!" would lead the tender creatures off to chase cracker hoppers over the blistering hillsides, and sharp at three o'clock in the afternoon, the straggling flock would report back at the kitchen door to tell Nancy their tale of woe. Every day, it seemed, weak young birds would drag themselves back to say "peep! peep!" and then lie down listlessly to die before her eyes—without even a kick. It was heart-scalding! What with the heat, and the throng of harvest work, and Aunt Letitia, and the turkeys, the light of gladness seemed to go out of Nancy's eyes for a while.

Betty's future was the grand-aunt's special care that summer. The fashions of Mono impressed the lady as somewhat rustic; and she strongly urged that, for a proper finishing, the young girl be sent to a ladies' school in Toronto and got ready to make a good match. It was The Toronto Ladies' School on York Street, of which Mrs. Poeller was lady principal, that Miss Letitia favored. Mr. and Mrs. Marshall had seriously discussed Betty's

future before Miss Letitia's arrival, but they had quietly laid the matter aside for family discussion at a more convenient season.

"Indeed, Willie!" the visitor declared, "you can well afford it, and the child's future is to be considered."

Mrs. Marshall's mind now hung back from agreeing with a suggestion touching her daughter's future, coming as it did from the other side of the family.

"Indeed," said she, "I don't require to send my daughter to a ladies' school to be taught table manners."

At Mrs. Poeller's school, young ladies were given "a thorough English education, also French, music, dancing, singing, drawing, wax flowers, embroidery, and all kinds of plain and ornamental needlework." Mr. Marshall was favorably impressed with the school because of its regular advertisement in *The Globe* newspaper.

At the height of one of the discussions at the dinner table, Mrs. Marshall raised doubts as to the dancing, and referred to the discipline of the Methodist Connexion.

"You better speak to the minister about it, William," she suggested. "The last time he made us a pastoral call, the man was sighing with thoughts of hell fire because our ladies were washing their faces in tansy and buttermilk."

That, of course, was a sly dig at Aunt Letitia, who flushed up and promptly collapsed into one of her spasms. Nowadays we would describe such a flaccid weak spell as gas on the stomach. The woman was laced up so tightly, to affect a slim waistline, that useful organs were pushed out of place. A pinch of baking soda might have relieved her. She wilted and collapsed.

"Me heart . . . me heart, Willie," she gasped feebly, "the salts . . . Willie . . . me bottle!"

We all thought she was going out; but a whiff or two revived her.

That fainting spell settled, of course, the matter of young Betty going to Mrs. Poeller's school for young ladies, and not a moment too soon as events proved. With a dressmaker in the house, and Aunt Letitia assisting, it required six weeks' steady work, between sewings and fittings, to get the girl's wardrobe ready by the fall opening of the academy. Believe me, those were the days of fine stitches and art needle work!

The excitement of these goings-on brought a touch of color to Betty's cheeks, and, at times, the household again enjoyed the habit of human laughter.

"I may write you, Paddy," she told me as she left, "and give you the proper table manners for eating fish."

The mother received bulky letters from her homesick young girl, but their contents were seldom matters for table discussion.

One evening, Mrs. Marshall chuckled as she bespoke our attention.

"Would you listen to this, you gentlemen of Mono?" said the lady, and she read:

"They always said the men in Toronto were good looking and fashionably dressed. Indeed, Ma, I don't think they are as good looking or as well dressed as our own men up in Mono."

William Marshall looked up from his newspaper. "Would you convey to your daughter, mother," said he, "the thanks of Patrick and her father for those kind words."

We had a thronged time that fall and winter drawing the material for our new farm house. The plan was copied, of course, from the stout family dwelling on the 4th line of Markham, but the location of the house gave Mr. Marshall a good deal of thought. He often spoke to his wife about it, and one morning asked her to step out and look the situation over. Nancy's mind was occupied with the weekly batch of bread. She swung the upper section of the kitchen door open, and glanced out over the rolling farm land.

"Just suit yourself, William," said she, "put it anywhere . . . out there."

Mr. Marshall asked my opinion.

"Let us build it, Mr. Marshall," said I, "so every room'll get a kiss of the sun; and a kitchen window should give the womenfolk a chance to be observing the road without leaving their dishes."

So the house faces south by south-west, and my old kitchen fronts the highway.

The new farm house brought a deal of comfort and a dash of pride to the members of the Marshall household. But we kept the family pride locked up behind the heavy, drawn curtains in the chilly parlour; and it stole around stealthily in there, dusting the Jacques and Hayes walnut haircloth sofa and

the formal, springy-bottomed chairs—all of which, now grown shabby, are in use to-day as a living memorial of honest workmanship—and being careful, of course, not to shake the spindly-legged little table that held the casket of waxwork flowers Betty had made for us. The sad truth is that for generations the best room in an Ontario farm house stood closed up as a place of gloom, awaiting a death or a marriage feast.

But out in the great kitchen, the geraniums and fuchsias bloomed like love itself on their deep window sills; and neighbors dropped in a-plenty to crack butternuts and shorten the long winter evenings with their chat. The religious doctrines of the day got a thorough going over. An itinerant book peddler had been pushing actively in Mono the sale of *The Great Red Dragon or The Master Key to Popery*. I tasted the book myself, and its author impressed me as an ignorant and stupid person—but I let it go at that. However, when Paddy's feelings were not by to be hurt, Romish idolatry got its what-for in that kitchen. There was a fair sprinkling of Scottish Presbyterians in the district, and stout defenders were there to uphold John Calvin's cruel doctrine of the election of the saints and the other four points of difference with the Methodist creed. The Baptists, too, were sticking their heads above water, but their fenced-off communion table retarded for a time the growth of that great sect in the pioneer timbered lands of Canada, and on the wide plains beyond the Mississippi. However, the issue joined between "the jacket wetters" and "the baby sprinklers" raised heated arguments in the Marshall kitchen. For some reason, which I could not grasp, Mr. Marshall thought the fact that water descended from the sky on our heads instead of rising up to immerse our feet was a powerful argument in favor of infant baptism.

Doctrinal differences between the Mono protestants may have been only skin-deep. Anyway I have always suspected as much since the time Isaac Cornish bolted the Methodist Connexion. An active member of the Quarterly Board, the good man had been a noisy opponent of the Presbyterian Doctrine. At a Sunday morning service in the local Methodist meeting-house, Brother Cornish stamped down the aisle leading his numerous household to the family bench. The Cornishes always came last like the cow's tail.

At that moment, Rev. Mr. Berry was shoulder deep in his extensive opening prayer. Despite the squeaking of boots, the minister waded right on through his discourse, only pausing to explain: "And, O Lord, here comes Isaac Cornish—late as usual!"

With an angry snort the brother wheeled right about face, and tramped his family out again—thus giving further news to tell. Thereafter the Cornishes attended the Presbyterian church to hear Rev. Mr. Lewis preach the doctrine of the election of the saints.

However that may have been, a man's politics in those days, were usually all one wool and a yard wide.

Nathaniel Carson and William Marshall were both liberal reformers—staunch, clear Grits, they called themselves—and they were faithful followers of George Brown and his *Globe* newspaper. When Mr. Carson got into the Marshall kitchen, he could cry: “Sanctuary!” Bob O’New Pitsligo knew his manners better, of course, than to attack a visitor right in the bosom of the family. The dog begged to be excused from the smell of that man—and went outside to wait for him.

Those were the days of bitter politics in Canada, and of ugly sectional strife that left scars upon us. At the time the politicians and their quarrels loomed up large in the life of the Ontario countryside. And in judging the strength and temper of Canadian feeling, let us not forget the rock from which we were hewn and the pit from which we were digged. Those who are ignorant of the past are always fearful of the future. But you and I, who have fared over the rough roads, would be glad to go cheerily whistling down the smooth pavements of the morrow.

We usually had both sides of the arguments stoutly represented in that kitchen because Nancy Marshall was as hard-boiled and consistent a conservative as her father before her, and, in her amiable way, she scoffed at the Mono reformers, and at all the dogmas of their creed.

“Tut! tut! woman,” her husband would tell her, “you belong to the Middle Ages.”

He never got in the last word in my hearing. But, like a wise wife, Nancy was content at times to hold a watching brief. She would cast a supercilious glance over *The Globe* newspaper, now and again, but merely to gather faggots to feed the fires of her contempt for the paper and its editor. For meaty, solid reading, she immersed herself in *The Leader*, a sophisticated journal that supported the tory side. It tickled Nancy Trueman pink, to find George Brown, the editor of *The Globe*, spreading his personal ambitions in large splurges on his front page.

“Ah, ha!” she would tell the enemy, “I see Brown has had another invitation to a free meal up in Zorra . . . the conceit of the man!”

And in those days of personal journalism, the editor not only tooted his own horn, but he may have blown it with immodest vigor. Mrs. Marshall did not like George Brown—and that was that. She declared him to be a surly, bitter-minded scandalmonger. She smiled at the trustful, childlike faith her William and his cronies had in the reliability of their party paper. One of them, a Scotsman in the village, had trouble with his eyes in the fall of 1856, and his good wife read him the weekly paper. One evening she was jogging along diligently through the various news items in small type, and finally she read:

“A contract has been let for the construction of a candle over eight hundred yards long between the two bodies of water, large enough to permit an eleven foot draft.”

“Tut! tut! woman, it can no be!” the sick man exclaimed. “A candle! . . . what length?”

“But it is here printed, Sandy,” the wife declared, “I’ll read it again.”

“Well! well!” declared the astonished man, according to Mrs. Marshall, “. . . if it were no *The Globe*, I’d no believe it.”

At that time George Brown had led the reformers of Upper Canada through a series of successful campaigns against abuses that called for remedy, and he had earned their trust and confidence. To make a successful reformer, a man must have an aggressive spirit and a biased turn of mind that lets in light on one side of the subject only. Such qualities usually make him a tiresome travelling companion on a long journey; but they are specially ordained by nature for the purpose at hand. Even the little chick has, for the moment, a hard crust on its tender beak to help it peep the shell.

There was a bitterly contested general election in Canada in the midwinter of ’57—what with snow-blocked roads, open voting, free liquor and heads that needed mending. In those days, elections were rough fights like a lacrosse match with no referee on the field. In the nearby hamlet of Brampton, the supporters of the tory candidate rushed in their voters on the opening of the poll, taking complete possession of the booth by storm, and thus kept the other side out quite effectively on the opening day. Such a forcible showing of strength was thought to have an effect on the public

mind, and many votes, as you know, are like fallen leaves that drift with the prevailing wind. No official list of qualified electors had been prepared beforehand for use in the election. Having for the moment spent their available voting strength, the conservatives set in, on the second day, to obstruct and retard the poll. Every liberal who stuck his nose into the booth was subjected to a time-killing catechism as to his qualifications.

A respectable old Englishman declared he was a British subject, did he? The indignant man thus challenged was made take an oath on it. And the old man then said he was twenty-one years old and upward? Yes? Well, let him swear to it. How long did he say he had resided in the town he helped to found? He swore to that also. But was the local tightwad possessed of property worth £7 10s. a year? In such hypercritical fashion doubts were raised as to the qualifications of men personally well known to every person present. And after pledging his oath that he had not been bribed, the liberal supporter would finally cast his vote for Atkins and emerge choking on a string of oaths as long as his arm. Such tactics proved very effective toward the close of a poll. Getting the votes out early was practical politics in those spacious days. And in the same election, men were passing from poll to poll in the larger centres casting votes in whatever name came readily to their minds. Even the British royal family was not overlooked. Prince Consort cast four votes in that election against George Brown in Toronto.

The vanquished in elections, in those days, always had corruption and sinister influences to explain the verdict. The candidate of the Mono reformers, in the riding of South Simcoe, had been defeated, and Mr. Carson was loud in his exclamatory discourse about tory boodle. Nancy Marshall turned the heel of a sock before she spoke.

“Well, Mr. Carson,” she said at last, “how about poor Willie Ford?”

“Oh! Ford was all right,” Carson assured her. “He voted for us.”

“I thought the old man was a Conservative,” she remarked. “He was speaking to me this morning in the village.”

“And what did he tell you?” Mr. Carson demanded.

“He was much bothered about being sworn at the polls,” she replied. “He reckoned perhaps it was all right because he had no money in his hand at the time, but he told me about your side putting the silver on the ledge over his stable door.”

And Nancy went on with her knitting.

The Clear Grits were claiming a majority of English-speaking members in the next parliament of Canada; and rumblings of what they would do were being heard in Mono. Bitter criticism of the French Canadians was the principal stock-in-trade of many Ontario reformers.

Mrs. Marshall would hear none of it. On first coming to America, John Trueman and his family had spent four years down at Rivière du Loup, and her mother had always spoken highly of the courtesy and good manners of the Canadian children.

“The French were here before you, Mr. Carson,” she told him, “and they’ll be here after you’re gone. It is poor patriotism, Mr. Carson, to be forever criticizing the principal feature on your country’s face. We have an eleventh commandment in Canada; it says: ‘Thou shalt mind thine own business’.”

Nancy Marshall prodded the enemy by reading aloud to them an editorial blast from *The Leader*, and a naïve exhibit it makes of the sweet political temper of the times:

“So is any advocate of good government afraid of the untameable Clear Grit members? Why, there is nothing to fear. Silence a few of the boisterous ruffians with a sop. Hold a petty office before the eyes of a screaming Grit member and he is down on his marrow bones in an instant. He fawns like a spaniel. Their noisiest ones can be had cheap as dirt any day.”

—*The Leader (Toronto) Jan. 2,*
1858

So you will kindly gather that Nancy Marshall was a strong conservative; yet, curiously enough, she was very friendly-minded to the people of the United States. Whatever may be said about George Brown and the clear grits, their loyalty to England could never honestly be questioned. The truth is they were muchly of the colonially-minded, and, at the time, part of the ritual of that cult consisted in finding fault with “American ways,” and sneering at the United States and its government. To Nancy

Marshall's simple mind, the Republic was no abstract angel, or demon, either—it was merely millions of working people struggling to make homes and raise their families to better things. Now Nancy had two aunts living down Philadelphia way—and in houses with marble steps, as she proudly boasted. The strongest feeling in the heart of that woman was utter loyalty to her own kin folk. Anything said against the Republic seemed to hurt her as a personal affront against those Irish aunts and their families. And believe me she would not stand for it!

“They could gobble us up, the Americans could, any day if they had a mind too,” she told the loyal schoolmaster. “We must be friendly neighbors to them or we will soon cease being neighbors at all.”

Mr. Carson boasted of the British navy.

“Now, Mr. Carson, I'll have you know,” the lady told him, “so far as England and the States are concerned, Canada is housekeeping on this continent by sufferance and during good conduct only. And if you think for a moment the people of the States will quietly let England build up a military power in America, you have another better thought coming to you. Hush up, man! We are Quakers in Canada.”

And as events have proved, Nancy was right. The folk living north of the Rio Grande have in fact made a covenant of peace that no government can destroy—which, to my mind, is another wonder of the world. Peace reigns in America, because everywhere there, its altars glow in the hearts of the humble. Modern history has not been made by politicians, nor by acts of state. It is made by the temper and turn of mind of ordinary people, like Nancy Marshall.

Yes, Nancy Marshall was a strong conservative in her politics; but, going further, she was a very conservatively-minded woman. Free trade, the repeal of the corn laws, and the benevolence of unrestricted competition in business were subjects fresh and novel enough in those days to awaken a lively interest about an Ontario farm kitchen. The economic principles that supported them were becoming common property among the reading public, and such was the convincing lucidity of “laissez faire—allez passer” that, on first grasping them, the average person felt the rapture of an initiate who awakens to find in his hands a key that unlocks the mysteries. The cold, abstract, economic formulae of the day were accepted as pure gospel by Mr. Marshall and his cronies. They seemed to solve any problem just like Q.E.D. So far as such abstractions were concerned, Nancy remained an impenitent

unbeliever to the day of her death. She would not listen to Mr. Carson preaching the benefits of unrestricted competition.

“Indeed, Mr. Carson,” she once told him, “I think those creatures of yours, Lucy Fair and Allie Passer, are a pair of bad women. The very idea of it! Sit by, you say, letting things go to the devil, and everything will come out all right? Just try running a farm that way, William, and Sheriff Jarvis will be driving in to count us out our six knives and forks, and to put our bedding on the road.”

She had the curious notion that the public has to pay in the long run for a multiplicity of stores and such conveniences; and that society foots the bill for the riot of waste and the losses that competition leaves in its wake.

Indeed, Mrs. Marshall told the Mono reformers she did not believe free trade was a philanthropic attempt to give cheap food to the working people of England. In her opinion, self-seeking business interests over there were ruining the farmers in order that factory hands could subsist on lower wages.

“And without sound, healthy farms,” she asked them, “where will any country drift—but to ruin?”

The simple countrywoman was merely applying generally the social and economic principles that people practised on a pioneer farm in Canada. Industry, to her mind, was a social service, and had a greater duty than piling up wealth to ruin the lives of the money-grabbers themselves. Its first duty was to produce honest wares, and its second duty to give reasonable security of employment to men who depend on it to support their families in comfort. In pioneer life, people knew little of competition, but they tasted the sweets of neighborly co-operation. The idea of gouging a neighbor with a high price because he finds himself short taken in his supplies would have been shocking to the mind and feelings of Nancy Marshall. To her way of thinking, men successful under modern business methods should face a grand jury.

“If people had a chance to be honest, there is plenty to go round,” she told them, “and for every reasonable need, families could cut and come again!”

Her husband was probably right. His wife Nancy belonged to the Middle Ages, with its guilds that controlled production and regulated prices. In these later days, the economic principles Mr. Carson accepted with such enthusiasm have lost some of their savour. The practical precepts of shopkeepers, traders and gambling houses are not necessarily the laws of

social life. However convincing they seemed to him, they were false and dangerous because their conclusions were built on premises that were only half truths, and had society applied them literally, they would have led us through a bloody welter. In politics and social life, the man who has the better argument usually has the poorer cause. Arguments emanate from the fevers of the brain, but the truth pierces a man in the pit of his stomach. Down there somewhere close to the heart, according to the ancients, lies the seat of wisdom. Yes! William Marshall was probably right. And, again, Old Hickory Mick described a conservative as a person a hundred years ahead of the times. But then, again, that drunkard would have also told you that any thought worthwhile on social matters is already several thousand years old.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BLUE BELLS OF SPRING



ARD times hit and rent the Ontario countryside in the spring of '59, as unexpectedly as a bolt of forked lightning strikes down out of a clear sky. All of a sudden and for the first time we observed the lowering storm clouds banking up to the south. Speaking of depressions, that was the granddaddy of them all! A search warrant was required to find a dollar bill in Upper Canada. It was not a matter of low prices on an unsteady market: wheat and meat became unsaleable; the worried farmer hauled home his load of produce or trifled it off for trade. Public confidence and private credit had dissolved into thin air; and the spell remained unbroken in Canada until great guns started to speak of brotherly love as they shook the battlefields of the Republic.

How fortunate that in their days of plenty the pioneers of Upper Canada had built themselves stout barns and houses! Nowadays it is those very barns and houses that the farmers mortgage in order to gamble on the stock market. Before they get through, some of them will agree with me that the only stock for a farmer to own is livestock. The Canadian farmer was hard hit in the late fifties; but, generally speaking, what he had was his own with a rail fence around it. Men heavily in debt went under and went elsewhere, as they always do. And in the end, perhaps, they were the better for it.

As for the rest of us, we had plenty to eat—but no cash money. As a ship-owner overhauls his vessel in a slack season, William Marshall spent the years of depression putting his farm in first-class shape. Loose field boulders were lugged out of the plowman's way. Long stone fences mark on this farm the grave of the great depression. It makes an old man smile to hear folk growling about high commodity prices. It is a taste of low prices that gives them all an acute belly-ache.

In the spring of 1861, the pride of the Marshall household returned home, after spending the winter with her mother's aunts in Philadelphia. Miss Elizabeth was now a smart, wholesome young woman in her

nineteenth year. With all her travelling around, she had remained quiet and soft of speech, but the girl had the air of always knowing right well what she was saying. Her cousin, Jennie Thompson, had come up to visit with her, and the presence of the marriageable young ladies made the Marshall household a mighty lively place. Mrs. Marshall was a jolly woman; and the result was that young people were constantly visiting the farm, and having a real good time. William Marshall was an open-handed host and not like the old fellow down the line whose daughter complained bitterly that her stingy old father said to young men: "Come up, come up after supper and stay till bedtime!" In fact the Marshalls went to the other extreme. They seemed at times to be running a boarding stable for smart driving horses. It was nothing unusual for a couple of young beaux to drop in to call and end up by staying two or three days. On one occasion two brothers from the second line west extended their stay till their father finally drove over himself to enquire wrathfully:

"Who do you reckon, boys, will be doing the chores up to home the balance of the winter?"

But Nancy Marshall mollified the man, and the father's horses also got a free meal out of Marshall's oat bin.

Miss Elizabeth Marshall was a very popular young lady; but the grand-aunt, Letitia, was not altogether pleased that summer with the way things were going. The Marshalls made every one welcome and saw to it that they had a good time; but their daughter showed no preferences and she failed to develop the clinging qualities which I noticed in the grand-aunt's pies. When Jennie and Elizabeth went to a party, it was William Marshall that drove them out in style with his spanking pair and three-seated spring democrat; and no matter how late the hour, Mr. Marshall always went for "his girls." Indeed, Nancy would not have them depending on any young man for a ride home. Letitia thought Elizabeth was wasting valuable time, and that at her age she should be keeping steady company. The matter concerned the woman so much that she lengthened out her visit that summer; and by her twists of thought and subtle hints it was clear as day that her mind was bent on making a match of some kind for Miss Elizabeth—but without any apparent results.

A few days before she left the Rev. Mr. Berry came over from his circuit at Markham to visit around for a few days among his old parishioners in Mono. Miss Letitia called him into consultation. Match-making was one of the specialties of a Methodist minister in the old days. On his return home, Rev. Mr. Berry busied himself to some purpose. He wrote William Marshall

eulogizing Samuel Arnold, a young farmer of the Markham circuit, who was “the only son of a godly family of great substance;” and in the end, Mr. Samuel Arnold received a warm invitation to come over to Mono for a visit among Mr. Berry’s Methodist friends.

Meantime, the American Civil War was breaking out and there were prospects of high prices for Canadian farm produce. On the Marshall farm we were making special efforts to get in a large acreage in fall wheat. I had always been a strong healthy man, able to do a fair stroke of work; yet that season a listless spell came over me that made me thoroughly disgusted with myself. I thought at first it came from some ailment of the stomach. My appetite went back on me, which was certainly a novel experience. My mind would wander off most unexpectedly from the task in hand; and I would find myself leaning on the plow-handles studying dissolving cloud effects—which is a mighty slow way of blackening a field. The affair worried me quite a bit; but I hoped the others did not notice it. Then one morning early, I took the team over to Orangeville to get a load of supplies. I was back by noontime; and as we sat down to dinner, Mr. Mashall asked me casually:

“What did you do with the team, Patrick?”

I was dumbfounded entirely and felt mortified in the extreme. I had left that wretched team standing in the stable of the Queen’s Hotel at Orangeville, and, like a silly idiot, I had walked home the whole distance of six miles.

My face burned as red as the hair on my head.

“Faith,” I exclaimed, “it’s clean daft I am. Someone should examine my head!”

“Oh!” said Miss Elizabeth Marshall, “it’s in love you are, Patrick. Now who can the proud girl be?”

They all laughed at the fine joke. I begged to be excused and slipped away to throw a saddle on the sorrel gelding. Off I rode in haste to retrieve the forgotten team in the tavern stable.

I did a deal of hard thinking on the way over. Now there, thought I, as I rode along, is the benefit of sending a girl to a ladies’ college and to see the world. Just to think that a simple, demure young woman can tell offhand, and at a glance, what is ailing a man who has been stumbling around in painful ignorance of the whole matter entirely. The blood left my face at the thought that perhaps the clever young lady could answer the question she had asked me. I realized I was in a terrible bad way. My heart was like an

old stock pot that bursts suddenly into a boil after simmering a long time. It was honest, wholesome, human love that had struck me down. Paddy, said I to myself, my boy, you'll have to chuck a brace! Of course, the pride of the Marshall family had nothing but a friendly interest in me. For the girl to have an affair of the heart with a Catholic fellow would have seemed as great a disgrace to her connection as for her to run off with a drunken tinker. And from my own standpoint, the affair was quite as ridiculous. I belonged to a different race and breed; and as a good Roman Catholic, I saw it was a bad business entirely. But mulling such thoughts over in my mind only seemed to make my ears ring and gave me a sharp pain in the base of my skull. Before leaving Orangeville with the team, I slipped into a store and bought myself the biggest bottle of patent medicine I could lay my eyes on.

The Marshall family were honestly concerned about my condition of health; but I told them I had got medicine to take, and, worse luck, I produced the bottle. The dose was a tablespoonful night and morning before meals. Miss Elizabeth saw to it that I took my medicine. It was horribly-bitter astringent stuff.

“I read on the label that it is good for most every ailment, Patrick, even for fainting spells,” the solicitous young woman told me, with a smile. “So perhaps it will cure you!”

I kept away from the house and threw my body into hard work in an attempt to burn the fever out of my system. I can sincerely recommend a daily walk of eighteen miles between the handles of a bucking plow to any young man who is love sick—to be followed by a rest of eight hours on a hard bunk.

A day or two before Christmas that year, Samuel Arnold drove up the lane to make his expected visit on Miss Elizabeth Marshall and her family. Mr. Marshall was away to town. So I stepped out to do the honors and took the young gentleman's team. Mr. Arnold said he would go with me to the stable. It had been a long, cold cutter ride for the man—the snow crunched under foot. He came muffled up with fur cap and robes, but on alighting, his legs were stiff and numb with the cold. His purpose in coming with me, I found, was to dandify himself up for an effective stage entrance at the house. Off came the fur cap; and on he clapped a high silk plug much affected by the young Irish gentry of those days. The smart young man was wearing pants with plush stripes and a black frock-coat with two buttons at the small of the back. As he fingered his bow-tie and turned to walk towards the house, it occurred to me that I might do him a kindly turn. He seemed a civil

young man. He had come a long way, and was entitled to a good run for his money.

“Pardon me, sir,” I said to him; “but the Marshall ladies have a prejudice against tobacco chewing. Perhaps you better wipe your chin and rid up the corners of your mouth a little.”

Mr. Arnold took the suggestion kindly.

“And perhaps, too,” I told him, “you better leave your plug with me. You might be forgetful and take a chew unbeknownst to yourself like!”

I carried his grip up to the house and ushered him in the front way, which had been freshly shovelled for the occasion.

That was one festal season the Marshall parlor gave useful service for its idle keep. Mr. Arnold prided himself on his deep singing voice; and his idea of a good time was to have Miss Elizabeth play hymn tunes for him on the melodeon. The man’s voice vibrated the wire stems on the wax flowers and penetrated the remote fastnesses of the Marshall house. After several days of it, the committee rose and reported progress. Mr. Arnold apparently asked leave to sit again at a later date. Mrs. Marshall thought him an agreeable young man. William Marshall had tried him several times, but never struck sparks strong enough to light up a discussion of any kind. Mr. Arnold pulled on his fur cap and drove away with a cordial invitation to come again.

The Rev. James Berry—that incorrigible matchmaker—wrote the bread-and-butter letter. He reported that the young man was very favorably impressed.

Arnold returned to the Marshall farm in lilac time. As luck had it, Miss Letitia was present to make his acquaintance. On the occasion of this visit, the young man’s mind was not on hymn singing. He had driven over to make arrangements about getting married. He was surprised and disappointed when Miss Elizabeth told him that, at the moment, she was not thinking of marrying any one.

It then transpired that Rev. Mr. Berry, in the heat of match-making, had overstepped his instructions and that the clergyman’s limber tongue had placed young Arnold in a very awkward predicament. All his friends and neighbors over home had been told the match was made, and the whole countryside knew that Arnold was now off to attend to the details of getting married to Miss Elizabeth Marshall of Mono. An awkward affair that, was it not? Arnold argued his side of the case with great vigor, and spent a couple of days trying to persuade the young woman to take a reasonable view of the

situation. Elizabeth did not see matters in his light. Aunt Letitia spoke her mind strongly on the wisdom of the girl getting a good husband with a two-hundred-acre farm all clear, now that the opportunity presented itself. Quite a bit of pressure was brought to bear on Elizabeth, but she was adamant. Altogether, a very unhappy time was had. Finally Miss Letitia had one of her weak spells; and Samuel Arnold threw up his hands and asked that his team be got ready for the road by two o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Marshall asked me if I would mind lending a hand by having the visitor's team ready at that unearthly hour. That was no task for me—it was a downright, joyful pleasure. I gave the Arnold horses oats enough to send them steaming down the road; and then I took a walk off somewhere—I was horribly distressed in spirit.

On returning, I found the house in darkness. The air was mellow with moonlight and vibrant with the rasping, pulsing hum of the tree locusts. At the gate of the snappy new picket fence, which now totters on its timeworn way, I found the cause of all the family trouble awaiting me. The girl was in her bare feet and her hair had tumbled down from a loose coil.

“Why, Miss Elizabeth,” said I, “I thought every one would be in bed long ago! Bob and I were waiting up to get Mr. Arnold's team ready for him.”

“Oh! it's heart-broken I am,” she told me with a choke in her voice.

“Now, now, Betty,” said I to her, “it's this night time does it. The shadows will all flee away with the fairness of the morning.”

“If that old thing, Letitia, would only mind her own business,” she sobbed, “I know Ma would leave me alone.”

The girl's face was pale in the moonlight, and she was in distress.

“Why, Betty,” I comforted her, “they're all interested in your welfare, and they're trying to plan the best for you.”

“But I don't want to marry that conceited thing—with his singing,” she burst out.

“The man might make you a good home,” I counselled, “his folk are highly spoken of.”

“But I don't want him!” she sobbed. “I don't want him at all. . . . It's you I want, Paddy!”

The girl's hair got tangled up in her bare arms and seemed to blind me. I could feel the sobs shaking the curves of her soft, warm body. It was Betty taught me a woman's tears have a salty taste.

"Oh! take me," she whispered, "never to forsake me—because I love you so."

"Now, now, girl," I told her after awhile, "you'll always have Paddy as a last resort. Sure, child," said I, "you'll never be a leftover like your grand-aunt Letitia—I'll guarantee that!"

The thought touched a funny spot and broke the spell the moon was casting.

"I don't know why they are all so much concerned about my affairs," she complained, "why don't they leave a girl alone to live her own life? They must want to get rid of me!"

"Well," I said, with a chuckle, "they'll all be damn well concerned about your affairs, Elizabeth Ann, if that Aunt Letitia of yours spies you standing out here in the moonlight with your arms about the neck of a no-account Irish papist."

"Oh! well, anyway, you clumsy sweetheart," she smiled at me through glistening tears, "it's 'mea culpa,' Paddy, and you won't have to tell your ghostly father, John Sheridan, anything about it."

With that, she fled into the darkened house.

"Come, Bob," said I, when at last I got my breath back, "let us go and think this matter over."

It was clear as day what was the matter with Paddy Slater. He was hopelessly in love with the woman whose fresh young heart had burst open, like a flower, in wild surrender there. In the hot heyday of his youth, his blood was tingling with a love sickness of which a country lad once sang:

"My beloved is unto me as a cluster of flowers in the vineyards of En-gedi . . . Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair! . . . Thou hast doves' eyes. . . . Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn which come up from the washing. . . . Thy two breasts are like two roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. . . . Thy lips drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is as the smell of Lebanon. . . . Stay ye me with cakes of raisins, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love!"

And Paddy Slater knew what unhappiness that love would bring to a family to whom he was honor-bound by ties that snubbed about the heart of a lonely barefoot orphan boy. Now, I ask you, all and sundry, what should the miserable lad have done?

I hung about the house till long after two o'clock in the morning. I could hear the heart-broken swain snoring soundly, dragging a bow over his base cord like a regular fare-you-well. Evidently the man was snugly lodged till breakfast call. I went into my own room and packed up some working clothes in a clean grain sack.

Bob was waiting for me at the kitchen door. He was a crippled dog, worn out with the weight of his years. I felt heart-scalded to be leaving him, and I knelt down to try and explain matters.

“I’m off on a long journey, Bob, my friend,” I told him.

The dog stuck his long snout into my face and whined querulously. The old fellow was suffering from a disorder that was a private matter between two gentlemen; but while I was around to do him little services, he took an interest in the affairs of the farm and got about without much discomfort. But it seemed a shame to be deserting him.

“And, Bobbie, old man, some of these days you may be going on a long journey, too,” I whispered to him; and after a long pause, I slipped around to the woodshed to get me a sharp-nosed shovel.

We strolled slowly back to the bush, conversing about old times; yet the conversation did not seem to shorten the journey.

“I’ve always had a shrewd notion, Bob,” I explained to him right cheerfully, “that the little ground-folk have their living quarters under the trees somewhere hereabouts, and I’m just going to dig down a little and see if you can find them.”

The old dog lay down by the edge of a little pit I was digging, and watched me with fitful interest.

“Now just look down there carefully, Bobbie, with those old eyes of yours,” I told him, as he stood trustfully beside me, “and you may find out the wonder of the world.”

Bob O’New Pitsligo never knew in this life what happened to him; and if he awoke in another, his loving old heart forgave the man who shot him. I

choked at the thought of shovelling the moist cold earth over his quivering body. A silly notion, of course, it was; but away back I slipped to the house to pilfer a fine new checker-board quilt Aunt Letitia had made, with its bright scarlet squares cut from a soldier's tunic. So I gave Bob a decent burial with a martial cloak around him.

Then I struck off smartly down the townline. Pale in the moonlight, spread out before me a shadow-shot road that led on a long journey from love.

My body was in a fever and my head was splitting. I trudged along, fortifying myself with heavy drafts of self pity. I had done no wrong; yet here was fate overturning my little world about my head as plowmen crush the homes and hopes of lesser life in stubble field. Woe's me! I was a poor creature tramping off to punishment at the whim of a blind force as cruel and bad-hearted as the Roman matron who sent her slave to be torn with stripes and nailed to a cross.^[12]

Riding in his heavens, the man in the moon had me in derision.

"Why," I asked him, "damn an honest man to the torments of vain longing?"

"Let me tell you, silly, crack-brained human," he sneered at me, "a man seldom marries the woman he loves; and, if he does, it is often a tragedy I find on my hands in my pale moonlight."

"But where is the justice of it all?" I cried.

^[12] "So you tell me, do you, you chattering ape, that this slave of mine has the emotions of a man? And you say the creature has done no wrong? Very well! We'll let it go at that. To the cross with him! It is my whim. I am his mistress and I will it so."—Juvenal.

"Don't ask me," the moon replied, "to justify God's ways to man. It is a heavy night's work for me to justify man's ways to God. In your trifling world, human notions of justice have little to do with man's mortal fate. It is lucky for most bawlers for justice that they do not get it! Since when," he inquired of me, "have the petty merits of mortals controlled the decrees of destiny? Indeed, it is an interesting time I have, up here, strolling around observing affairs."

"See that poor suffering woman in the cabin yonder—dying in childbirth?" the moon man enquired. "She dies in the giving of life! How does that fit in with your notions of justice? But let me tell you the soul of

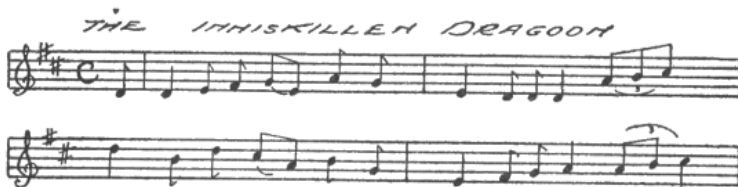
that brave creature flies straight to the arms of her loving Saviour who died for the likes of you. And where was the justice in that?"

"And what have you to say," he asked me, "of that babe yonder, new born with poison in its bones because of a man's sin? Put that in your pipe, young man, and smoke it at your leisure."

"It is all very well," the moon man told me, "for men caught in the little traps set by their own sins and mean weaknesses to whimper and cry out for mercy. But the Iroquois brave, chanting his war songs as the French burnt his legs to a crisp at the stake, bore himself with the heroic, unflinching spirit that becomes any man trapped in the cruel toils of destiny itself."

"I am the great leveller," the moon chuckled to me. "Given time, my beams can flatten out all your trifling affairs down there—even the little gravestones the Irish put up to tell the county they came from. I keep no record of you mortals, save of the stout hearts that smile at the grim tragedy of life."

And somehow as I trudged along, his honest talk seemed to renew a serene and right spirit within me. Why all my vain repining? After all, I was twenty-three, and five foot ten. A long, fast walk is fine for sweating the annoyances out of a man's mind. By the time I reached Purple Hill, the day was breaking and the shadows were fleeing away. As I swung down it, and turned my face southward, I found myself whistling an Irish tune:



*Her hair is as bronze as a wild turkey's wing,
Her eyes are as clear as the bluebells of spring;
And light is her laugh as the sun on the sea,
But the weight of the world comes between her and me.*

*Now what can man do when the world is his foe
And the weight of relations fall on him like snow,
But bend the brow boldly and fare away far
To follow good fortune and win fame in the war?*

CHAPTER XII.

PATCHES OF CRIMSON



was travelling in a southeasterly direction along Huron-Ontario Street, the old centre trunk-road that cut across the Province of Upper Canada from Lake Huron on the north to the mouth of the Credit River on the shore of Lake Ontario. A three hours' tramp brought me abruptly to the sharp edge of the Caledon hills; and standing there, a thousand feet above sea level, I looked out over a great undulating plain that sloped southward, thirty miles beyond the eyes' reach, to the waters of the lower lake. That long range of highland resembles the sharp shore line of an ancient inland sea, the waters of which receded before anyone was around to view God's handiwork, leaving its sprawling headlands to shelter the vineyards and peach orchards of the Niagara peninsula, the warm fruitful plains of Burlington, and, further to the west, rich farm lands flowing with milk and honey.

As the Centre Road dipped further into the plains, it became a smooth, well-planked highway dotted with toll-gates; and following through to its end, on Thursday noon I hung up my hat in the roughcast tavern by the river mouth at Port Credit, and sat down to have my dinner. A heavy east blow on the lake had sent local shipping running in for shelter and a forest of masts bristled in the harbor as large lake schooners rode at anchor with flocks of smaller craft bobbing around them.

The bar-room across the front of Robert Lynd's smart tavern was crowded with sailormen unloading schooners of lager and ale. About the kitchen, the women were as busy as farm wives on a threshing day. A bright-eyed Scottish girl was waiting on one of the tables.

"Kindly bring me two meals," said I to the girl, "one for myself—the other for a friend."

"Will your friend be in directly?" she asked me, as she planted two steaming bowls of soup on the table.

“Don’t bother your pretty head about that man,” said I, casual-like. “I’ll look after him—he’s a friend very near to my heart.”

So I neatly stowed away the two dinners from soups to pudding helpings.

The girl observed me with a merry glint in her eye.

“Perhaps,” she suggested, “your friend needs something more.”

“No,” I told her, “I think that fellow has had enough, but I wouldn’t refuse an extra piece of pie for myself.”

I had wandered into a smart little port town of five or six hundred souls, where every working-man called himself a mariner and was as busy at his trade as any skipper in a cheese. Thirty-five cargo boats of one size or another were sailing from its port that season. The smaller ones were running lake stone and cordwood fourteen miles down the shore to the docks at Toronto. Large schooners of 600 tons’ burden and over were loading cargoes of produce at Canadian ports and then crossing the lake, 165 miles, to Oswego, or to other American ports of entry. Along the east side of the Credit river stood a row of wharves and grain storehouses; and, in the fall after threshing time, farmers’ teams formed long lines on the streets, waiting their turn to unload at the granaries.

I spent that summer and winter at the Credit; and, of course, I became a mariner myself.

The river running through the village divided its residents into two factions—as such rivers have the habit of doing; but apart from women squabbling at Hallowe’en time about the ownership of geese, neighborly peace reigned among the sailor families of a port where fun-loving hearts never grow old. Obstreperous strangers landing at Port Credit faced a united front and were roughly shown their proper places. Outsiders had the annoying habit of referring to the Credit as Port Misery, which was considered locally as an opprobrious epithet; and it was assuredly a scandalous name for any sailor to give a snug harbor town with its four smart taverns, at any one of which a man without silver could get himself tight as a drum by standing around taking the drinks on the house.

But the geese, I’ll admit, were the cause of much village strife. Every housewife wintered a gander and two or three laying geese; and, as the summer advanced, she put her private mark on their progeny, and thriftily turned out her promises of pin money to join the community flock—at times a thousand strong—that in fair weather floated in state on the lake in front of

the harbor, but on a storm brewing gave a true weather forecast by sailing its squadrons upstream to the shelter of cat-tail marshes. The geese were as destructive as a plague of locusts to any barley field that lay convenient to the water edge. They ate everything before them and destroyed everything behind them.

A bonfire on the river bank, a keg of beer from the little brewery at Puggy Huddle and a couple of fat geese roasted on spits made any dark fall evening pass pleasantly for a party of sailor boys. Many a good woman was short in her count of young geese when the community flock was broken up and the raffles were held. But a still sadder misfortune befell Mrs. Johnstone, whose two sons were running a stone-hooker out of Port Credit in the fall of 1862. Her boys grabbed a couple of squawking geese one evening and a lively shore party got under way. The flesh of one of the birds proving as tough as shoe-leather, a thought occurred to Aaron Peer, who picked up its head and quietly despatched a sly young lad to bear the token to Mrs. Johnstone. The good woman came hurrying down the shore, calling loudly for a police constable and keening that we had killed poor Maggie, her great egg layer, that had been a family pet for twenty years.

Everyone ducked quickly for cover with the exception of a sailor off a Toronto schooner, who had been an innocent bystander. The woman had him arrested on the spot, charged with petty larceny. The accused man had a distressing impediment in his speech. In the misery of getting words out of him, he tramped with his foot like an angry bull pawing the ground.

The goose-eaters all went up to Cooksville next morning to hear his trial, which came on before two Justices of the Peace. One of the presiding magistrates was Melville Parker, a local farmer and a popular citizen, whose father was Admiral Sir William Parker, Bart. Owing to the death of an elder brother without issue, Melville Parker afterward fell into the title himself. He was a clever and resourceful man and could make a cracking good tory speech—after he got going; but at times he stuttered.

It was a trial after the usual sort in a rural police court in Ontario. Mrs. Johnstone told all about her family pet and the roasted carcass. And, of course, the strange sailor had been caught right on the spot. Magistrate Parker swung his chair around to question the accused.

“Whu-whu-whu-why,” he demanded with a violent jerk of the head, “di-di-did you do it?”

The sailor set in to paw the floor boards.

“Di-di-di-did yu-yu-you thi-thi-think,” he ground out, “I’m a di-di-damn —” with a jerk of the head—“fo-fo-fool?”

Magistrate Parker’s face reddened as he jumped up and hit the table a bang with his fist.

“Sis-sis-sis-six months!” he shouted. “Ti-ti-ti-take him away!”

We had to send to the Port for Robert Cotton, a good tory, to come up and explain away the contempt of court; but, in the end of the matter, everyone, save Mrs. Johnstone, forgot all about the stolen goose.

The following spring I sailed under Skipper Hare aboard a two-masted brigantine of 120-ton burden. With her smart white frock bulging before a chasing wind and a ribbon of foam fluttering in her wake, she was a pretty, dainty-stepping little lady, was the *Blue Heron* of Port Credit. Her foremast was square rigged, and, as flounces and festoons about her square sail, she carried a staysail, a standing staysail, a fly jib and a jib topsail. Her main mast was schooner rigged with a flying staysail, a midship staysail and a main gaff topsail. The schooner had a slip keel, which was better than “a barn door” for holding her into the wind and which had the knack of getting itself out of the way in shallow water. The *Blue Heron* tripped along smartly and kept her feet well in any kind of sailing weather. Many of the large cargo boats sailing the lower lakes at the time were built along similar lines and carried the same spread of canvas. The shallow draft and narrow channel of the old Welland Canal developed a special design in sailing vessels that was not seen in other waters.

The *Blue Heron* was busily engaged that season carrying sundry trifling cargoes to American ports. She had bunks for four; but at times we made room for more, because her skipper and crew were profitably engaged that season in the business of bounty jumping.

On requisition from the executive at Washington, the state governments were raising troops by draft to prosecute the American Civil War, and a citizen with a marked ballot was obliged to serve in the army or supply a substitute. Many a well-fed merchant shelled out freely to hire a lad to do his fighting for him. Thousands of Canadians crossed the line to accept such blood money and serve in the armies of the Union. So extensive did this traffic become that Roman Catholic priests, especially in the French parishes, were fulminating against it. There were enough Canadians serving as mercenaries in the Northern forces to have made a smashing fine army in themselves; but accurate statistics must remain unavailable, because there were many lads like Paddy Slater, who joined and deserted that summer at

every American port of call east of the Detroit river. The *Blue Heron* said goodbye to her soldier boys as she sailed away with their bounty money on board, but she had secluded trysting places where she picked them up again in the dead of night. My share of the traffic netted me \$1,870.00, which lay on deposit in the Bank of Montreal, corner of Front and Yonge Streets, Toronto. The last \$350 of the money was deposited by Skipper Hare, because a smart American officer had hustled me off thirty miles inland. Paddy Slater had gone to be a soldier.

Men who have been concerned in the actual killing do not talk about a war. They try to forget; and I have plenty to forget myself, in the name of God. A foreign mercenary, let me say, often makes a good soldier. The lad is usually there because he has nothing elsewhere to live for. My year of active soldiering ended abruptly amid the pitiable shrieks of wounded horses. The 61st Alabama Infantry swarmed on the scene; and troopers in butternut suits and slouched hats marched off a small batch of us as prisoners.

The most vivid impression of the Civil War that remains in my old brain is the horrid memory of well-dressed Southern ladies, in their wrath and hatred, spitting in the faces of wounded prisoners in ragged blue. But perhaps there was nothing peculiar about that. The war-crazed women of Toronto would have treated prisoners the same, a few years back, had they been given the chance. A man would require a longer lifetime than mine to observe anything good come out of a war between peoples. Let us leave the ladies and the recruiting officers to sing of the thundering of war's mighty arms. As Old Hickory Mick used to declare—while getting over a spree—“of tillage, and the care of beasts and trees, I sing.” May God and Mary rest the man's beautiful soul in peace!

I cannot say much in favor of Southern hospitality. With 1,300 other prisoners, I got plenty of fresh air treatment behind the high-stockade of a four-acre prison camp. Nor do I speak highly of Southern cooking. It was half a pint of flour I got a day, and, once in a while, a small piece of putrid meat. Paddy's stomach felt like old times in Donegal. However, I lived, which is more than many a comrade did; and by the luck of an exchange of prisoners, I found myself back again in Buffalo, N.Y., knocking about, with a new suit of army clothes on my person, and a month's furlough and sixty days' of my back pay in my pocket. I was weak in body and spirit, and spent my time about the harbor, envying the greedy gulls that flew in from the North, owning no man as their master. I wrote a letter to Charles Hare, Port Credit, C.W., telling him, if he happened to be in my present parts, I would be glad if he would enquire for me.

One Tuesday morning, I saw a sight to cure sore eyes. Sure, it was the sweet little old *Blue Heron*, beating into port with her white-goods all on, as clipper looking as any fresh young girl off to a Sunday school picnic. I noticed the officials took a lively interest in the brig. Canadian vessels of her type had earned the bad graces of American port authorities. It was assumed they were up to devilment of some sort. They were regularly boarded, and several of them had recently been fired upon. I dodged over to Sam Spink's tavern to wait events. Down the shore that night, I paid a lad two dollars to row me out to a red light that blinked twice in the darkness.

A saucy squirt of a tug leisurely towed a long string of schooners through the Welland Canal. As a puff of wind filled the sails, she cast us off, one after another, on the blue waters of Lake Ontario. One Irish heart thanked God, that day, that a great queen reigned over the healthier parts of North America. And whenever I read, nowadays, of them burning an old lake schooner to make an idle spectacle for a thoughtless crowd, I think of the stout hearts that sailed her; and the word of one of those fresh-water sailors to his comrade was better, I declare, than any banker's bond.

On a September morning that year, Aaron Peer and I were busy unloading a box of freshly-gutted herrings on the fish quay in Toronto harbor. A stick gave me a sharp dig in the ribs, and I swung round smartly to face a stylishly-dressed old gentleman whose high hat was atilt in the surprise of the discovery he had made.

"Oh, Mr. Lewis," said I, "God bless you! And how are all the folk up in Mono?"

"Ah, ha!" the man exclaimed, "I'd know that back of yours anywhere, Paddy Slater, you scoundrel you!"

Sure it was the Reverend Alexander Lewis himself, and he was a sporty-looking old fellow for a retired Presbyterian minister. Away back in 1820, he had been the first settler in Mono Township. For a time he kept the first post office at Mono Mills, and the good man had since preached the doctrine of the election of the saints to two generations of Mono Presbyterians. For several years, he had been living retired in the village, lending his money carefully on good security at twelve per cent.—yes, and, like a shrewd banker, deducting his interest out of the face of the loan. It is a caution to me how the Lord prospers some clergymen on their small salaries. With his silk waistcoat and ruffled white shirt-front, I would like to show you a picture I have of that smart pioneer of Mono, as he sat glowing with health, his hand resting gallantly on the shoulder of a gentle, feeble old lady, whose eyes

show plainly she is proud of him. Now I ask you what better character evidence than that can any man leave behind him?

Rev. Mr. Lewis informed me William Marshall was a sick man, and he gave me strict orders to get back up to Mono as fast as a train would take me. I went into the Great Western Station that afternoon to enquire about the train service to Brampton. And who did I find strutting around in there, like a quartermaster staff sergeant, but Michael, the smuggler, who was now using his great voice to good purpose announcing the arrival and departure of trains. When I was a lad in Toronto, Michael's wife kept a neat little cottage for him on the bay shore at the foot of York Street. The good woman busied herself renting boats, and Michael had been a sailor with a proud reputation gained by pitching a custom officer overboard into the bay. Michael shouted to me that I was in the wrong station.

The next morning I took the Grand Trunk train to Brampton, and from that village the stage coach carried me twenty-two miles north to Orangeville, where I hired a livery rig to drive me east up over Purple Hill. I couldn't notice any changes as we drove along, which surprised me because time had changed me greatly since I tramped away in the moonlight over that old country road.

A strange woman met me at the Marshall door. She told me Mr. Marshall was too sick to see visitors.

"Tell the good man," said I, "that it's Paddy Slater."

It was a sad sight to see the big man brought low with nothing much left but his huge frame. As I took his hand, I noticed his finger nails were blue. William Marshall was glad to see me.

"You shouldn't have gone away like that, Patrick," he said to me, as we talked things over a little.

"Well Sir," said I, "I did it for the best." "Yes Patrick," he answered me after a pause, "I know all about it now—poor Betty told me."

I mentioned the war and told him about my bounty money.

"And now that you're back," the man said to me, "you'll have to look after the farm till I get round again—since I haven't got Charlie."

It was a long term promise I made that day to William Marshall.

His mind drifted off to other things; and after a while he began to pray in a low broken voice. It brought a great choking lump to my throat to hear the sick man praying, not for himself—but for me, Paddy Slater. William

Marshall's life dripped kindness as sweetness drops from a broken honeycomb. He was a father and a comrade to me. They make no better men than that pioneer Ontario farmer! I am ashamed, this day, of the condition of the fields he loved.

The doctor drove up the lane to earn his daily fee; and I stepped out of the room as he entered, bringing the smell of cloves and horses with him. The previous February, in 1865, William Marshall had driven over to Edmonton on the Centre Road, in Chinguacousy Township, to help organize a temperance society in a village that had a tavern on every corner. It was a lively meeting with heated speechifying and ended in a free-for-all fist fight. The long, cold drive home gave him a touch of the pleurisy. The doctor bled and blistered the pleurisy and purged the man into a weakness that held him bedfast for months. Finally consumption set in. Not to spoil a good job, medical orders required that the victim be kept in a darkened room and away from drafts of any kind. William Marshall died because he could afford to have a doctor. But what will they be saying in fifty years' time about these modern blighters who pump an old man full of bismuth and buttermilk, and then solemnly tell him the picture shows that his great gut is out of order? Just because the silly old fogey has a farm they desire to open him up!

I better be careful what I say because that fat undertaker will need a medical certificate for me. But honestly speaking, our doctors do at times act like heathen medicine men. Long years afterward, the widow, Nancy Marshall, died of a condition that any practical nurse can remove nowadays by local treatment, but it was serious enough in her day to kill her. I had two specialists brought up from Toronto. After leaving the sick old woman, the medical experts rubbed their chins in their professional way and asked me for a chamber in order to discuss the matter. They got the chamber, and I got every word they said in it. Believe me, the only thing they talked about during their consultation was the chances Seagram's stable had of winning the Queen's Plate at the Woodbine racetrack.

On leaving poor William Marshall to the mercy of his doctor, I walked into the sitting-room and there I found Sarah Duncan doing mending and minding a taffy-headed youngster who was toddling about on sailor's legs. The woman was honestly rejoiced to see me. I noticed an extra stoop on her shoulders as I put my arms around her.

"Sarah, you old darling," I told her, "you always find beautiful children to mind."

“Yes,” she said, “even if I have an ugly old face . . . it’s Betty’s little girl.”

“And how is Elizabeth Ann?” I inquired in an offhand way.

“Oh! didn’t you know?” the woman questioned me. “Poor Betty died a year ago July, and Mr. Arnold is married again.”

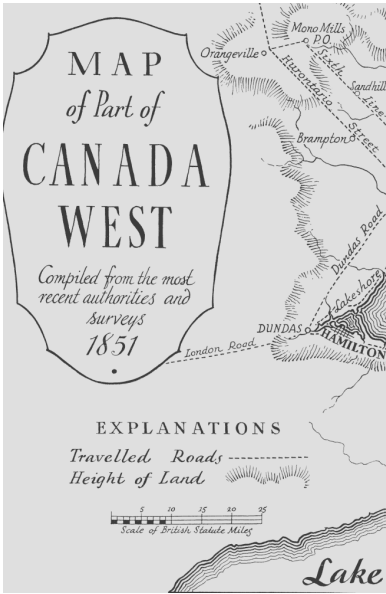
So I picked up in my clumsy arms the soft-bodied little person who was to be the grandmother of the young lady from Baltimore; and I went out through the kitchen door to take quite a long look at the rolling hillsides of Mono. The hardwood trees were already turning; and, here and there, a sugar maple, like the body of our Blessed Lord, was showing a patch of crimson on its wounded side in sure sign of a glorious resurrection.

AND here I sit, a garrulous old fellow whose trials and troubles are all over, chirping away and as happy making noises for my own amusement as any cricket in a crack by a glowing chimney corner. Sure an Irishman gets a lot of fun watching the world go by. But my warmth comes from memories of the long ago. So I ask you, folk, to fill your glasses with the moonshine of the hills where speckled trout still lurk in limpid streams:

*“Here’s to the worn-out hearts of those who saw a nation built,
and to the proud, fun-loving young hearts that have it in their
keeping.”*

Ave Atque Vale—1924.

THE END



TRANSCRIBER NOTES

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Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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[The end of *The Yellow Briar* by Patrick Slater.]