

The Man Child

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("Fan-Fan")**

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THE MAN CHILD



BY

GRACE BLACKBURN
("FAN-FAN")



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To

JEAN de SANTA MARIA

who, living or dead, is
“SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE.”

“There is a man child conceived.”

JOB 3.3.

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*Just now—
Out of the
Purple silences
That float across the firmament,
The music
Of the moon;
Night's cradle-song,
With ebb and flow of waters
Intertwined;
Where I lay sleepless,
I heard a cry
Of Women,
Of Mothers:
Warriors
Whose Battlefields were Birthbeds,
And their huge agony
A thing of commonplace!*

PART I

CHAPTER I.

The main part of the village ran along a country highroad. Just a straggle of houses with a blacksmith's shop at one end; a Methodist meeting-house, a post-office and a general store midway; and up at the other end where the fields began again, the Anglican church and the District School. Then there were some rough side roads and rougher paths across lots and these roads and paths led to more houses, to a bridge and to a mill that rose by the side of the river.

On one of the side roads three or four hundred yards around the corner from the blacksmith's shop, stood a small brown house with sloping roof and dormer windows. The house was approached by a path worn through the grass at the side of the ditch, and its prospect was a prospect of fields—white, green or mellow according to season—creeping up to a barricade of hills and ending at the top in a broken sky-line.

It was a May day, about ten o'clock in the morning, when a young woman, still little more than a girl, knelt at the side of a bed in an upper room of the small brown house with sloping roof and dormer windows. The bed was a walnut bed with twisted posts and railings, a bed covered with a coarse woven quilt of blue and white cotton. It stood against the wall abreast of the window.

The space at the other side of the room was taken up by a chest of drawers with a swinging glass. There was some women's neckwear scattered on the top of the drawers, which contained also a man's toilet articles and several roughly-piled books.

At the other end of the room in line with the door stood a washstand with china, and next the washstand a chintz curtain hung from a pine shelf was bulged from behind with the humps and bumps of crowded wearing apparel. Two cane-seated chairs and a deal box covered with chintz like the curtain, completed the furnishings, which were further helped out by a couple of hooked mats lying on the painted floor.

On the walls where the cheap flowered paper was faded in stripes as the light fell, hung several pictures—colored fly-leaves from English magazines, cheaply framed, with chief among them a large black and white print of Queen Victoria in Jubilee costume. There was also a wooden bracket with a china vase on it, empty of flowers.

Among other things the washstand held a small oil lamp. It had smoked the night before and the chimney was hazy and streaked with lampblack, the bowl oil-sweated and covered with a light layer of dust.

The casement of the window was open against the sides of the dormer, and so half-concealed its curtains of cheap Nottingham lace.

Outside, the blue sky of the Canadian springtime; a sky traversed by rapidly moving white clouds, blown from the general mass of vapor which hung along the horizon, each cloud a centre of reflected radiance curiously golden.

The day promised heat, though at that hour a breeze stirred the boughs of the apple trees in the garden below the dormer, rippling their white blossoms until they looked like foam-flakes on a green sea.

And all these things, or at least the essence of them, came in with the morning sunshine through the open window.

The bed in the corner was still unmade, its blue and white quilt thrown over the foot-rail, its pillows showing the impress of two heads.

The girl who knelt beside the bed, sidewise, her face to the window, had fluffy brown hair which she wore caught in a knot at the nape of her neck. She had wide-open gray-blue eyes, thickly lashed and innocent, set under dark brows, and already there was a pucker of flesh between the brows and two upright lines, one on either side of the pucker, to show that she had thought a good deal and thought hard. Her dusky skin was flushed over the cheeks with rose. Her mouth was well-shaped and warmly coloured, and she had teeth which, though white and even, were delicate and looked as though they might go early.

The girl's frame was long and muscular, square-built rather than rounded, with large not unshapely hands and feet; a body whose softness was the softness of youth, bound with years and hard work to lose rather than gain flesh and thus become more angular.

She wore a blue cotton dress open at the throat and so hastily and imperfectly buttoned that it showed her thin neck and even the rise of one slim breast, pear-shaped above her corset. She was damp with perspiration—perspiration so thick on the back of her neck that it sent the short hairs there into curls and tendrils—perspiration broken out in beads between her bosoms—perspiration on her legs in their cheap white stockings.

The girl's head was thrown back showing the full length of her throat. Her bare arms on which the sleeves were rolled above the elbow, were

strained down so that her clasped hands came together between her knees. Her eyes were the eyes of a wild thing suddenly trapped.

CHAPTER II.

Some months had passed since Emma Hart had been married here in this village, to John Winchester the schoolmaster. She had that morning discovered herself to be with child. John had gone to the school a full hour and a half ago. She was alone in the house when the conviction, harbored as a suspicion for a month past, finally overcame her. "Oh, God!" muttered Emma and her teeth seemed to close on the words—"Oh, God!" Then she bent her head and crushed her hands together with the strength of her knees.

For the moment she was not rebellious, only frightened; physically frightened, mortally scared of what was ahead of her. She wanted her mother and her mother was dead. The being of all beings whom she did not want was John, and John would be coming home at noon demanding his dinner. She would have to get up soon, tidy the house and get it ready for him. If she were dull he would question. Whether she were dull or not he would make love to her; pull her down on his knee, lay his face against her bosom as though he would listen to every secret rhymed by her heart. How could she meet him with this secret untold? Worse, how could she tell it? The age-long primordial female need for concealment was on her. She trembled at the thought of words.

Kneeling there all alone, Emma blushed crimson. Her face was suffused. Her neck was suffused. Her hands between her knees hurt her with their heat.

She was remembering! The evening when she saw John for the first time—the social at the schoolhouse to welcome the new master—the gay decorations of autumn leaves—the long tables with their array of pies and cakes—the smell of the coffee. They had seen little of each other that evening, barely exchanged greetings. She had thought him stuck up. She had wondered what the other girls saw in him that they should come to her giggling out their admiration. Afterwards, too, when he joined the church choir, it was very plain that he avoided her; she used to catch his eye sometimes across the chancel and he always turned his head away when he saw her looking. If they chanced to be thrown together for a moment after service, she imagined he was bored, and made her escape as quickly as possible.

Then one evening late that November he overtook her in a snowstorm. It was slushy, that first snow, and the roads were muddy; her rubber had come off; she was standing on one foot trying to put it on again when he came

tramping past her. She looked up and their eyes met. Her plight roused the spirit of mischief in her. She smiled. Strange to say he smiled back, seemed glad to; and stooped to help her with her rubber. So the ice was broken. He went the rest of the way home with her and her mother asked him to stay for tea. That was the beginning.

Sometimes now after choir practice, he saw her home. Sometimes they met on the road when he was coming from school and he would turn and go a bit in her direction. Once they walked to town, three miles, together, and had a roll and a cup of tea at one of the shops afterwards.

As the winter progressed there was skating on the river. He skated well, a light foot and a strong arm; she delighted in his power as together they flew along the ice and she felt the support of his hands below hers, turning the corners.

Finally, in March, there was the sleighing party. Then twenty of them all told—fathers, mothers, boys and girls—in two large sleighs packed with good things to eat, drove out to the Caly farm to spend the evening. The snow was crisp and it glittered under the moon. The horses were fresh and the sleigh-bells jangled. How good-humoured everybody was! What stories they told and how they laughed at mere nothings! On some pretext he held her hand a thought longer than necessary—she could remember the thrill of it all this while!

Later they danced in the Caly kitchen, cleared out for the occasion and hung with flags and evergreen. All the girls looked pretty she thought, but he said there wasn't one who could hold a candle to her. She wore a white dress with knots of crimson ribbon and he stole a ribbon and stuck it in his pocket. When they danced together she could feel his heart beating under the serge of his coat. Her own, too, was tremulous.

On the way home when everybody else was laughing at one of the rector's stories, he told her that he loved her. She implored him to be careful, and promised she would meet him next day after four, near the schoolhouse. They met and went through the almost inarticulate joy of a first confession; the snow around them and the winter sun, drawing down to its splendour, silhouetting their young figures black against the gleam. They came to a lonely spot and he kissed her.

She was remembering their love-making, decorous and yet bubbling over with the joy of life—John, a lover with wit to woo a woman; words with which to fill her full of the image of himself.

The boys of the village were slow, unimaginative, dull. Women like Emma Hart, country-bred though they are, live tremendously. In the hearts of such when they are born, “the desire of the moth for the star,” exists quiescent; their fancy has a long flight. And so she was remembering the impression John Winchester made upon her. She was remembering their talks together, he, only a village schoolmaster and yet an incipient leader of men, leading her to realms where the immortals are—realms of the poets and the philosophers—kingdoms of fairy and of dream; she following and sometimes, girl though she was, passing him in the enthusiasm with which she caught up a great idea, in the heat of her kindling to a noble deed. John with his adorable adoration of her sex—just the woman in her, once they were sworn lovers, being enough to keep him at her feet.

She was remembering his kindness when the bank failed and her father’s savings were lost—his care for her widowed mother during her subsequent illness and death—their own hurried decision to marry and live in her mother’s house where she was now so lonely.

She was remembering their wedding day a year and a few months after that November snowstorm. She was remembering all that followed here in this room—passion slowly roused in her, culminating that night in the great bestowal—the ardour of young love purging itself in its own white and immortal flame.

And now there was this! This that was John and yet not John; herself and yet not herself. This intruder on their comradeship. This spoiler of their leisure. This that would take her from him, wear her; rob her, perhaps, of her attraction in his eyes. All that had not been rebellion suddenly became so. She clenched her hands. For the first time in her life she hated.

CHAPTER III.

How long she knelt there Emma never knew—she was wrapped in an inward vision, part joy, part agony. At length, however, the necessity for movement definitely asserted itself. She swung herself back; she unclenched her hands, finding them hard to unlock; she rose. The rest of the morning went in a waking dream of dinner-getting and housework. Twelve o'clock and John finally came.

She was watching; hanging over the green gate, waiting to see him round the corner. Then she would take the meat out of the oven and by the time he was at the door she would be ready for him. The blacksmith's corner was her gauge and guide. She knew that from there it took him just four minutes. Then he had his hands to wash. Ten minutes in all. Plenty of time!

The sun was shining full on the corner as he came in sight. Emma had been looking at the snake-fence across the way, noticing how large the leaves of the elderberry bush in the crutch of the fence were growing and how high the wheat back of the elder. Suddenly she saw him. He had his round straw hat under his arm and he was holding his head high as though he were filling his lungs with the fresh spring air. He was walking faster, she thought, than usual.

How wonderful he was, this man of hers; a giant man with fearless blue eyes that took the sun proudly as one king takes the glance of another. His hair, too; surely no king ever had a crown as splendid as that tumbled mass of gold. He was tall and straight. He was vital. He was radiant. He was all things, she thought, that women love in men. As she watched him her heart beat high. The very idea that he was coming down the road to her house, her house and his; that he was her lover, her husband; that there was no bar, mental or physical, between them, made her tremble with gladness. The very sight of him helped the trouble at her heart. As she scampered back to the house to be ahead of him, she almost forgot it.

"Hello, Em!" cried John, breaking into the kitchen; "Hurry up, old dear, will you! I'm in the devil of a rush! Never mind the dish, honey! The pan will do for once."

Emma's eyes widened. He answered her stare:

"Inspector's here! Came at 11.30. He'll inspect after noon hour. Then the Lord help us! Such a set of blockheads!"

They sat down to the table and he went on:

“Just let me have a slice of meat and a potato, Emma. No, no tea! We can have the pie for supper, can’t we, old lady?”

He talked incessantly—about himself—his work—his prospects—his fears for his scholars. Emma served him, hung over him, loved him and was disappointed in him all in one breath, and slowly her trouble came back to her. Even while she was trying to listen she thought surely if their souls were as close as he said, if they were indeed one soul, he would have sensed that something was the matter! She was certain that nothing very dreadful or nothing very wonderful could happen to him and she not know it. Yet there he sat discussing the iniquities of text books and Departmental requirements as though to-day was no different from any other day. . . . Why she might die. . . . Women often did die. . . .

So the noon hour passed. John ate his dinner. Then with a hasty kiss, the first hasty kiss he had ever given her, he ran down the pathway and along the highroad. Emma was left to her dishes. They were greasier that day than usual. Some tears fell into the dishpan.

CHAPTER IV.

That afternoon she climbed into the hills above the village overlooking the river. She wanted to be alone. The thought of John after four oppressed her. There was so much more of herself it seemed than there used to be; such a strange unsubstantial inner self with whom it was necessary she should become acquainted.

She had not yet come to a realization of the great creative heritage into which she had entered. She gave as yet no thought to the fact that that which was being called into existence within her, was soul as well as body; was God himself seeking yet again in the everlasting, the eternal way expression through human consciousness. All she felt was that something very terrible was happening to her, Emma Hart; that she was more miserable than she had ever been in her life before, and that in her misery she was curiously alone. It was this loneliness that most weighed upon her.

So she climbed into the hills; high, so high that she was above the tree-tops yet with other tree-tops above her. And there, in a partially open space between the hills, she sat down.

The afternoon was warm as the morning had promised. The mists on the horizon had lifted, blown, sun-touched, across the sky and disappeared. There was nothing now to vary the deep blue but an occasional filmy rack lazily wandering like a bit of wind-blown gauze with torn edges. Below, the land dropped terrace after terrace into the valley, where the river, wooded at the edge, cut the landscape like an archer's bow, one tip of which touched the distant city; the other, gilded by the afternoon sun, swung under a bridge and rounded off far beyond her village.

When the river passed under the bridge the character of its banks changed. What had been gentle and well-wooded was suddenly transformed into an abrupt palisade of clay and gravel worn by storm and filtration into grotesque forms that caught the sun with a glare on their yellow faces. At the foot of the palisade there was a dam, and above the dam, good fishing. Below, the current was swift mid-stream; its sides tranquil and much sought by swimmers. Even at that distance Emma could see the flash of white bodies. . . .

The concave of this great watery bow outlined one side of a plain so wide it strained her vision and teased her fancy. It was a plain, wooded in parts, and between the woods farmlands and fields like squares of coloured ribbon; purple-black from the plough, green with springing wheat,

iridescent from the many-tinted tops of vegetables just showing, the whole a rainbow in a lowered scale striking across the lovely land. Then there were farmhouses with red roofs and smoking chimneys to vary the picture.

On the other side of the plain, miles and miles across country, were again hills, lower than those among which she was seated but still not inconsiderable; these described a segment of a circle rugged with pines and maple, a circle so wide it seemed to Emma as though it put a girdle round the earth.

All the roads dropped into the valley—one, two, three; she gave up counting. What hundreds and hundreds of farms these roads stood for; and to every farm a farmer and a farmer's wife who must come down into the valley to trade. In her mind's eye she could see the stream of carts and carriages; carts and carriages of the long ago; carts and carriages of to-day; carts and carriages of the future, when the plain would be filled with the millions on millions of twentieth-century Canada and all these fields and woodlands would have vanished.

Those who talked of a coming Canada, talked in terms of industry; and industry she knew meant belching chimneys, steel rails, cinders, gravel-heaps, blackened skies. The world of to-day stretched in all its beauty before her; was the world of to-morrow destined to be a world where beauty lay stripped and dead on river and valley, stricken and dying in the hills? Emma drew back from the thought yet it was impossible to help being interested in it. The to-morrow and the to-morrow were now hers; for good and ill she had linked herself up with them.

The silence was wonderful. She could hear a woodpecker drilling . . . then the progressive melody of a meadow-lark . . . then a cock crowing in a barnyard across the river . . . then nothing more audible than the beating of her own heart.

Suddenly as she sat there, a shaft of light fell from the west through the trees across her open space, brightening the green of leaves and grasses, filling the whole world with the radiance peculiar to woodland places; a radiance like the radiance in the heart of a beryl, only more elusive. She saw, also, that the light struck beyond her diagonally across the plain. From the trees above her head whose notched and dancing leaves were illuminated, to the grasses at her feet, all their blades bordered by that beryl blaze, right out to the middle of the valley, the light fell. It was paler out there, clear, almost glassy; and formless it seemed to take a form . . . the form of something or of someone who embraced and sheltered her. She heard a voice, too; it

called her “blessèd.” So, looking and listening alone on the hillside she was caught up into peace.

That night when the lamp on the washstand was turned out, when it was very dark, Emma told Jack. He laughed boyishly as he heard her whisper and, laughing, he caught her to him. So her trouble fell from her.

CHAPTER V.

The River Thames is the most picturesque of the smaller rivers of Canada. It has, also, in the district round about Emma's village, the reputation of being one of the most fearsome.

This fearsomeness is due not to tides, for the Thames is an inland water; not to undercurrents, falls, great depth. . . . It is due, rather, to a heavy-handed destiny: destiny no more a respecter of waters than she is of persons, who overshadows the one as she does the other, and when it pleases her turns their very beauties to account that by them she may add to her inexorable toll of events.

Destiny and none other sat enthroned on that July evening when a cloud-burst occasioned by the meeting of two storms, drove over the valley of the Thames a downpour so terrific that for eighteen hours, amid gross darkness and electric fury, rain fell like a solid wall. Then the waters that were above the firmament augmented and strengthened the waters that were below so that the glutted banks of the river could no longer contain the push and the volume of them. The flood broke gates and sluices as though they were built of matches. It bit at the friable shore. It reared itself like an infuriate beast and rushed across the plain. Then houses were rooted from their foundations and all, lighted as they were, went with heavy rotations down the whirling current. Then sheep and cattle were swept with the stream, impotent as straws in a roadside runnel. Then men and women died horrible deaths. Then, when the water subsided, what ruined orchards, what rotting fields; what skeletons of outbuildings and machinery. Then what scum! What filth! What desolation!

Destiny was there, too, that May afternoon when the air was clear and the sun shone, when there was veritable "Queen's weather" in honour of Victoria the Good; when the river in poetic mood, deep, silent, slipped along between its green and flowery banks, and all the world was on pleasure bent. Nobody was thinking of the Gray Goddess; her steps on the shining water, though fleet, were invisible. Suddenly in the midst of the merry-making the largest passenger boat on the service, criminally overcrowded, careened at a bend in the river. Her boiler broke loose; it rolled over and as it did so it carried away one of the flimsy stanchions that supported the upper deck. The deck settled sidewise with the boat, and settling it rushed the crowd into the water pell-mell, as coal is rushed into a ship's bunker. They sank. They were held down. That day two hundred and odd persons were drowned or killed and the whole region plunged into mourning.

Finally Destiny travelling by the way of ignorance in men and boys has completed the disrepute of the river. The Thames has many safe swimming places and yet each summer knows its quota of drownings. They bear them up, long and stark, those dead men with ghastly faces; limp and pitiful those small boys with glazed eyes staring. And the next summer sees men and boys just as eager for the cool sweet pulse of the water, just as oblivious of the depth and the danger, meet death in just the same fashion.

And yet for all, those that live by the river love it; they love it well! They love the clear brown of its water, dimpling to gold and to hazel. They love its music . . . that deep unbroken undertone . . . those minor melodies plucked at harmonious intervals by its eddies as a *piccicato* is plucked from the strings of a harp. They love the long scroll of white clouds and blue sky reflected on its winding length . . . a scroll written in an occult tongue, instinct with mystic meaning.

Go to the river in May. If you are lucky, a pair of kingfishers will be winging and shrilling along the opposite shore, their bluish slate-colour flashing to so much more than its ordinary value that they will seem like stranger birds. You will watch the kingfishers for a moment and then you will find yourself trying to count the number of greens that confront you on the sloping bank above them—blue-green, bronze-green, green-green, yellow-green of young grass and tender foliage; with, in among all those greens, a giant interrogation point with unheard-of flourishes, the black-green of an ancient pine tree reaching up questioningly into the blue. That pine tree will bring you controversy from a century of Winters to mingle with the pronouncements of the Spring!

Or if you would search out the ways of love to the uttermost, see the Thames on a day in October, when the nuts are dropping and the apples are ready for the harvest. Northern-spies, pippins, baldwins, alexanders, russets on that day will hang so glorious that what with the browns of the chestnuts and beeches, the scarlet berries of the mountain-ash, the rose tints of the sumac, and the ever-regal maples in their vestments of crimson and gold, the whole world will be terrible as an army with banners . . . an army marching through the valley, flaming along the hills: the beauty and the terror of death!

In October the river moves among farms whose fields show green again after the summer growing, or are yellow with stacked corn and with pumpkins that star themselves among the stubble. And only the brisk water draws a tawny line across the splendour.

CHAPTER VI.

It was mid-August. The apple trees under the dormer window were heavy with fruit. Against the board fence over across the lot, hollyhocks flaunted in the sun. Along the house front wallflowers grew gorgeous in orange and brown and as sweet as they were splendid. Wild asters and goldenrod, iron-weed and sunflowers bordered the dusty road.

It was half after five in the afternoon and very hot. Emma had chosen for herself the coolest spot she could find, a spot where the breeze, such as it was, blew across country. She sat there in a low chair with her slippered feet in the grass. Nearby was the well whose bucket she had just wound up dripping with water. She had a tin cup at hand for thirsty emergencies.

Her work-basket was on the ground beside her and her lap was filled with soft white sewing. She was whipping the tiniest of edgings on to the tiniest of frills. Between whiles she raised her eyes with an interested glance to where beyond the shadow-line mysterious lengths of linen were bleaching in the sun.

The air was sibilant with the chorusing of locusts. Emma smiled as she listened to their fantasies.

She looked well. Her lean shoulders had plumped out, her cheeks were rounded, and there was an indescribable radiance over all her person as of one who had a secret access to sunshine.

Occasionally she rocked her chair and now and again she essayed to rival the locusts with a snatch of song.

She was thinking about her son; for of course this first child must be another John, with John's brave thought and beautiful word, but with a better chance than John had ever dreamed. Already in imagination she globed his downy head with her long hands. Already his baby fingers clung to hers and thrilled her with his need; his need of her; his need of the infinite mother-love of which she had become a part. She hung over his cradle. She watched his first steps, righted him when he fell and kissed away his tears. She visioned him in the rough-and-tumble of his school-boy days. She was proud, she held her head high, crowned with many crowns, because of his young manhood. In anticipation she was justified; her passion for John had more than its own meaning.

Her boy must be a university man; and after that? Oh well, after that she hoped it would be surgery. No man appealed more to her admiration and her

sympathies than did the skilful surgeon. She knew several. They came out from town occasionally for special cases, she had met them at the bedsides of the sick. She believed them to be humanitarian and sane. Their philosophy both of religion and of life won her.

Emma, though she could not be called an educated woman, had read well. She knew just enough science to appreciate the attitude of mind that sees things in a state of flux, therefore she found it impossible actually to concur with those whose feet were solidly planted on the bedrock of theological tradition. She wanted her boy to have the scientist's outlook; more than that, she wanted him to love humanity and to labour in its interests, winning men and winning with men closer to God. Yes, on the whole she thought surgery would be best. . . . So she dreamed as mothers will dream, pondering the things of their beloved.

John had gone down to the village. He had to go to the schoolhouse for a moment to speak with the carpenter who was making some alterations that were in hand for the better seating of the children. Then he was to buy some things she needed at the grocery store and do one or two other errands.

He had been busy since noon in the woodshed, hammering and tapping away at a cradle the panels of which he had carved during vacation. About four o'clock he had finished, and the cradle was ready for the final polish. It was a fantastic piece of work, its headpiece and its footpiece carved in the form of outstretched wings. John and Emma thought it the loveliest bit of furniture in all Canada.

When the joining was done and the first rub for the polish over, he had called her and they had stood together in the gloom of the woodshed where a long beam of dusty sunlight struck through the open door and fell upon them. He had thrown his arm around her waist and they had stood thus, their heads to one side a bit critic-fashion, contemplating and admiring his handicraft; worshipping at the altar of their belief in the Life to Come.

Then he ran into the kitchen to wash, get into his coat and be off. She thought that she had never seen him so bright or so good to look at as when he stooped to bid her good-bye.

He would be back soon now. She caught herself wondering whether he would like a savoury or a sweet omelet for supper.

CHAPTER VII.

The gate clicked. Emma turned her head expectantly. No, it wasn't John after all; it was the rector. She drew her apron around her sewing and rose shyly and a bit clumsily to greet him.

The Reverend Charles Broadhurst was a man past middle age, tall and gaunt; his clerical black hung loosely on his thin frame. He had a rather typical face, the face of the Anglican clergy of the older school . . . high nose, well-defined cheek bones, a wide resolute mouth clean-shaven. His eyes were blue and faded, wind and weather had had their way with them.

Mr. Broadhurst had three parishes in his charge. He preached in the tiny stone church in Emma's village on Sunday afternoons. The rectory was at D — —, three and a half miles off. But he was such a good visitor and so wedded to his horse that the people here saw his kindly face almost as often as did those of the more favoured parish.

Emma had known the rector since her childhood. He had baptized her, prepared her for confirmation and married her. He used to bring her goodies in his pockets when she was a wee thing, and he had advised her tenderly all her days. She loved him well.

So it was that bundling her apron and sewing under her left arm, she moved toward the gate, her right hand extended in eager welcome.

"You!" she exclaimed; "I thought it was John. John's down in the village. Bad boy! He's been gone an hour and a half, and he was going to stay only such a little while. But he'll be back in a moment now. Shall we go into the house or sit out here? Take that chair, I'll sit on the step. Warm, isn't it?"

So she talked, voluble as she was light-hearted. The rector seated himself without protest. He let her take the step as she suggested. He seemed dazed.

She looked at him curiously and thought he must be ill. He was white enough. The heat perhaps. She was troubled, but she went on talking.

Presently the inevitable pause came . . . it was a pause with a shiver in it. Hot as it was, Emma felt as though the wind had changed. Mr. Broadhurst was palpably struck; he seemed to weaken and whiten before her eyes, the withered look of great age crept over his face by stages; almost she thought his teeth chattered.

When Emma stopped talking the rector stood up. He stretched out a trembling hand, knotted with great veins and blue along the fingers. He touched her on the shoulders. There were voices of people coming up the road and he must hurry. The old man's tongue was thick. He looked bewilderingly around as though help might come from the hollyhocks; as though the well had a voice in its throat and could speak for him. Then the voices on the road drew nearer.

After all, Emma was first. She was sharp about it. Her words rang:

“What's the matter? John! Mr. Broadhurst, somethings wrong with John! Quick! Tell me!”

“He went to the river, Emma. He must have got into a hole. We don't know yet. It was near the dam, dear. Oh, my God!”

Two women and a man came in at the garden gate and up the path toward them. . . . Tom Moore, the blacksmith, in his leather apron, the sweat running in black rivulets down his cheeks. . . . Mrs. Springer, the grocer's wife, up from her supper-getting, portly and puzzled-looking. . . . Sarah Williams, Emma's nearest neighbour, a little Irish woman with a bent back, threads still sticking to her skirt from the garment she had been basting over against the meeting of the Sewing Society.

They stood stark still. The women threw their aprons up before their faces to hide the sight of it. The rector dropped his head. Tom Moore stared, fingering his leathers. . . .

Emma was on her knees in the gravel. She was praying wildly, incoherently, and yet they could make out that she wasn't praying for herself; no, nor for John; but for that other. She was praying for her reason, and that she might have strength to bear her child. And even as they stood about her, dumbly, all four of them, the feet of them that brought John up from the river sounded along the dusty, flower-bordered road.

Then Tom Moore strode forward and lifted Emma to her feet . . . pressing her face to his shoulder . . . hiding her head with his big hands with their spatulated fingers.

So the dead man came back!

CHAPTER VIII.

The women of the village were kind to Emma, they helped her out as their saying is. They cooked odds and ends to coax her appetite and came running up the road with them at meal-times mysteriously hidden in dishes under white cloths. They did her housework for her. They brought their sewing and sat awhile whenever they could find time from their own crowded labours. They took turns to sleep at the brown house. To her distress and their own they even tried to read to her out of the newspapers and the Bible.

The men were no less sympathetic. Her position as a young widow and an expectant mother appealed to the awkward chivalry of the Canadian villager. Many a little job was done for Mrs. Winchester that fall, by hands that were themselves full of tasks. Many a step was taken on her account by feet already tired by the day's doings. A neat wood-pile in the shed where the cradle stood, covered now with an old green cloth . . . a couple of bins in the cellar to hold potatoes and roots for winter boiling . . . a bit of pipe from the roof to feed the cistern . . . things that John had had in mind to do and had not yet done, were done for her comfort.

CHAPTER IX.

As for Emma she moved in two worlds. In the midst of death she was in life. Through the remainder of August and all September, John's death haunted and overcame her. She was obsessed by it. The agony of it darkened the sun.

As she went about during the day, making feeble, mechanical efforts at doing things, she used to stare at people when they smiled and wonder what there could possibly be to smile for in the sad autumnal world into which her glorious summer had dwindled . . . a world dripping with faded leaves and blown raindrops. She never cried but sometimes when she was alone she used to stand and lean her face up to the wall, and let her sorrow shake her.

On long, dark, starless nights as the autumn progressed, she would lie on the walnut bed while the warm blackness outside was filled with the sound of wings, the sound of birds flying over, leaving the northland summer had made serene, guiding their young to a softer climate; and wish that mateless though she was, she were out there with the birds . . . beating her way from cloud to cloud . . . caught in the storm. God! if she might be dying.

Or under the blue and white coverlid she would listen to the wind sighing up the gully of the river, taking ghostly counsel with itself round and round the spot where John went down; and fancy herself the wind, able to scream out her pain with no one to take notice. But no, there was always a listener. There was always that other woman in the bedroom across the staircase. There was always that other woman; nothing for her but to lie still with every nerve in her body strained and memory thundering upon the stretched strings its intolerable heart music.

Sleep overtook her before morning and then, along about six o'clock, there was the waking. The restless toss of her warm body when the red lips opened wide over the white teeth and her breath escaped in a long low sighing. The instinctive, unwitting stretching out of her arms for John's place on the other pillow. The sharp recoil of the return to consciousness with its sense of desolation; her eyes shut obstinately against the gray light, and all over her a faintness that made her shrink and shrivel.

She was numb with death . . . death of the love life lately so hot within her . . . death of the long year. Yet all the while, though she did not know it, life was having its way with her; a life within her life to help her live.

At this time her child was no more dependent upon Emma, no more bound up with her than she was dependent upon and bound up with her child. If it drew sustenance from her, she drew sustenance from it also. The mere fact of its maturing and growing there under her bosom, taking on more and more the form and the attributes of humanity, companioned her; she could feel the comfort of it creeping through her veins. Gradually the wind in the night-time hurt her less. She slept better. She began to contemplate again more and more deeply, the mysterious union between herself and that soul in the becoming; that not seen but tenderly loved being who had elected her out of all the world, mother of his incarnation.

Thinking in this way she became holiness to herself; an awful and a sacred thing. No Hebrew ever had more reverence for the Ark of the Covenant than Emma now had for her body, the hiding-place of such a promise. No Catholic ever contemplated the monstrosity that encloses the Host with greater veneration, than she the sanctuary of this miracle.

Then the life that was within her commenced to feed her, not spiritually alone, but physically as well. Her blood began to flow more freely. Her brain brightened. October had not closed when she was once more reconciled to the daylight and resolutely facing her rapidly approaching destiny.

So the old dreams came back, though not in the old fashion. She no longer thought of this or that as a possible profession for her son; she scarcely considered his scholarship. What she did think about was the very man of very man . . . all else was accidental.

She began to see that after a fashion she was an artist. Robert Browning's idea of the sculptor who instead of producing form out of unshaped stuff, evokes a soul from form, came to her. She would be that artist. This that slept within her body was already form, necessitated, pre-determined. But the soul without which the body was nothing . . . she could evoke it, make it feel, see, live. This new soul was hers!

So she emptied herself of self. So she laboured at her task of motherhood.

They stared at her, the women did, when she threw back her head and laughed; when she rocked in her rocking-chair, and smiled. They marvelled at her growing colour, her good looks, her gay talk. Some of them shrugged their shoulders and whispered together. Others, more observant, noticed how every now and again she whitened; saw the clutch at her heart into which her wrecked wife-hood betrayed her. Between the two, she achieved a

reputation which was a mixture of heartlessness and craze. Some said that she had got over her trouble. Others, that it had gone to her head.

But she, merging her love for the man that had been her husband, into her love for the man that was to be her son, battled on.

And the fullness of time came upon her!

PART II

CHAPTER I.

About two weeks before her child was born, Emma collapsed. She was heavy with her burden, short-breathed, unwieldy; she did not know either how to sit or lie that she might have ease from it. Her eyes were ringed with shadows, brown patches disfigured her skin, her cheeks were pinched; she was very plain.

All that uplifting sense of a blending of personalities, her own personality with that of her child, was obliterated. The claim she had made on divine artistry, her conspiracy with nature which during the past while had helped her lock out of her consciousness a too keen realization of the crass physical side of the thing to which she was committed, seemed to have been vetoed by nature herself . . . who turned to rend her.

She had not yet brought forth, but she had daily become more clearly aware of the determined individuality of the creature to whom she was about to give birth. To be the encloser of sensations so objective; to wall about with her own body another body distinct from her own not only in muscular power but in volition, mood, spontaneousness as well; this it was that gradually began to appal her. Sometimes when she was least expecting it, involuntarily her eye would catch a glimpse of the distortion of her person. Sometimes there were movements within her that sent her hair on end with a shiver. Her sanctuary was invaded. A thousand terrors possessed it.

She had, too, about this time an increase of fear as to her own and the child's safety . . . a fear which the veriest commonplaces of life fed until it became a positive anguish. The women brought her stories of disease and disaster. If she picked up a newspaper it seemed inevitable that her eye should light upon a gruesome paragraph. So many children were stillborn. So many women died in childbirth. Strange. She had never noticed these things before.

CHAPTER II.

It was in December, a still clear night following a stormy day and the snow was drifted. Above the brown house the sky was an inky violet; there the three-quarter moon was up and every now and again a thin cloud floated across it, trailing glory. The cattle in their stalls stood as far from the doors as they could. The few sleighs that passed on the highroad were white with snow, men and horses rimed with it, runners slipping without sound, bells jangling. And except for that occasional jangling of the sleigh-bells, the world was intensely still.

Emma had been alone all day, marooned, cut off from communication. She had attended to her few wants as best she could. The greater part of the time, however, she had passed sitting inert at the window.

The eyes of her body looked out at the storm. The eyes of her soul looked in at her short life whose few inconspicuous events moved past her like a pageant. How clear it all was that little life of hers from start to finish. . . . Love had held her. . . . And Death had held her. . . . What was coming now, she wondered?

CHAPTER III

When the wind dropped enough to make walking possible, Sarah Williams ploughed her way from her house up the road; come to spend the night with Emma. People said that Sarah had the map of her country written on her face. And she had . . . right down to the Lakes of Killarney, which were written in her two blue eyes that either with laughing or crying had always a glint in them.

The two women sat up until half after nine shivering around the base-burner in the back sitting-room. Sarah was reminiscent . . . she knew the history of every man and woman in the place . . . she dearly loved talking. . . .

They had been gossiping about Mrs. Fowler, "the Queen of the village," Sarah said people used to call her—Maria Fowler, an Englishwoman, whose husband, Jimmy, a lively little grasshopper of an Irishman, could never be got to take her seriously. That was Maria's cross. Jimmy had his, though he didn't talk about it.

"But if you burned James Fowler for a fool, you'd get wise ashes!" said Sarah with no little conviction. "Sure and it's he that could take a rise out of Maria! I remember one night; it was the night of Maggie McAlpin's marriage to Sandy McPhail. . . . You recall Sandy? No? You were too young, I guess; you couldn't remember. . . . Poor Sandy! 'Whistle Breeches' the girls used to call him because he was so bandy. . . . Well, as I was saying, Maggie and Sandy were getting married. It was a grand wedding! We were all there down to the last spalpeen in the place. Maria was as proud as a quilt of a thousand threads; she had on her new black silk and her mother's cameo she was so perked up over, God bless the woman! She was sitting up with her tombstones that night if ever I saw her. Somebody was telling about the fine new cow Jacob Springer had bought at the Delaware Fair and the fine price she had cost him, when Maria broke out with:

"My Mamma never saw a cow until she came to this country!' That was too much for Jimmy. He laughed right out and as sure as there are fairies in County Kerry he up and mocked her:

"And what did your Mamma think of that kind of a specie?' said he, light and airy; 'did she think it was a skitty?'

"Everybody snickered but your father: 'Easy! Easy!' said he, 'you'll cry for this, James Fowler!' But nobody could faze Maria; she just thought

Jimmy was too vulgar.”

There was a saucepan of gruel on the oven at the back of the base-burner. Sarah poured the gruel into a bowl and told Emma to drink it while she put the saucepan to soak and let the cat out.

The cold of the kitchen came in at the sitting-room door when Sarah opened it. The wind from the outer door lifted the rag-carpet almost as far as the points of Emma’s rockers. Emma could see by the lamp Sarah carried how the snow was splattered in great daubs and feathers on the kitchen window panes; she noticed that the half drawn blind shook on its roller. The house creaked with frost. The cat mewed, rebellious at being routed out of his snug quarters. Sarah stamped her feet occasionally as she went about the business of locking up. It was bitter weather.

“What became of Mr. Fowler when Mrs. Fowler died?” Emma called into the kitchen.

“He went out West. Beyond Winnipeg. To a son of his that has a great ranch,” called Sarah.

“Does anybody ever hear from him?”

“Mr. Broadhurst used to. Sure I got a card myself one time; a grand card it was with one of the parks of Winnipeg onto it. They’d been into the fair. He must have bought it at one of them stands in the Fair Grounds and sent it to me. I never heard hide nor hair of him since.”

While Sarah was gone Emma ate her gruel. Then she put the empty bowl on the table, took a second lamp off the machine and threading the small hall went slowly and laboriously upstairs to the room with the dormer window. There, the only heat was the heat from the pipe of the sitting-room base-burner.

As she hitched herself on to the top step she was struck suddenly by a great weariness; just as though her whole body were one enormous backache. It was such a curious feeling it startled her.

Presently Sarah came clattering up noisily. The light from her lamp flickered a moment in the cold hall and then went on into the room across the stairway.

“Good night, Emma!” she called.

“Good night!” called Emma.

CHAPTER IV.

Emma began to move about the room getting ready for bed. Her lamp was on the chest of drawers with the swinging glass. She got out of her dress and let her hair down to brush it; it fell like a brown cloud over her corset and down onto her winsy petticoat. As she brushed she saw her face in the glass . . . John wouldn't have known it! She shivered with cold and with disgust of the picture. A great wave of self-pity swept over her. She put up her hands and blotted out the image.

After a moment's standing so with her hands covering her face, she turned away from the glass, picked a shawl up from one of the chairs and went and sat on the deal box with the chintz cover. There, she wrapped the shawl around her shoulders.

The box was close to the stove-pipe, but there was so little heat in the pipe she could lean her face against it. For an hour or more she sat so, dumbly aching. She had no will to get into bed and none to sit there either. Occasionally she turned her head so that her eyes took in the details of the room which, small as it was, her lamp did not fully lighten. . . .

There was nothing of John left, except that he used to use the basin over there as she did herself, looked in the same glass, slept in the bed beside her. The women had taken away his comb and brush and his shaving things that first day. They had carried all his clothes, save those they dressed him in, to the room across the hall; she had packed them in his trunk herself, later. No. Not one thing left! Not even a photograph . . . the only one she had was downstairs and she was too shy to move it. He was gone. Gone utterly!

The thought maddened her. Sobs rose in her throat and choked her. For want of someone to kiss she fell to kissing her own arms and shoulders, there under her shawl; moaning on them and muttering out her misery.

Of all the objects in the room the picture of Queen Victoria stood out the clearest . . . the widow's cap . . . the massive face with its high arched nose and fleshy eyebrows . . . the open sleeve with laces flowing away from the fat wrist . . . the dimpled hand heavy with rings on the table beside her. Again and again Emma came back to these things. She was utterly worn out with them and yet either their own attraction or that of the light that fell upon them continued to draw her.

Suddenly she found herself shaken by a tremendous force from within; a terrific downward-moving pressure accompanied not only by great strain

and effort but also by an excruciating sense of impotence and reaction. Something not herself, an imprisoned something, was pushing with all its might at the inner gates of her being. And she was trying to let the imprisoned thing free, yet at the same moment without any will of her own she was retarding its progress, holding back jealously lest it should escape her. The tension brought her jaws together. Her heart jumped, then beat like a hammer. Her knees shook. Her body was cold as death.

All this agony was upon her so quickly she had no time to think until it was over. Then she cried out . . .

In a moment Sarah Williams, shaking and bleary-eyed, roused from her first sleep, stuck her head in at the open door.

“Fetch the doctor!” gasped Emma.

Sarah’s head disappeared. Emma could hear her throwing things around in the room across the stairway. The front door banged. She pictured her, half dazed, stumbling through the darkness and the snow to Tom Moore’s house at the corner. She was thankful it was no farther. Tom would do the rest . . . he had promised.

Left solitary, her apprehensions increased. It was a full fortnight before her time and yet she felt certain that the days were accomplished. She knew now that it would come again, that fearful downward thrust, that slow inexorable headway as of a shifted mass grinding through her and wrenching her bones asunder.

She knew, too, that the still more terrible counteraction would come also. She knew that she would want to speed the thing, to liberate it, push it forth; but she knew that she would not be able. Her muscles had just so much power and no more. They would go to their limit and then they would slacken as they had slackened this time. There would be the fright, the torment and then the failure . . . nothing would be accomplished.

The nervous misery of her condition overcame her. She locked and unlocked her hands. She turned ashen. Her blue eyes took on the glare of profound abstraction.

She was alone, all alone; that she realized. Death had stolen her partner. He could not hold her in his arms now that her hour had come. He could not suffer with her, his flesh reaching out to its fatherhood by way of his anguish with her flesh, his eyes witness of her love for him in her torture.

It wasn’t fair! It was a cheat, a cheat! Love, Death, God—they had all cheated her! A woman has some rights. Someone must go down with her

into the valley. Who was He that promised He would gently lead those that were with young . . . ?

She had friends she knew, but what matter! No one but John could understand. Fill the room from the box here to the dormer window with all the people she knew, crowd in every man, woman and child of them and still she would be alone; just Emma Winchester and none other. Pray as she would nothing would happen but this that was happening. No one in heaven or earth could lift a finger to make it different.

So! This then was what life meant? Everyone was born this way. She had been born this way herself. Every little baby costs this. All mothers in the world had gone through with it.

She questioned vaguely why they had said so little about it? How was it, she wondered, that the ages had not rung with the story? There was nothing in the books. Nobody had put it into poetry or into music. They had been dumb, those millions on millions on millions of women!

Job in the Bible; he had made a marvellous epic moan when he was afflicted. And Job's wife, she had thought his agony so insupportable when she looked on it that she had told him to curse God and die. Yet there is no record that Job's wife had said a word about her own suffering . . . and she had suffered . . . those sons and daughters smitten by the wind whom Job mourned, yet praised God in mourning; she had been touched in the bone and in the flesh on their account; she had gone through this for each of them. . . . There! The torment was coming on again. It was coming. It was come.

Small animal cries burst from her, cries as elemental as any that ever came from the den of the she-wolf, or the hole where the fox cradles her young. Then she heard the handle of the front door turn, and she bit back her sorrow.

It was Sarah bringing Eliza Springer. The two women stamped the snow from their feet in the entry, took off their wraps and came upstairs. She could hear them whispering together.

Eliza, with a big family of boys and girls to her credit, was fussy and important; full of suggestions and orders:

"Now, then, Sarah Williams!" she said; "what does this mean? It's as cold as charity in here, woman! Thought you was going to have the parlour stove up, Emma?"

Emma moaned a faint excuse. Eliza went on:

“Well, we’ll have to get some heat here, somehow! Have to have a couple of irons, anyway! Say, Sarah, you run down and put a fire in the kitchen stove and set on all the irons she has. Give a hand here first, though! You’ll want a clean shift, my girl. And your roomiest nightgown. This drawer? All right; I’ll manage.”

Sarah was plainly sick with fright; the blue eyes were brimmed and her hands trembled. Eliza had to call her to order.

They got Emma out of her clothes and into bed. They put hot irons wrapped in newspaper in the bed with her. She could smell the print and the paper scorching . . . on top of the pain it sickened her.

Her misery was too great for gratitude. Outwardly she was gentle enough; she did what they told her; she thanked them for their pains. Inwardly she was just one seething mass of envy. It was well to be them; God! it was well to be them. Her envy grew. It was envy no longer. It was resentment.

Wherever she turned her eyes she still saw Queen Victoria . . . the widow’s cap, the fleshy eyelids. Victoria! A queen! And she had gone through with it.

Eliza Springer was all encouragement: “There! That was a fine one!” she would exclaim when Emma was shaken by a fresh paroxysm; when the brute force of the life within her life mastered her. “Oh, come now, come now; it will soon be over!”

Emma had to shut her eyes to keep Eliza from seeing the things she had in her heart against her.

In about an hour the doctor arrived. One must always take hitching and accidents into account; he was as quick as he could be, seeing the call was sudden.

The doctor warmed himself for a few moments at the base-burner, talking with Tom Moore and listening to Sarah Williams fidget . . . the smoke of his pipe rose through the hallway. Then, bland and kindly, he came up to Emma.

Men have told us about dying, but none has been able actually to describe death . . . death is still the impenetrable mystery. And so one can talk about bearing. But who will describe birth; who can render an account of that profound and secret experience—that labyrinth of torture and of triumph, by means of which the “Word” is made flesh and dwells among us?

They worked with Emma all night and far into the morning; Tom Moore pacing restlessly back and forth downstairs most of the time, when he wasn't doing odd jobs for Emma or helping Sarah make tea and toast for the workers. Tom was a bachelor. He thought it was a damn shame that women should suffer like this. Most bachelors do think so.

The moon dropped and the stars went out. The dawn broke . . . red rays and pink streaks of it against the gray behind the icy hills. The sun came up and the sky turned from gray to blue above the snow-covered landscape. But she was sensible of none of these things. For her it was still night, forever and forever night. Her eyes were shut against the world, its processions and its presence . . . only her brain went on beating out the thought that a queen, too, had suffered. Then the doctor gave her chloroform and for awhile she changed earth for heaven.

At one o'clock in the afternoon, with a lusty cry, a boy was born. Emma had been in labour fourteen hours. The doctor said it was a normal case, normal in every way for a first child. Fine boy too! Pity his father couldn't have seen him!

"I'll look in before night," he said. "Keep her quiet. She'll ask for the child presently. Be careful. No excitement. No tears, please."

Then he went downstairs and ate a meal of ham and eggs prepared by Tom and Sarah.

* * * * *

She lay in a state of dream and exhaustion. She had asked for the child and she had smiled in a visionary sort of way when they told her of his sex and his prowess. Then she seemed to forget all about him . . . only she lay there smiling. She was sore to her finger-tips but she didn't know it. Later, when the effects of the chloroform wore off she would realize. The women whispered together . . . they might have talked like trumpets.

In the middle of the excitement of the night before, Tom had changed the direction of the base-burner pipe and put the parlour stove up in Emma's bedroom. The place was warm by the time the boy came. He was washed and put in his wide-winged cradle long before Emma asked for him. A mingled odour of soaps, powders and new baby pervaded the room with the dormer window.

Later in the afternoon they began to torture her afresh. They said they must put the child to the breast. He was a ravenous fellow. The pain of

giving suck was like the pain of a boil drawing . . . yet she gave gladly; all the suspended motherhood in her rushed into that first giving, it hung, it brooded above him.

“A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.”

It was a man who said that. Divine as He was He didn't know. Emma could never forget. It was part of her great happiness that she must always remember.

She had paid the price. Love is not paid by anyone, from anywhere . . . love itself must pay for the good of loving. She had paid the price. Thank God now! She had the right to love him.

So they lay, those two, in the walnut bed with the twisted posts and railings . . . Together!

CHAPTER V.

Emma had been downstairs about two weeks; the boy was still a very red young person with scanty hair, a soft crumpled skin and two mottled fists held up close, one at either cheek, where he slept in his wide-winged cradle; when one January afternoon the bell on the front door twirled and rang. Emma answered it.

To her surprise there stood Sarah Williams; Sarah in her best clothes, immemorial long-fingered black kid gloves and all . . . that old black bonnet of hers with its white flowers frosted like the flowers on a wedding-cake, tied down with strings and a bow into her ruffle.

Sarah was not alone. Back of her, carefully scraping the snow off his galoshes on the edge of the step, stood a little man whose eyes shone out of a wrinkled face, bright as the proverbial dollar . . . and whose whole appearance seemed to suggest that he had spent the best part of his life improving the shining penny.

The little man was dressed in an overcoat of melancholy brown. His overcoat was, however, the only melancholy thing about him; for in addition to his bright eyes he had a cheek to which a winter day could still bring a splash of colour, while his hair, gray as a badger, stood out from his head with the energy of eighteen summers.

The two were smiling. Emma guessed in an instant who he was . . . Jimmy Fowler!

"You'll have to come into the sitting-room where the baby is, I'm afraid, Mr. Fowler," she said, "the parlour stove isn't lit."

"Well!" exclaimed Jimmy, executing a sort of double shuffle in the snow as he spoke, "seeing the baby's the identical person we've walked over to see, and seeing he can't come to us yet, I'm thinking we'd have to go to him sooner or later anyway! Ain't that right, Miss Williams?"

Emma laughed the happy laughter of the young mother whose child is the topic of conversation.

"It's herself has been telling me all about this boy of yours, Mrs. Winchester," Jimmy continued. "I've seen a few babies myself in my time, ma'am! The father of six and the grandfather of six more up the other side of Winnipeg. So I said: 'Let's go over and pay our respects to the latest!' And here we are. Your very humble servants!"

Emma led the way and they went back into the sitting-room; the very room where Sarah sat with her the night before the boy was born and talked about “the Queen of the village.”

It was a shabby room and much used, as like as two peas to half a dozen other rooms between the brown house and the church on the highroad. But there wasn’t another room with such a cradle, thought Emma. No, nor such a baby!

The sun was ruthless. It shone through the window with the inquisitorial glance of afternoon sunshine; not a spot nor a rent nor a speck of dust escaped it. It was so bold and so insistent that the red glow of the base-burner at full blast lost colour before it and took on a purple complexion; a purple in its turn blurred by the coal-smudge that tarnished its squares and oblongs of mica. Only three blossoming geraniums set out on the window ledge could preserve any sort of countenance in face of that four o’clock survey.

Emma stooped to pick up a little woollen shoe which had dropped to the floor near a black rocker. The cat rose from his place in the spot of sun centered on the rag-carpet in front of the stove, and arched his back in protest at the interruption of his napping. Then Emma turned back the covers on the cradle and they all bent over him.

Sarah—the Killarney eyes struck through at last with the light that never was on land or sea—was beaming and proprietorial.

“He’s that fast, the drums of Ross wouldn’t rouse him!” she said. “There! don’t waken the child. Ach! don’t waken him. Sure Jimmy can see his eyes another time! And as for the heft of him; begorra that will improve with the keeping!”

The boy’s mouth moved as though he sucked. He waved one fist impatiently in the air, uncurling the tiny fingers; then it dropped back with the palm uppermost, close to his ear, and he sank again into perfect slumber.

Jimmy was hitting one galoshed foot against the other where he stood, smiling first at the baby and then at Sarah.

“How old is he now?” he whispered.

“How old is he now?” mimicked Sarah in great derision. “Jimmy Fowler, didn’t I tell you the noon that he was born yesterday five weeks, at one o’clock in the day-time. How old is he now, bless him!”

Emma turned and looked at Sarah. Everything about the boy was so wonderful to her own mind that it seemed the most natural thing in the world Sarah should keep tab on his age to the latest minute. The look was a look of perfect understanding.

“See! Mr. Fowler!” she said, “see how well he holds on! They say that’s a good sign in a baby.” Then she covered the boy, lingering a moment in the process, tucking and patting. And after that the three sat down.

“When did you come?” asked Emma, opening the conversation and addressing Jimmy. “I didn’t know that you were in this part of the world, Mr. Fowler.”

Jimmy chuckled. “Neither did I,” said he. “That is, I couldn’t be properly said to know it ’till I dropped off a sleigh there at Tom Moore’s corner at nine o’clock this morning. You see I only got into the city a bit after six . . . a bit before Phœbus was footing it, as we say in Ireland. I had a cup of tea at one of them hotels near the station-house; and then I started. I meant to walk it, but a travelling man, he was selling brooms and a fine trade he seemed to be making of it by all accounts, picked me up a piece back up the river; and here I am.”

“Yes, here he is,” breathed Sarah, the beginning of a laugh at the corners of her mouth and the light in her eyes deepening.

“I’m from the other side of Winnipeg,” Jimmy went on, “went out West after my wife died, to live with my boy Charley. That’s fourteen year come April. I remember you, ma’am. You were so high! About eight year, I fancy. Your mother was in her first mourning when I went away. Great man, your father; best doctor and best druggist in these parts. Yes, and he knew a thing or two about a sick horse into the bargain. . . . I always had it with me that if Doc Hart had been alive things might have gone different with Mrs. Fowler. Ah well, glory be! we all of us have to die sometime. Things might have been worse, I’m thinking.”

With this last ejaculation, Jimmy hit his feet together, and threw a glance at Sarah:

“Tell Mrs. Winchester why I’m come. Ah, go on. Sure, she’s one of the family.” Then without waiting: “Mrs. Winchester,” he said, “Sarah and me thinks of getting married! I always liked Sarah. Even when Mrs. F. was alive, I thought there was worse looking girls in the world than Sally Williams. After? Well, after things crowded in on me a bit, I never could quite get to it. But now if you please, it’s herself has been telling me that she could put up with Jimmy Fowler. Glory be! ever since I heard them words

I've been asking myself why I'd been such a fool as not to speak earlier. It's been lonely for her these years and I'm dead certain it's been lonely for me, leastwise since my boy Charley lost his wife and went and took another. Not that I blame Charley! Charley's a family man, and his wife had a black spell of sickness before she went, poor boy. With six children under his feet every time he stuck his nose in the house, he just had to. No, I'm not blaming Charley. But that isn't to say that I could like the woman he took. Is it?

"Well, when I found that I didn't like Mrs. C., and that I couldn't be got to like her, I said to myself: 'I guess I needn't stay here. I'm beholden to no one as I knows of. And there's somebody I could like if I could clap eyes on her, that's certain'. . . . So I packed my things . . .

"Charley, poor chap, he kept on telling me that it's cows over the seas have showy horns; that maybe I'd be disappointed. But I told him to leave be. Sure I'd more than the price of a ticket to Winnipeg in my pocket—I could get back if need be. And there he was, standing around, moaning over me . . . thinking of the bit I've saved, I guess . . . thinking of the children.

"So I says: 'Don't you fret, Charley! I ain't going to leave anything away from my own flesh and blood, you can put that in your pipe and smoke it! When I die you get your share. No, I'm just going back to Ontario a bit and if I see a girl that used to live down there and if I like her as well as I used to think I liked her; well, maybe there'll be a wedding.' Only one thing she'll have to understand: I'll provide for her comfortable through her life, but there won't be one cent after me and her to leave away from the Fowler family. Sarah knows! I prepared her mind for her. I let her see the lay of the land before I asked her to take a canter round the pasture with me! And that neither of us may out-live the other, is the wish of my heart for the future Mrs. Fowler!"

Drawing down his long upper lip with an expression at once good-humoured and final, Jimmy ceased speaking. Emma was dumbfounded. When, however, she saw that Sarah sat in a state of manifest felicity, she hadn't the heart to let her astonishment show. So she got up and kissed the future Mrs. Fowler; gave her a whole-hearted squeeze across the arm of the rocker:

"Mr. Fowler," she said, "I think you're the luckiest, and I think you're the cleverest, man in the country!"

Jimmy laughed and cocked a quizzical brow at Sarah, as who should say,

"Ain't I the artist? Haven't I got the eye for the women . . . Jimmy Fowler?"

“You’ll stay for tea, won’t you, Sarah?” Emma continued.

“We will,” said Sarah, “that is, if you’ll leave it to me.”

“I’m thankful you asked us, Mrs. Winchester; sure I’m that hungry I could eat the jamb off the door,” said Jimmy.

So Sarah, very conscious of her new position in the world, told Jimmy to change places, while she put up the leaf of the table and set out the china. Then began a series of nods and whisperings between Sarah and Emma, to all of which Jimmy, as the guest of honour, was supposed to be as oblivious as the thief of time himself. Presently Sarah went out into the kitchen and drew the door to after her, whereupon there was a subdued clattering of pans and things. After awhile she came back and the smell of frying came with her. Then there was five minutes of continued back and forth; the door between always very carefully shut for fear of the baby. And now, the hanging lamp in the centre of the ceiling having been rattled down and lighted, a kettle of freshly boiled water having been set on the hole at the back of the base-burner for the second relay, they sat down to a dish of meat and potatoes, the cake left over from the boy’s christening, and what Jimmy called the “best cup this side of glory!”

The lovers went away early; Jimmy carrying a lantern to light Sarah down the snowy road, and Sarah, her skirts lifted so that the glare of the lantern threw a gigantic shadow-pattern of her well-rubbered feet and the tier on tier of her clothing, plodding along with grave steps, but in the liveliest anticipation of double harness.

“Mr. Fowler,” Emma called out after them, “if Tom Moore hasn’t enough blankets down at his place, tell him to come up here and I’ll lend him a couple.”

Then she locked the door and went back. Sarah herself had cleared away. The room was tidy and silent, not a sound but the tick of the clock on the dresser. The silence made her heart feel empty. She wondered what she could do without Sarah Williams?

For a moment only she stood there musing. The feeling had scarcely possessed her when she swooped down over the cradle, caught him up and held him:

“My son! my precious! As if I needed anybody!”

CHAPTER VI.

“Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?”

Mr. Broadhurst’s voice, putting the paternal challenge of the Church of England marriage service, resounded with traditional pomp through the little gray building. And Jacob Springer answered:

“I do, Mr. Rector.”

A version of his own which he flattered himself gave to the ceremony a peculiar distinction.

With the exception of her brother—“Pat the drone”, as she was wont to call him—who went away to the States years ago and forgot to send word of his whereabouts, Sarah had neither kith nor kin this side of the water. If Pat were alive, they two were the last of eleven. So Sarah asked Jacob to stand up with her.

Jacob Springer was a lubberly one-armed man with a gaunt gray head and a face whose flesh seemed to have been put on in laps and folds, quickly, with a trowel. After due deliberation, he said he didn’t mind, he guessed he would.

Not that Jacob Springer was interested in Sarah William’s marriage . . . one old maid the less was about what it came to, to Jacob. And Jimmy wasn’t any such great shucks as he could see . . . mean little rat, as tight-fisted as they make ’em.

“If I have eaten bread, and I have,” said Jacob, “it was none of it Jimmy Fowler’s baking.”

“Jacob!” sighed Eliza, “however can you! Ain’t you glad that Sarah’s going to get a man and a home to her liking?”

But Jacob was gone . . . the shop bell . . . he had tea and sugar to weigh, perhaps cheese and bacon. Things of infinite importance.

“Young Eliza,” an unelastic tendril of her vine-like mother, whose flaxen hair was perpetually tied up with pink ribbons, perked up enough when she and Eliza were doing the dishes to say:

“Ma! Do you know, I believe Pa’s a pedimist!”

Eliza wasn’t exactly sure what her offspring meant, but she answered:

“Yes, I guess he is, all right.”

The main thing, of course, was that Jacob consented. And really all things considered, he was almost cordial that bright July morning when he stepped out from the little group gathered at the chancel steps in response to Mr. Broadhurst's question.

Jacob that day wore the time-honoured church black. In spite of—well, in spite of his being what his daughter said he was—he had, however, thought fit to brighten his person if not his view-point. Therefore in addition to his ordinary Sunday habiliments, he had put on a lavender waistcoat which had formed a part of his own wedding garment, and the tie to match. The gloves that had originally accompanied waistcoat and tie having long ago gone the way of all skin, Jacob wore the brown gloves Eliza had given him at Christmas. People never could make out why Eliza always would give Jacob kid gloves. It did seem so extravagant!

As it happened the particular glove in question was of the fall or early winter variety, with silk weltings down the back, and fingers so roomy they made the sole remaining hand of the wearer look not unlike a bunch of Frankfurters, of which one, the little sausage of the bunch, was missing.

This extraordinary index and sign manual the good man waved in the air in time with his words. And to the end of time, deep in his own mind, Jacob Springer thought that if ever a woman was well and truly married, that woman was Sarah Williams.

In Jimmy Fowler's phraseology, Emma had undertaken to "boss the job." She decided that Sarah's cottage was too small for all the people who would want, and who would have a right, to come to the wedding. Besides as Jimmy had made up his mind to stay east and had taken a house in the city, it would be well for Sarah to get her goods and chattles packed at least a week before the ceremony. Then she must move her clothes over to Emma's and the breakfast could take place there . . . out under the apple trees if the weather were fine; if it rained, in the parlour.

They were making it a "surprise" breakfast. For years Sarah Williams had been village property. People had given her her presents in kind; and in return she had had the run of every sick-room and every kitchen in the place. There was nothing strange then, now that she was making the best match of any woman in these parts in many a day, the village would want to see to it that her send-off was handsome.

So there was great baking and cooking among Emma and her neighbours. The pungent odour of the ham they boiled, the sacrificial smell of roast chickens, the fragrance of cakes and jellies assailed the nostrils of

the wayfaring man for two whole days. Above all they assailed the nostrils of Jacob Springer whose ledger waxed fat with credit.

As far as the wedding and the breakfast were concerned, Sarah gave herself up unreservedly into Emma's hands. On the subject of the wedding-dress, however, her mind was made up and settled. No, "a pretty gray" or a "nice lavender" wouldn't do at all! She hadn't waited all these years and many and many a time given up hope in the waiting, to be put off with anything so tame as gray or lavender. White! It was going to be white! And orange blossoms!

Emma shrank from the thought of the kind old face set off pitilessly by the conventional get-up. She urged a hat or a toque or a "dear little bonnet with a soft white feather and a drop veil just to the shoulder." Sarah was obdurate.

"You wore a long white veil yourself, Emma Winchester," she said, "and I guess I've a right to wear one too if I am a few wisdom teeth older!"

Then white it was, with a good swathe on the floor too; and all Sarah's savings of years came out of the bank to pay for it.

"And why not?" said Sarah. "What use would I have of the money? Sure, there's Jimmy!"

Everybody remarked how well Sarah looked in her finery: "Her hair's only iron-gray, after all." "There's a kink in it, too. Don't that help wonderful?" "Ain't Emma Winchester the hand, though."

And yet truth to tell, after all was said and done, Sarah looked not unlike the immortal Miss Haversham . . . supposing, one morning, Love had looked in at Miss Haversham's shut up window and caught her, bridal dress and all, waiting and still so unexpectant of his coming.

The thought sent Emma flying to her . . . kissing the faded cheeks until they bloomed with roses.

They decked the church with elderberry blossom, plucked from the crutches of the snake fences. Emma even made a great wedding bell for the happy pair to stand under.

That bell is village history. . . . She made it out of the smallest of her mother's hoop-skirts left hanging on a nail in the lean-to since the far-away Victorian days when such things were in fashion. She wound the ribs and the rounds of the hoop with green and then covered it thick with the elder flower. With its clapper of crimson poppies and its ropes of white ribbon, no

florist's arrangement could have done better. Sarah wept outright when she saw it.

But as for Marshall Jones, the carpenter, he shook his head when he was dismantling the church for Sunday, and gave it as his opinion that there would be: "Petticoat government in the house of Fowler!"

CHAPTER VII.

So Sarah and Jimmy were married and gone away, and it was August again. Emma's year had completed its circle.

August with the same heat and the same sunshine. August and the apple trees under the dormer window heavy with fruit, the hollyhocks flaunting, the wallflowers gorgeous, the dust thick on goldenrod and asters. August with its silence of birds and its chorusing of locusts. August and the flash of white bodies where the river ran with tranquil sides and deceptive shallows. August! Everything the same and yet everything so different.

He lay on his back on a pillow in the coolest spot in the garden; the spot where the afternoon breeze blew across country and ruffled the grasses. He was short-coated; a big fellow of eight months whose clothes were the scantiest. From out of their white nothingness he stretched his naked legs and arms, as though both with hands and with feet he was trying to capture the checkered sunshine.

He was terribly in earnest in his pursuit of the evasive loveliness with wings and a golden garment that lived a length above his head among the leaves and the branches. He exhorted as though it were the most reasonable thing in the world that it should drop down out of its radiant remoteness and come play with an earth-born baby. He enticed and entreated. All the most honied sounds in his primitive vocabulary poured out of his mouth by way of invitation. He proffered the seduction of his outstretched arms and of his dewy mouth whence came all this parley. Then he grew angry and lifting his voice in the largeness of a remarkable pair of lungs, he scolded in a high-sounding vernacular made all the more lurid by his use of a pantomime robustious and threatening.

The sunshine capitulated. Suddenly, all on an instant, it settled right across his face; which made him shut his eyes, screw his nose, squirm and try to brush the thing away with the very two hands which had so lately solicited attention.

Emma sitting near, the allegiance of her eyes divided between her work and his antics, smiled as she watched him. She leaned over and shifted his position, thus giving him the chance to win near his goal and yet not quite attain it.

"Little son! Little son!" she crooned . . . and her voice had in it the bodement and the admonition of the ages.

Lying thus in the warm sunlight under the apple trees, the boy made a beautiful picture. In sculpture, he was the kind of thing Donatello loved to do; the kind of thing he did do . . . and left us his “Dancing Children” of the Duomo at Florence. In painting, Raphael has, perhaps, come nearest him; though even Raphael never got quite that etherealised mixture of ivory and rose which is yet neither rose nor ivory, that goes to make the flesh of a healthy well-formed baby. His eyes were already gray. His hair was plentiful now and yellow. Otherwise he was just the normal child of his age, a child well born and well nurtured.

Emma’s dream was over. Emma’s dream was come true. Emma was still dreaming.

As she leaned over him she began talking to the boy in untutored rhyme; slowly counting her words, making it up as she went . . . a little song all about her baby:

*Child, if your cheeks out-vie the rose,
And in your eyes the violets blow;
If all your crumpled little toes
Are pink carnations stuck in snow . . .*

She knit her brows, hesitated, ran the gamut with her fingers on the arm of her chair, and went on:

*If soft your skin as any peach
And your two lips the cherries shame;
I guess that Science soon will teach
Your esoteric herbal name!*

It was too much! She laughed out blithely at what struck her as her own unprecedented cleverness. Then she began again:

*For when on such a tiny shoot
They find all fruits, all flowers too,
They’re sure to go down to the root
To test the species through and through . . .
And I don’t doubt me, Baby dear,
That sometime, somehow, soon or late,
They’ll call you something hard and queer
And long as half way to the gate!
As to the gate . . .*

Her eyes widened; their gaze was far, far off. She raised her body and threw up her arms exultant. Then she cried out . . . no poetiser but a woman

flaming to the tips of her fingers with exquisite passion:

*. . . Why look! Here's Dad!
Come, let us run! I'm sure he'll know
What Science calls a little lad
On whom both fruit and flowers . . .*

The word failed her. Her gaze came back. The triumphant pose shrank and shrivelled. Her hands went up to her throat. Then all at once with a great sob, she tumbled herself down on the grass beside him . . . weeping, weeping her heart out, her arm thrown across her baby's body.

When the storm of her grief was spent, Emma was all penitence. She argued and talked out loud and made the boy her witness: Would she overshadow his dear life with her own sorrow? She must do better, much better! Besides there were things to be faced for him and for herself. The year had been a heavy one. Her funds were low. She must think, think! She couldn't think and weep at the same time . . .

So she dragged herself together and sat upright, red-eyed and miserable; the baby meanwhile gurgling and crowing and catching once more at the sunshine which had moved down a space with the day's decline and was now dancing on a low branch directly above his head.

She rose and stood over him. There was no laughter now and no tears . . . only an infinitude of tenderness. Presently with a lift of the head and a resolute shoulder, she turned and went into the house. From there in a few moments she came back carrying her handbag and a bank-book and seating herself she opened the one and poured out the contents of the other into her lap. Very carefully she went over it all. How little there was! Such a very, very little! One thing was certain . . . there could be no more tears!

PART III

CHAPTER I.

The village store is, as a rule, the receiving and distributing station of village opinion. In Emma's village a good four-fifths of all opinion came by way of the smithy, where it was hammered and fullered along with Tom Moore's horseshoes, and sent the length and breadth of a ten-mile limit securely nailed to the hoofs of every rag-tag and bob-tail.

The blacksmith's shop was a long low building with two gables, the north gable of the two facing the highway. It was built of field stone set together with rough mortar, roofed with shingles that were painted red and had a red barn door on the east side of it. Beyond the barn door a shaky lean-to made a convenient shelter for crippled carts, and for ploughs that were waiting an edge on the colter. For the rest, the place was shaken with age, the cracks on the face of it crazy as patchwork, its two windows in the gable ends little more than the outlines of windows . . . rugged apertures gaping into the open, stuffed against the weather with papers and sacking.

For all, when the barn door leading into the forge was open, which it was usually until long after sunset, the smithy was the most picturesque spot in the district . . . its sombre interior hung with curious shapes of things . . . the glow of the fire . . . the brighter blast of the bellows when sparks went shooting off at intervals into dusky space, made up a play of light and shade which would have rejoiced a Rembrandt, supposing there had been a Rembrandt on that lonely Canadian road to rejoice in it.

Next the shop was the blacksmith's cottage, a bachelor's place, neglected and lonely, whose small lot seemed to be everlastingly set out with cabbage stalks. There Tom's hens were the only visible gardeners.

People were fond of calling Tom Moore by such discredited names as socialist, unbeliever, atheist. The first he was with certain modifications of his own manufacture. He had been the second. The third, only the most unimaginative ever could have called him.

Scraping together what education he had, in a Canadian country school during the sixties and early seventies, the smith had been brought up in the strictest sort of orthodoxy . . . Anglican in creed, and taught to revere the Word to its last letter; not a punctuation point that had not come by way of revelation; believe or be damned . . . Conservative in politics, with John A. Macdonald the crowned head of Canadian statesmanship.

As he grew to manhood, however, hard and fast convictions of this kind began to creep too near his reason. Gradually, both in religion and politics, he became skeptic . . . not skeptic in the slap dash modern usage of the term, but in the absolute Greek sense . . . the spirit of investigation and of criticism possessing him . . . his curiosity and his interest in his own curiosity becoming an all-absorbing occupation.

This particular direction was first given to Tom's thought when, a youth of nineteen years, he lost his only and his elder brother and suffered by that loss an almost unbearable sorrow.

Mr. Broadhurst, at that time a very young man just out from England and still victim to certain occupational diseases which attack the clergy of that country, urged the theory that in the Providence of God man that is born of woman has but a short time to live and is full of misery . . . the Lord gave and the Lord taketh away argument . . . submission to the divine will and to church authority the whole duty of man, as also his only chance of happiness:

"Say 'Thy will be done!' Tom, say 'Thy will be done!'" whispered the kindly priest and his own heart broke for the coldness of his comfort.

Tom couldn't. An arbitrary all-powerful Being who had made a world in six days and formed man out of the dust of the ground just because He wanted to, with all the accompanying details of the Garden of Eden, appealed no longer to his idea either of sovereign intelligence or of supreme love. On the other hand, he had as yet neither education nor vision with which to sift and sort the dear old fables . . . he could not winnow their truth from fancy . . . he could not bring their teaching within reach of his understanding. So far everything was either black or white to Tom Moore, either God's truth or a lie. He had some slight knowledge of physical law but none of mental processes. In particular the figure of speech, the poetic symbol so natural to the Oriental mind were waste matter . . . pros and cons applied to the realm of his five senses expressed in language literal to baldness, this for the moment was practically speaking his intellectual stock-in-trade. So the seeds of a mystical Eastern faith falling on stony Western places sprang up for awhile, but being without root of scholarship or insight, withered and fell away.

"If there is a God," said Tom to all and sundry, and he voiced his "if" with the patronage of the very young, "then so far as I am concerned the most important thing He has made is Tom Moore. And of Tom Moore the most important part is his reason . . . I have a reason and I mean to use it."

It is well known how that argument went in the early seventies . . . how men of the Tom Moore type tried to reduce intelligence to phenomena of matter; resolve existence to mechanism. How they misinterpreted their Tom Paine . . . found the essence of Voltaire in his ribaldry . . . the soul of Rousseau in his politics. How they became utilitarian with Bentham and warred against institutions under the glittering ægis of the youthful Shelley . . . image-breakers to the last enthusiastic one of them, but image-breakers whose dangerous “little learning” led them to an assault on the Soul of man himself, the image and the likeness of God.

So, he could find no hope nor comfort in his brother’s death. Sunk in the lethargy of the writer of Ecclesiastes, he abandoned the mysteries of the universe as insoluble even while, like that ancient writer, he retained his faith in the profitableness of virtue, and his sympathy with natural happiness.

The first light in the darkness came when Tom fell in with the works of John Stuart Mill; learned of that philosopher that according to the present state of our knowledge the adaptations in nature afford a large balance in favour of the idea of creation by intelligence . . . that so-called “miracles” may one day be explained by natural laws . . . that of Christianity and the person of Christ Himself we may reasonably believe that God, or Intelligence, made provision that one should come at the opportune time in the scheme of development; and that the other by the very force of his originality combined with the profundity of his insight as well as the dedication of himself to his idea, should present himself to the ages “Charged with a special, express and unique commission to lead mankind to truth and virtue.”

A little later he ran across the writings of Charles Darwin; threw himself into a study of the liberating theory of the Origin of Species and The Descent of Man . . . the latter at that moment just from press.

One day about this time Mr. Broadhurst, dropping in to see Tom, who was working then for his father, a brawny man and a smith of creditable skill, the two had a tilt at their usual argument. Tom outlined his recent reading, his face glowing with a new hope as he concluded with these words:

“Well, all I know, Parson, is: if this here theory of evolution is true, and if Tom Moore’s a part of it . . . then it’s ‘Thy Will be Done’ for mine henceforth and forever!”

Saying which he brought his hammer to the bar he was drawing down. Tap! Tap! Tap! a quarter round and a quarter round all across the anvil. The patience and the fidelity of one who rejoices in his skill . . . who feels the power of the master-worker within him to be a part of creative nature; a modicum of God.

After that Mr. Broadhurst took Tom Moore as he did many of his intellectual difficulties—“On faith.”

But Tom went further. In the long solitude to which during the winter months the smithy was subject, he put the theory of evolution to the supreme test . . . he carried it from the realm of the physical to the realm of the spiritual, where it opened out to his imagination glories undreamed.

In these speculations Tom conceived of man as the end of the finite and the beginning of the infinite; a creature just risen to a new plane of being with endless reduplications of himself ahead in more ethereal form and to finer issues. The apparent disorder of the moment he thought to be due to the fact that while the physical, the ancient inhabitant of the earth, has learned in this, its age-long home, to respond automatically to the law of its being; the Soul, a newcomer; has not yet so learned. And the law of the Soul is Love!

So confusion opened out before him into vistas of ever-increasing harmony. So the crooked became straight. He had swept the universe with his thought. He had made the great curve. Starting with a blind belief, he had encircled the facts of existence so far as they presented themselves to him; and had come back with his eyes open to his original point . . . the “I Am” of human consciousness. He had proved so much that he had learned to trust what he had not proven . . . the vastness and the silences!

Greater faith has no man!

CHAPTER II.

Tom Moore had no special leanings toward women, but he had succumbed to Emma . . . suddenly . . . on the day of her husband's death, when he saw her on her knees in the gravel praying for strength and sanity that she might bear her child. Afterwards, when the boy was born, he adopted them both. And he served them!

Even as a wee tot there was no place Jack loved so well as the smithy. Tom always broke work willingly to ride him on his knee or let him hunt in his big blacksmith's pockets for peppermints or taffy. Hours and hours when the smith was busy, he played contentedly there among broken wheels and scrap iron.

He had been a burned child once. The result was a due respect for the monster that roared by the side of the anvil. Neither Emma nor Tom were afraid he would do himself a further injury.

When he grew older and read the Wonder Books, Tom's fire, deep-mouthed and with accompanying steam and fury, became his dragon . . . as for the sparks, they were his wonder people.

He made it up to himself that after the forge was closed for the night and Tom was in bed snoring, all the sparks of the whole day came out again from the darkness into which they had vanished and held high revel. The fire, too, began to snort and flame exactly as it did when Tom was playing the bellows; the water in the trough to fume and sizzle. And by and by he began to believe quite firmly everything that he made up.

There were king sparks and queen sparks of course, and the thousand on thousand of other sparks were the knights of his Kingdom of Firefly. . . . What tournaments they held on the anvil, each knight helmeted and on his charger. . . . What castles they went storming over there in the black corner beyond the dragon where the rubbish-heap suggested impregnable fastnesses. . . . What feats of daring. . . . What captive ladies. . . . What treasure. . . .

When Tom knocked off a particularly large spark from an especially refractory bit of iron, why that was Bluebeard or Goliath or his own namesake's vociferous enemy . . . the giant that Jack killed. And when with quick blows he sent companies of smaller sparks flying; those were the Forty Thieves, or Bluebeard's Wives, or the Lilliputians getting back at Gulliver.

If the blacksmith were in a thoughtful mood, his work slow, only occasional white sparks coming rhythmically in singles or doubles, those were Fairy Godmothers bringing gifts for people's christenings; or, whisper, Jack didn't tell all his thoughts, it might be that to the youngster among the broken wheels and the scrap iron, they were angels with starry crowns like the angels on Christmas Trees, dancing in heaven because a little Boy was born in Bethlehem.

CHAPTER III.

“Mother! Mother! Mother!”

“Yes. What is it?”

“Well, Mother, you know I just must have a piece of green for the coat of Albert’s Napoleon. . . . And have you any more white for the breeches? And I think I’ll make the boots out of black satin this time, if you have any . . . black satin looks pretty much like shiny leather, doesn’t it, Mother? . . . And . . .”

Emma put her hand over his shoulder and stopped the boy’s mouth with it:

“Anything else, old man?” she asked laughingly. “Just mention it, you know, if you happen to think of anything . . .

E. WINCHESTER & SON
Tailors, Hatters & Bootmakers to
HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY
THE EMPEROR OF FRANCE

“Sounds well; doesn’t it?”

He had burst in on her by way of the kitchen as she sat in the afternoon light, her chair drawn up to the drop-leaf table, doing over Eliza Springer’s five-years-old black cashmere. His usually pale cheeks were flushed. His gray eyes had lights in them, like the lights in solemn waters suddenly struck with sunshine.

“Well, Mother,” he went on as if in extenuation, “you know you can always get things. And Albert just must have that Napoleon to-morrow.”

“Why must he?”

“Well, you know, Albert’s uncle’s got a lot of stamps . . . hundreds and millions of them. . . . They belonged to that boy, that kid of his, that died out in British Columbia last winter. . . . And Albert’s uncle said he could show me. . . . And he won’t till he gets his Napoleon. You will, won’t you, Mother?”

Emma took the small hand down from its position around her throat and squeezed it before she dropped it. Eliza was in a hurry for her dress. Mary Cook, Jacob’s cousin over on the Third Concession, was dead and Eliza had

to go over on Saturday for the funeral. It was Thursday now. She had no time for the sweet thing called fooling.

Jack was twelve. Emma had entered her thirty-fourth year. They still lived in the brown house with the sloping roof and dormer windows.

She had matured as her youth promised . . . a spare body, curiously noble. Her thin hands were work-worn but scrupulously clean. Her long feet were still shapely. Her lean hips and shoulders were without the suspicion of a slouch. The blue eyes under their thoughtful brows were as wide open as ever . . . the peculiar clear eyes of a child which certain persons carry with them to the grave. Only her hair was not so bright a brown as formerly.

He was tall for his years, slight like his mother, but more graceful than she. There was something impetuous and yet steel-like in his small body . . . it suggested the bright flash of a sword drawn quick from its scabbard. This brightness was further accentuated by his hair, golden and plentiful as his father's had been before him, and by the lively pallor of his face with his mouth like a scarlet thread across it. It was his mouth above all that gave him the exotic look people noticed.

When he was a very little boy, Sarah Williams used to whisper to Eliza Springer that she was afraid he wouldn't make old bones . . . no boy could with that look in him. But Emma knew him to be exceptionally well and hardy; that there was nothing to fear on account of his pallor. As for the "look" Sarah noticed . . . well, there was a daring imaginative spirit in the boy . . . a quick response to both good and evil.

From the crown of his head to the soles of his feet he was a hero worshipper. His mother encouraged him; she thought a boy ought to love the world's great men. She was a hero worshipper herself one step in advance, and she believed that he had to go through the regular process.

His heroes were all men who had made a stir . . . preferably those who had the flower of romance stuck about their person . . . fine deeds and plenty of swashbuckling! Not that he had ever heard the word swashbuckling or would have known what it meant if he had heard it. But he knew the thing itself and gloried in it. . . .

He was chivalrous too. As yet he had read no line of Sir Philip Sidney's poetry. The history of the author of "Arcadia", however, he knew by heart. . . . Emma had told it him over and over in the Sunday gloaming . . . in the one hour of the week when she had time to gather him to her heart and they two could go a-journeying. When he and the boys were campaigning

under the apple trees he used to specialise on that cup of cold water business. He thought that the finest.

For a whole six months he had given his allegiance to Charles the First. There was something about those fellows with the love-locks he simply couldn't get away from. They always stood so pat. He adored people who stood pat! He dreamed a dream of himself . . . Indians . . . Pirates . . . a big muss of some kind . . . and he, Jack Winchester, standing pat in the middle of it taking his medicine!

When he was a bit more grown up, as he said himself, and had read a few things, he accepted the fact that his fascinating Charles was a no-good. But that didn't cover the Cavaliers, did it? They thought Charles was great and they stood pat for him. So that was all right, wasn't it?

At the moment his idol was Napoleon. The spell of the "Little Corporal", the charm of the great emperor, was on him. It would be a long time before he would escape that dual thralldom . . . perhaps he never would escape it.

How he envied the fellow in the poem his mother used to read; the wounded fellow, you know, who brought the dispatches. To have carried the news his general wanted, to have been shot to pieces and yet to have got there. . . . To have flung himself off his horse at attention, his lips so tight that scarcely any blood came through. . . . To have had Napoleon notice him, say "You're wounded?" . . . And then to have cried out proudly, "I'm killed, Sire!" And so, having saved Napoleon and served France, to have fallen at the feet of his hero. . . . That was death! That was glory!

The boy had a talent for drawing—his ships were the envy of the school. But the chief reason why his stock stood high was because he could make a "real" Napoleon out of cardboard. . . . Napoleon triumphant; no one could ever persuade him to the melancholy exile of Saint Helena. This image he used to dress in the traditional coloured stuffs and then mount on a second piece of cardboard for hanging. There were at least seven Jack Winchester Napoleons in the neighbourhood, besides the one he had given his mother on her last birthday . . . the one that hung in her room under the portrait of Queen Victoria.

The boys who had secured these masterpieces were objects of envy to the boys who had not . . . a fellow had to be able to whack up, you know . . . Winchester wouldn't part with a Napoleon for nothing. He liked knives and fishing-hooks and sinkers and string and corks and marbles, of course; what fellow doesn't? But he liked stamps and coins better . . . and here was

Albert's uncle with stamps to burn. Perhaps if he made Albert an extra good Napoleon, Albert might get him a couple!

When Emma's mother's estate had been settled after the failure of the bank, it was discovered that everything was gone except the brown house and its orchard. From her husband she had nothing but a small insurance . . . all ready money, and that out of a schoolmaster's salary was necessarily a pittance, having been exhausted during the year when Jack was a baby. To eke out she lettered two great cards and put them in the parlour window. One card read:

PIANO TAUGHT

The other:

DRESSMAKING AND PLAIN SEWING

Pupils were never plentiful . . . Mr. Broadhurst worked her case with every likely family in the three parishes, but for all his efforts the feet of them that came to be taught made little difference to the wear and tear of the path that led from Emma's gate to the blacksmith's corner.

With dressmaking it was different. When she was about sixteen years of age she had visited a cousin of her mother who lived in Chicago. The glory of those six months clung to her; what was in reality native wit and ingenuity—her handiness in such things as Sarah Williams' wedding; the never-to-be-forgotten marriage bell—she was supposed by the women of the village to have acquired in the western metropolis. That glory told when she lettered her card and took in a fashion paper. To be sure she got few enough dresses actually to make, but every now and again there was one to do over.

In addition she grew vegetables all over the lot, kept hens and a cow and sold milk and eggs in the village. She also made her own clothes and the boy's, mending and patching the things she had made until there was little left of the original material. In the meanwhile she ate as sparingly as she could that Jack might have plenty . . . growing boys need such a lot . . . they are hollow down to their toes, God bless them!

In spite of all that she could do, however, she was poor . . . the sort of poverty that dare not betray itself . . . the kind that turns a woman into a human machine; a machine for getting and spending; a machine for concealment and subterfuge. Village people have such eyes.

And yet she was not unhappy. Even so sordid a thing as pinching and scraping may be a sort of happiness when there is a purpose back of it. And had she not the most splendid purpose in the world . . . had she not Jack?

Moreover, Emma was happy in the thought that though the curtain had rung down early on her love-life, that love-life had been as complete as anything earthly can be. Not death nor time could destroy that which had been up-gathered by eternity . . . out of all the years God had given her those three years; they were as valid and as durable as herself.

She thought of John as eternally young and eternally her own. It had been a short experience but not meagre. Working as it did in her, upon a sanguine and a fertile nature, it had in it vitality for a lifetime. Women, the roots of whose being go down into and are nourished by the affections, fade and grow old because romance fails them . . . because men forget to be lovers. Emma with the rhapsody of a young man's love close held in her heart was kept imaginatively and spiritually young. Her body matured. Her mind ripened. Her vision won a broader range. But her soul was fresh . . . she had the gay laugh of a girl.

CHAPTER IV.

One summer evening a year later, while Tom, a special job on hand, was still working at the forge, Jack came running down the pathway that led from his mother's house to the smithy. He flourished a newspaper. It was plain that he had great news.

"Tom! Oh, Tom! Tom! Oh, Tom!"

The young soprano floated out on the air clear as a bugle call. Cheerful above the fields, it echoed back from the yellow palisades on the other side of the river, liquid as silver:

"Tom! Oh, Tom!"

The smith dropped his hammer and stepped to the door. The sun in the west threw the shadow of the old building across the yard and down the path. In the open of fields and meadows the evening light was disintegrating rapidly. . . . Heavily-branched trees, cottage walls and snake fences stood out in it touched to purple. . . . The roads had taken on a cast of pink. . . . The roofs were pallid. . . .

Tom stood in the dark width of the opening, the glow of the forge fire behind him and roll on roll of soft clouds, crimson and gold, scrolled in the blue above. He was sweaty and grimy and he wore his leather apron as he had on that summer evening thirteen years before.

Thirteen years older! And yet it was easy to see that he was still a man in his working prime.

Tom Moore's face was not a handsome face so much as it was a strong face; strong and tender. There were deep knotted wrinkles between his brows, wrinkles into which the soot settled, making them look deeper and more knotted still. His brows themselves were shaggy, hanging above his eyes like yellow thatch, smoky and faded; the eyes beneath, calm and wise with the saving grace of a humourous glance to make their wisdom clear. The smith had the high cheek bones and the broad nose of his Scotch ancestry and his lower face was hidden by a tawny moustache and beard through which his smile played at intervals like interrupted sunshine. His throat where the blue flannel shirt fell away was pillared and ruddy. There was six foot one of manhood in him—and every foot of it untainted and weather-proof.

As he watched the boy running toward him, Tom guessed what it was he had to tell.

“Tom! I’ve passed! I’ve passed, Tom!”

Tom took the paper out of Jack’s hand and sitting down on the great block of wood just inside the forge door, he rubbed his steel-rimmed spectacles to read the story.

Yes! There it was. “High School Entrance Examinations” in flaring headlines. And away down among the W’s with his marks duly recorded . . . John Winchester.

“Well, I told your mother not to let you try,” Tom grumbled in his effort to suppress the smile that would raise the little hairs at the corners of his mouth. . . . “Now, what are you going to do about it?”

Tom was never answered. From the flats this side of the river, a boy called; called with a whoop, his hand palpitating on his mouth to prolong the volume. Jack was off like a shot. The smith was left to speculate upon his own question.

A moment or two passed. The sunset deepened. Everything that had been red, bronze, gold, became redder, more bronzen, more golden. The purples darkened. Up in the sky the blue took on a greenish tinge, a green which lightened along the tip of the arc to primrose. Presently Tom stood up, stirred a chip or two about on the ground with the toe of his boot, deeply thinking; and then with a sudden revival of activity started toward the fire and the anvil.

He had been about to sharpen a couple of mill-bills when Jack interrupted him. They must wait. Must wait? No, no, what’s the use, get it over!

So he lighted his oil lamps over the health and above the anvil. Then he blew up his fire, the bellows belching and wheezing, the ruby light rising and splashing from the floor to the rafters. A thrust of the pliers and one of the wedges is in, Tom hanging round and waiting for the cherry red of the danger line. He has the wedge out and on to the anvil. Now for the hammer . . . and now for the ring, ring, ring . . . steel against steel . . . a rapid stroke . . . that’s what does it! A few moments and the edges of the mill-bill are drawn down as sharp as a razor. He turns to the other. He repeats the process. The miller may dress his mill-stone at what hour he pleases . . . Tom Moore has kept his promise.

His task accomplished, Tom banked the fire, turned out the lamps and for once in his life forgetting to put his tools in order, shut the barn door, padlocked it and thrusting the key into his pocket made for the cottage in the cabbage patch.

When he came out again into the open the moisture of a good scrub was still clinging to his hair and beard and he was fearfully and wonderfully garbed in black. Then he set his face for the brown house and Emma.

CHAPTER V.

Emma was sitting on the narrow verandah which crossed the front of the house, sewing. She had a glass lamp with a green cardboard shade tilted to throw the light on her work, on the window-sill beside her, and she bent her head well within the range of its radiance. The light made a way for itself along the cream of her throat, crept up her chin and sent a shimmer of gold on to the crown of her head among the fluttered upstanding hairs near the parting. It emphasized, too, the movements of her hands, the glitter of her finger nails and of the hoops of the scissors thrust points downwards among the spools and things in her basket. Outside the halo in which she sat, the verandah was all in a gloaming. Outside the verandah the summer evening grew darker and darker. Presently the faint purple still lingering on the broken sky-line of the hills would vanish. Then it would be night. Was that a star . . . ?

Black, greasy midges, dead or dying, dotted the bowl of the lamp. The air was filled with moths and shard-borne creatures come from field and garden to sacrifice in the ancient manner of their tribes at the altar of light. An occasional mosquito hummed close to her ear; whereupon she struck at it with her hand, which interrupted her sewing.

Tom walked up the path from the smithy and stood a moment at the gate before entering, flicking the dust from his boots with his handkerchief. She heard the gate click and looked up with dazzled eyes that peered, unseeing, into the blackness. A worm-eaten apple dropped with a pat from the apple trees under the dormer. A tree toad began its garrulous serenade. Tom's step crunched the gravel. Except for these sounds there was no sound.

"That you, Tom?" queried Emma.

"Yes," Tom answered.

She rose to meet him. A spool fell out of her lap and rolled . . . their heads almost bumped as both at the same instant stooped to get it. So their greeting was broken with laughter.

He seated himself with his back against the verandah post on her side of the opening. The lamplight made a group of their two figures . . . Emma close to the window, her hands in her lap in the midst of her sewing . . . Tom hugging his knees in the foreground.

"So the kid's passed," said Tom.

“Yes. Isn’t it splendid?” cried Emma.

“Well, I dunno. Too young for my fancy . . .”

“Why, Tom! He’ll be thirteen in December. That isn’t too young. Lots of boys get in earlier.”

“Do they?” queried Tom laconically. Then he went on questioning: “Besides, how are you going to work it? How is he going to get there?”

Emma hesitated. Presently she said: “He’ll have to walk, I suppose; other boys have walked before him. . . .”

Tom assented. His assent didn’t seem to settle things. He was still thoughtful.

“Three miles is three miles,” he said at length. “All very well in summer, but the roads are pretty bad the rest of the year. If they’d only put in that trolley now they were talking about.”

“Yes, I wish they had. I suppose there’s no chance this year, is there?”

“Not this year. Next summer, maybe. But that doesn’t help for the winter that’s coming.” Then he went on: “Look here, what do you say to my getting the boy a wheel? He could take the road back of the reservoir up yonder; that’s the best road of the three. If he had a wheel the little more wouldn’t matter.”

“Tom!”

Her hands dropped into the muslin she was sewing and for a space there was silence between them. By and by she took courage:

“Tom,” she said, “I don’t know how to thank you . . . a wheel would be simply lovely. But you’ve done so much for us already, I just hate to. Will you let it be this way, Tom . . . will you let it be a debt . . . Jack’s debt? Will you let Jack pay it back when he’s earning?”

Tom laughed that sudden dry humourous laugh of his into his beard; and the affair of the wheel was determined.

“And the books?” he went on. “High School books come high. Any savings, Emma?”

She confessed to the cash sum of fifteen dollars. In the meantime she remembered that Jack was badly off for boots. Besides he’d have to have a new overcoat . . . he’d quite grown out of his old one . . . at any rate it never would be thick enough for all that wheeling.

Tom jumped in on her confession with: "See here; you look after the books and I'll get the wheel and the outfit."

He was the best friend she had in the world, yet how she hated taking this money. Besides there was the village . . . people had gossiped already . . . they wondered when Emma Winchester and Tom Moore were going to bring off that match of theirs? Oh, yes, kind as they were she'd seen them at it. What would they say if Jack blossomed out in a wheel and a new wardrobe? She had always been one to keep her own counsel; but they knew, they must know, that she hadn't any such sum as this. The picture she painted was so vivid it made her tremble. She felt tongue-tied. She simply could not answer.

Suddenly Tom took his hands down from around his knees and raised his body on them until his slouched position was changed and he sat upright. Then he cleared his throat:

"Emma," he said. She knew what was coming. "Emma, my dear!" He stretched his hand out the little way that lay between them and touched her dress with his fingers. "Emma. Couldn't we make it one household?"

"No, Tom. No, I couldn't."

She loved him well, but his touch accompanied as it was by those words, made her shiver in the knowledge of how little she loved him. As she spoke his hand went back to its former place with the other hand interlocking there his heavy, hard-worked fingers.

For a little while Tom made absolutely no sign whatsoever; then without the slightest alteration in the friendliness of his tone, he went on talking of Jack and his schooling.

Emma was in an agony. To take so much and to give so little, nothing she thought could be meaner. And yet she couldn't. No, not even for Jack. She simply couldn't.

As the purple glow of the sky-line went out and the stars, very decided stars now, began to peep between the branches, they settled what was to be done down to the last detail: Tom arranging, planning, arguing it all out in his own slow way . . . full of the patience and the shrewdness of his kind; Emma a little breathless and confused, sitting back, not saying much; listening rather, listening out of the distance into which her self-consciousness and her misery had withdrawn her.

By and by Jack came running, gasping and wet, from his ball game. The gate banged behind him. He covered the length of the gravel path and

throwing himself on the step just the other side of the blacksmith, leaned over on his friend's neck, his fingers astonished at the unaccustomed starched collar.

The Hill boys had beaten the Flats . . . Jack was in high feather. He had stolen two bases in one inning and made a home-run in another. The pitching of their side was corking. . . . Billy Hodge had had his fingers split with a hot one . . . he, Jack Winchester, had had to do the catching for the rest of the game. Johnson had cheated . . . the Flats were as mad as hatters . . . they had sacked him. . . .

Tom showed the expected interest. He said:

“Say! Ain’t some of you chaps big enough to join the real ‘Nine’? I should think Johnson must be . . . he’s sixteen that fellow if he’s an hour.”

Emma sat lost in the wretched dream that kept on saying: “I couldn’t! I couldn’t!” over and over again in an inward whisper.

After awhile, quite wonderful for him, Jack suggested his own bed-time. He guessed he’d be off.

“Good night, Tom. Good night, Mother.”

He pecked Emma’s cheek. Tom and Emma chorused:

“Good night.”

And he left them.

For about five minutes he continued to call things out from his hot bedroom into the cool night air; moving backwards and forwards; getting out of his clothes in the room up there across the hallway. His boots dropped. A chair scraped across the floor. The bed creaked under the bound of his young body. Then silence . . . silence and the stars.

Beneath the violet summer night Emma and Tom sat on. She had taken up her work again and was stitching nervously. The shard-borne creatures thickened, but there were fewer midges. The mosquitoes continued their predatory hum. . . . Emma could hear Tom slapping his leg occasionally, when the enemy got him. It seemed impossible to break the hush that had fallen between them. The clock in the sitting-room struck ten. . . .

Then Tom stood up, stretched his long arms until the hairy wrists showed out of the black coat-sleeves, yawned into the darkness and said he guessed it was time for him to go home.

“When those black currants of yours is ripe, Emma, you might let me have a few. If there’s one thing I like above another, it’s a bit of black currant jelly.”

She was so grateful she could have hugged him. She dropped her work into her chair and came out onto the step.

“Of course,” she answered. “They’ll be ready by the end of the week. Then I’ll make you some.”

“Thanks. Good night.”

“Good night, Tom.”

* * * * *

Tom opened the door of the cottage in the cabbage patch and fumbled for the place where he kept his matches. The hens had gone to roost long ago. Through the small window of the entry he could make out the shadowy form of the forge beyond.

“I guess I’ll get a dog,” thought Tom. “Joe Smith says there’re a couple of dandies in that new litter up to Jim Sanders.”

PART IV

CHAPTER I.

From thirteen to eighteen, Jack's life was very monotonous, but it was also very happy.

The wheel was a great success. For six months out of the nine he put it over the road that lay between the brown house under the apple trees and the large brick school on the city avenue . . . the other three months, on account of bad wheeling, he walked.

Every day, rain or shine, she walked with him as far as the smithy corner. Together they stopped to greet Tom, at that hour in smithy-shape for the day. Tom would call out something encouraging or something saucy to make Jack's words fly. Emma would feel in his pocket to see if the luncheon were all right. Then, impatient of delay, no matter what, he must mount and be off . . . the two standing and looking after him until a turn in the road hid him from their sight.

Three miles is play when the weather is fine and the wheeling good. But three miles on foot against a January wind, the thermometer round about zero and the snow drifted, is another matter. It is, however, an adventure that puts a strong wine into young veins; strings a boy's muscles into a framework to be depended upon . . . clears the brain for the process of thinking. In Jack Winchester's day, the schools of Canada were filled with boys who were none the worse for just such discipline.

Those three miles constituted, too, the best part of his coaching period. During his rides or walks he found himself arranging what he was going to do with the time before him; or, if it were the return journey, overhauling the things that had been accomplished. . . . The change from a small rural school where he had been an easy leader to a city school that drew the bright boys not only of the town but of the country as well, put him on his mettle.

There was one bridge, a long one at the top of a grade, which, whether wheeling or walking, used to wind him . . . Pons Asinorum he came to call it. By and by as his chest developed and his legs hardened the pull was easier. Presently he discovered that he had conquered his fifth proposition in the realm of muscle as he had his fifth proposition in the realm of mathematics . . . by going at it. Thereupon, he settled it with himself that anything he didn't understand on the country side of the bridge, he must clear or at least have some light upon it by the time he was sliding down at the city end. So, unconsciously to himself, he raised the mental on the

physical . . . one giant standing on the shoulders of the other giant, if perchance he might get a peep over the wall into the garden of knowledge.

Oh, the doughty battles of Youth; the splendid adversary! From that moment the doings of Jack's day converged twice at the same point. He began to live more or less just that he might cross the bridge in the midst of the hosts of the enemy . . . swords at the clash . . . banners flush with the morning or dyed with the dyes of the setting sun. How many stubborn facts he mastered up there high over the river. What time and time again, the platform rattling under his wheel, the water shining far below, he put to rout the complexities of grammar, the obduracy of figures, the subtleties of poets; questions and questioners who had wagged their hoary heads at him. Almost it seemed as though the river, which had stolen his father, were trying to make up to him for what he had lost of conflict with that gifted mind.

The boy had the seeing eye; his vision recorded a thousand impressions which his brain stored away for future service. He delighted in the shapes of things . . . often he had to turn his face away from colours for fear their loveliness should steal his thought from sterner thinking.

Trees gave him the comfortable assurance of old friends, together with the fascinating uncertainties of new; he sat down under their shadows as though the arms of love were around him, yet try as he might he could never be before-hand with them in their surprises. One tree in particular there was, a certain solitary birch tree, a leper by the winter roadside, which caught and held him. As the years went by, spring for Jack Winchester came to mean a Hand that touched and a Voice that spoke . . . and behold, the leper was a king's daughter garlanded and dancing in a garment of green! The spirit of the pagan was upon him and he worshipped her.

He learned to know the birds, the architecture of nests, the songs in their seasons. When the flowers appeared on the earth, they drew him. At yeanning time he loved to throw himself off his wheel and follow after flocks.

But student though he was, and poet in his boyish heart, Jack was the sort known among his fellows as an "all right." He could swing a stout arm; yes, and give and take a bloody nose with the best of them. There was a certain shyness that held him back from talking about his feeling for the trees; but he didn't have to conceal the fact that his was a martial spirit to hide his unbounded delight in the swinging stride of the High School Cadets. Emma couldn't afford the uniform. So he had to content himself with standing about the parade ground, watching drill.

There was a day when he confessed in private to Tom that as for most of the fellows he thought he could show them a thing or two . . . small conceits were his great weakness.

In the May of his fifteenth year—Annunciation, Emma called it and made it her custom to go to the hills where she had seen the light and heard the voice that had called her blessed—an idea came to her. The piano! She hadn't had a pupil for a long time, might never have another. Why not sell the piano? Jack liked it, of course, and there wasn't another in the village—nothing but organs and phonographs—he was proud to have it in the house when people came in and Emma played in her sweet amateurish fashion. But then Jack couldn't have everything, she thought almost impatiently. The uniform or the piano? He had to choose.

No, she must choose for him. So, looking down into the valleys where the roads ran, remembering that the piano was a thing of yesterday, her yesterday; but that the uniform was a thing of to-morrow, the to-morrow with which she had linked herself up when she became his mother . . . Emma chose.

Thus it happened that one day Jack, coming up from the meadow where he had been feeding a calf they were weaning, found a piano-mover's cart at the green gate, and two wide-girthed men in overalls gone almost breathless in their efforts to get the heavy old rosewood off the verandah. Of course there was what the mothers of men flatter themselves into calling a "row". He wouldn't have her sell it for the world. What would she do when he was away all week, as he certainly must be when he went to the Medical School? What would Tom do on Sunday evenings when there wasn't any service, and he wanted to sing hymns. . . . Sell the piano? It was too horrible!

Emma didn't know. She hadn't a word. Poor Tom; it was a shame. And in her heart she said . . . Poor Emma!

And truth to tell, the parlour looked empty enough, she thought, as she pushed a high-backed chair across the room to hide what she could of the great blotch of unfaded wall paper; what would it look like when the boy wasn't there either? Then she dusted a bit after the piano men and went out into the kitchen where she had apples on stewing for supper.

* * * * *

At the close of his fourth year Jack matriculated with honours. It was quite decided that he was to go in for medicine.

CHAPTER II.

“Well,” said Emma, “the best thing, I suppose, is for me to go to town and see Sarah. If you can’t come home, you can’t. Though how I’m going to manage all through the winter . . .”

Jack threw his arms around her.

“It won’t be for long, Mother mine. Soon I’ll be through. Then I’ll get a practice. . . . And we’ll sell this old place. . . . And you’ll come and live with me. Three years at most! You can stand it, Mother.”

So Emma went into the city.

Sarah and Jimmy lived over the railroad track in a side street not far from the Medical School. Their house was a storey-and-a-half white brick with gray trimmings. To one side of the small square of grass, by courtesy called the lawn, a narrow granolithic walk led down to the street and to the single maple tree that grew on the boulevard. At the back of the house was a yard divided all round from neighbouring yards by a high board fence. There, Jimmy, grown very old now, spaded and planted and called the tree-less, vine-less, shade-less place his garden.

The September afternoon was chilly, but it was not yet the season of fires. . . . Jimmy had a special date with which neither damp nor cold might interfere. And then wasn’t there always the kitchen . . . ?

Sarah met Emma at the door:

“In the name of God, is it yourself? Come along back until I make you a cup of tea. Faith, and it does my heart good to set eyes on you, Emma Winchester.”

The tea was a good cup; a real Irish cup for strength and flavour. Sarah produced some cookies to eat with it. She got the cookies out of a stone crock in a pantry that smelled sweet and buttery. Then she went to the kitchen door and called:

“Jimmy! Jimmy! ’Tis Emma Winchester that’s here! We’re having a scald. Come you and have a cup. Isn’t it breaking your neck long enough you’ve been over that rubbish?”

Jimmy came slowly, in felt-slipped feet; and the odour of burning leaves came with him. He’d been raking up and burning for the first time that autumn. . . . Wonderful the leaves you could get off one maple . . . and when you added cabbage stalks and the like. . . .

His back was bent with the weight of his eighty years, but his eyes were bright; he was still the same little Jimmy . . . snappy by fits and by starts . . . garrulous about his burned leaves . . . glad to see Emma after his fashion.

Sarah put a chair for him in a comfortable corner near the stove. He wanted plenty of sugar in his tea; chuckled and said that his mother used to tell that it took more sugar than the thing was worth to sweeten a crab.

“No, thanks; no cookies. It beats me why Sarah makes them hard things anyway. Belike she makes them for the pleasure she finds in passing them over the fence to that red-headed gossoon next door. No one in this house eats them, that’s certain. . . .”

Sarah thought Emma looked well. She asked after Jack. Then they chatted.

“So Jacob Springer’s dead,” said Jimmy. . . . “If ever there was a hand for selling honey and buying sweets! But I done better than Jacob this time. Eighty years old, and the devil a whack wrong with me but a touch of the chronic in me back; and Jacob that was younger than me by ten years, lying in the graveyard! He’d a great eye for ha’pence, had Mr. Jacob . . . did you chance to hear how much of a sum it was he left behind him?”

No, Emma had not heard.

“And how did he look in his coffin?” asked Sarah. “Did he wear his lavender tie and waistcoat?”

“Yes, he did,” said Emma, “and a perfectly new lavender glove; Eliza sent to town for it on purpose. With his empty sleeve straight down by his side, and his hand with the glove on it laid across his shirt bosom, he did look nice. Poor Jacob!”

“God be merciful to us,” gasped Sarah, “the very picture of Old Michael to the last!”

“Aroo! Aroo! Death is a lonesome thing,” crooned Jimmy.

“What about Eliza? Did she take on?” asked Sarah.

“It’s wonderful how she misses him. You see Jacob’s ways were only cranky ways, not bad ways. And Eliza was used to him.”

“That’s true for you,” said Sarah. “Jacob was always as steamy as a fermented haystack . . . plenty of words and little harm! I was always saying that same thing to Jimmy. Heard how young Eliza is lately?”

“She’s well. And really, do you know, Sarah, she’s almost pretty! Marriage has certainly improved that girl. Perhaps it’s because she’s happy. Or—” the ghost of a malicious little smile flitted round Emma’s mouth —“perhaps it’s because she doesn’t have to wear pink ribbons!”

“What sort of a fellow is Peter Wilson anyway?” was Sarah’s next question. “I never laid eyes on him but once. And that’s ten years ago, the day of the wedding. His face is as broad as County Clare for one thing. I thought him a softy myself. Is he now?”

“Indeed he isn’t,” was Emma’s somewhat indignant rejoinder. “Peter is an all round good fellow! You have no idea how kind he is to young Eliza. People used to say no man that ever lived could stand her untidy ways . . . but Peter Wilson has . . . he’s done more; he’s helped her improve them. Tom? Yes, Tom’s all right. I never saw him looking better.”

Then with a swift shadow clouding her yes, “Now! Now, Sarah! Don’t. Please don’t. You know how it hurts me.”

Sarah was properly penitent for the little grimace which had carried her innuendo. . . . Sure she didn’t mean anything . . . only. . . .

Emma changed the subject. She had come to speak to Sarah about Jack. Jack was beginning to find that he couldn’t possibly get out home each evening and do his work as he wanted to do it. She must make some other arrangements for him. Did Sarah think that she could take him in? Would Jimmy mind? And if Jimmy didn’t mind, would Sarah set a sum that would cover his board and room? Sarah had always loved him. Emma couldn’t bear to think of his going anywhere else. If only Sarah would be good and come to a real business understanding. . . .

The kitchen fire and the hot tea coming so close after his wrestle with autumn leaves, had been too much for Jimmy. Sarah had taken his cup from him some time ago . . . and he sat there nodding. Much had escaped him. When, however, Emma began to speak about Jack, Sarah touched him on the shoulder and he awakened. He was quite bright and alert the moment his eyes were open. Sarah didn’t tell him he had been sleeping.

Jimmy hemmed and hawed. He wasn’t the man to make up his mind quickly. . . . He wasn’t sure. . . . Boys were boys. . . . Oh, yes, a good boy enough, he knew all about that, but. . . . Well, he would think it over. . . . Yes, he would think it over and Sarah would drop Emma a line. . . . That was the best way out. . . . He would think it over. . . .

Emma accepted the hint. She rose to go. “You’ve got Jimmy pretty well trained, haven’t you, Sarah?” she said as she held out her hand to him, laughing as she said it.

“I have that,” said Sarah. “I’ve got him so well trained that I can make him do anything that Jimmy wants to do. Can’t I, Jimmy?”

At the door she whispered: “Leave him to me! It will be all right, honey. Sure everyone has his way, but it’s two ways has our Jimmy. The boy’s as good as upstairs this minute, I tell you.”

CHAPTER III.

With Jack away six days out of the seven, Emma fell into the sort of routine women adopt when there's no man in the house.

Beginning with the chilly days in November, she used the sitting-room for kitchen as well . . . it got the overcrowded look of a too-much-lived-in apartment. The kitchen, on the other hand, grew emptier and emptier . . . her bits of food carefully covered on the table near the sitting-room door . . . her pots and pans as handily arranged as possible and with as little exposure of the sitting-room as she could contrive to that awful stoveless draught. This, with an extra heavy curtain on the door between the two rooms, kept her fairly snug during the five months of a typical Ontario winter.

She had two reasons at the back of these household arrangements. The first and most pressing was the saving in time. She was doing putting-out work for a tailor; sewing on boys' clothes; going back and forth to the city on the recently completed trolley, twice a week with her bundle. . . . It was piece work and she was greedy of every moment. Sarah would have been glad to have Jack for nothing; but there was Jimmy, and not even if Jimmy had seen it that way, could Emma have accepted. No, not from Jimmy!

The second reason why there was no fire in the kitchen of the brown house that winter, was because by this economy she made herself believe that she could afford a fire in the parlour stove on Sunday. Jack came home on Sunday afternoons . . . sometimes alone . . . sometimes he had one of the other boys with him. He did like to see Emma and the place at their best. Quite natural, she thought. And she loved that pride in him as she loved all his other ambitions and enthusiasms.

And so, after all, it fell out that it wasn't during the week when he was away that she missed the piano most, but on Sunday when he was at home. How nice it used to be for singing. Jack had had such a good boy soprano . . . she had scarcely heard him sing since his voice had changed. . . .

But there! The imprint of his knees in the old uniform trousers . . . that faded tunic, humped a little in the back in response to his skinny shoulders. She had only to take these things out and look at them, to be once more content and happy. He was as straight as a dart these days. And young bones are of more importance than old ivories. . . .

CHAPTER IV.

One evening late in March, Tom was with Emma. The month had come in like a lamb and it was going out in traditional fashion. The wind was like a creature possessed. It sank groundward and padded round the house; one could almost believe it was nosing. Then, as though outraged because it couldn't find what it wanted, it roared the most dismal roaring. And then, suddenly, away off, there was tearing and shrieking . . . a sort of ghostly carnage. Emma was thankful for Tom. It would have been too horrible sitting there all by herself.

They had been playing Patience, double Patience; a new kind that Jack had taught her . . . rather intricate. She was teaching Tom. His interest in the game amused her.

Now that their little bout at the cards was over, he sat with the door of the base-burner open the width of the handle of the corn-popper he had thrust in over the coals, watching the droll ballet of the dancing kernels. The stove gassed abominably, but Emma tried not to notice it; she seldom did notice anything amiss with the doings of Tom Moore. A man has no more considerate friend on earth than the woman he loves when she does not love him . . . it seems to take so much to make up for just the difference in quality . . . such a woman might do anything and everything for such a man and still remain his debtor. So it was with Emma.

Tom gave the coals a poke, the open door had dimmed their ardour.

"Well," he said, catching at a big black coal and moving it back from the glow, "only about two months now, and that young man of yours will have finished his second year. Time flies, don't it?" Then after a pause, "I guess he'll come out all right."

"I don't think there's any question about it. I saw the Dean the other day when I ran into the School for a moment to see Jack . . . he'd forgotten his clean collars again and I had to take them to him. The Dean was passing through the corridor and he stopped to speak with me. He told me Jack is one of the brightest; he expects great things. Why, Tom, he actually talked about his going to Johns Hopkins for a post-graduate course. The Dean was so gay. He'd just had a letter from the president of Johns Hopkins and the president had asked: 'What do you feed your men up there in Ontario? They're the best we get!'

“You’ve no idea how proud the Dean was. He says it’s the good food and the freedom and the sense of equality that does it. Wouldn’t it be splendid, Tom, if all the people in the world had just three things in common anyway—good food and freedom and the sense of individual equality? Nothing else would matter much, would it?”

Tom didn’t give a direct answer. Instead, he went on ruminating.

“I like that fellow, Matthewson . . . he’s big! He’s got a big body, a big brain and a big heart. Ever notice that big blue eye of his . . . for all it looks so innocent, that eye could bore its way through an inch of boiler-plate. I like the way he pokes his hand out to a body . . . that’s big, too; it means something. And his voice . . .” Tom’s own voice sank more and more into a sort of reverie: “His voice is big . . . big as the ocean . . . with a strange chime in it as though it brought a far message . . .”

Emma looked at him as he sat there, his head dropped, gazing into the fire. Her lips were silent but her eyes kindled . . . her eyes said: “Dear Tom!”

But Tom had his head bent. He didn’t notice. Presently when the last kernel had broken soft as an edelweiss and whiter, Tom took the popper from the fire, opened it and put it down on the stove-board. He sat there munching, stooping down every now and again, getting a handful, cooling the puffed-up pieces, tossing them in his hand . . . then munching. By and by he asked:

“Funds holding out, Emma?”

“All right, thank you. You see I make his board out of the clothes. Of course I had to begin drawing on the insurance when he went into the School—you knew that. You remember I had the whole thing in one mortgage at first. Well, that mortgage expired and when I got a new one I got it for just half . . . put the rest in the bank so that I could draw it as I wanted. It’s pretty well all gone now. Next year I’ll have to drop the mortgage I have and do the same thing again. That will last until he graduates. Then he’ll be earning. I’ve done the best I could; and there’s always a chance in town for the right man they tell me . . . perhaps he’ll do well enough to pay for his post-graduate course himself?”

“Yes,” he said slowly, “you’ve done your best!”

Then he turned, a sudden blaze taking the place of the accustomed humour in his eyes: “You’ve done your best. My God, woman! I hope he’ll pay you for it!”

Emma blushed crimson. She bit her lip. Then almost resentfully: “Jack will be all right. I don’t need any payment, Tom.”

That was the closest things ever came to a misunderstanding between Emma Winchester and Tom Moore.

CHAPTER V.

“Cummings! Cummings! I say, George . . . ! Any of you fellows seen Cummings? Up in Anatomy? Whatever in the world is he doing there this time of day? Gone to find out what Boomer meant over that gross anatomy business . . . isn’t that like him . . . he’ll have a big ear himself if he doesn’t look out.

“Going upstairs, Shorty? Well, say, would you mind . . . ? Little beast! Now, why in the world couldn’t he have gone one stairs more. . . . I’ll have to go all the way to Third for that. Never you mind, Shorty Wallace . . . just you wait till you want those notes of yours fixed next time. Huh! What’s a stairs anyway . . . look out, Wallace; I’ll step on your heels . . .”

Jack cleared the long stairs that led from the library floor of the Medical School to the physiological operating rooms on the second floor with huge steps which left Shorty Wallace far behind. Then he ran along a hall and stood at the foot of the smaller enclosed stairs which led to the laboratories above.

“Cummings,” he shouted. “I say, George, come on out for a walk. The roads are dandy . . . snow packed like a billiard table. I want to show you that tree I was telling you about, out there by the Williamson’s . . . it beats the gross anatomy you’ve got up there in those cases all hollow. Boomer’s big ear isn’t in it with it. Ah, come on . . .”

Jack was nineteen and a sophomore. George Cummings was twenty and a third year man. The two were fast friends.

Like most fast friends, they were harmonious opposites. Cummings, the motherless son of a medical man out in Kent County, was a small chap, slow in his movements and in his speech; with a light reflective eye and the cleaned-up look of one who is born to the profession.

Jack was tall, above the heads of most men; and still with that flash, that “elan”, that sense of immortal triumph that used to make Sarah think there wouldn’t be old bones in him. Where George was practical, Jack was a dreamer. The future of the one appeared to lie along lines of discovery. The other seemed to be cut out for an operator, an executant of unusual skill.

Jack loved to talk . . . he talked always, even though, as was sometimes the case, his talking did little but clarify the stream of his own thinking.

George was a good listener. There were times, however, when, like most good listeners, he became the victim of a burst of eloquence so strong no one else could get a word in edgewise.

Emma liked George Cummings. So did Tom. That settled it. After that Jack enjoyed nothing so much as getting old Cummings to walk out home on Sunday afternoons and have a cup of tea. As a usual thing Tom dropped in; and always, Emma put her best foot forward.

It was very pleasant to sit, all four, while the setting sun was peeping in at the sitting-room window, eating and drinking to the accompaniment of lively chatter. It was pleasanter still, when Emma said she'd "leave the dishes", and they gathered round the grate-stove in the parlour, where the conversation turned on work, books . . . the deep things of life and of the soul.

Then, last of all, the walk back to town with Cummings—the moon riding high perhaps; perhaps the star-shine only—thrashing out together the old eternal questions . . . free will, necessity; predetermination, impulse; good, evil. . . .

On those walks, too, the boys often talked about the future and what it might hold of usefulness or fame. . . . They exchanged confidences. . . . They covenanted friendship. . . .

From the first, Jack, as the saying is, had "taken hold". It seemed as though Emma had passed on her interest in the human body, her veneration for the profession, to her son. He adored the calm confidence of these men; the power and the potentiality of them. The directness and at times, the poetry of their language fascinated him. He found inspiration in the skill of their fingers. The wisdom in their eyes seemed to him the goal towards which he himself was striving. They built up in him an undying faith in the sacredness of the physical. For a time, indeed, as he watched the marvels of the operating tables, as more and more he found himself preparing to take his part in the great modern crusade of prevention and cure, it is doubtful if he did not worship the temple more than the god. But that passed.

George and Jack, who were at one in so many things, fell apart on the subject of religion. To use his own phraseology, George had "no use" for the clergy—orthodox or modernist. In particular he disliked the modernists, who, he claimed, sailed under false colours . . . he never entered a church.

Jack kept up his old Sunday morning custom. Sarah and Jimmy went to a church just round the corner, but he had found one more suited to his mind

at the other end of town. It was quite a walk, yet he seldom missed the eleven o'clock service.

The Rev. Norman Brooks was a modern thinker and a preacher of great power. Jack rejoiced in the way he stripped off the ceremonial garments and the rich ecclesiastical stuffs in which the person of Christ had been presented to the ages; lifted up again the simple and gracious character of the Man who walked in Galilee. His attitude toward the Bible, too, was a great comfort to the young student of science.

To be told by some one in authority that the Church of to-day does not declare that there is nothing but revelation in the Bible, does not deny a revelation of God in other sources. Instead, that while it acknowledges God's law, purpose, justice, truth, love, to be infallibly revealed in the Bible, it maintains that this broad affirmation leaves the rational mind free to discover a revelation of God elsewhere as it had discovered it here. To be told that inspiration and revelation are abundant in the Bible but that neither begin or end there . . . that among the sacred books of the world we accept the Bible as containing the most valuable religious literature and that because of the solemn injunctions of the ancient sages, the pragmatic utterances of the historians, the soul-stirring declarations of the prophets, the unexampled teaching and living of Jesus, the Master. To be told that over the once-mined fields of the Word of God the great dredger of scientific knowledge is searching out the last possible grain of gold and silver; that through the painstaking and scholarly criticism of to-day we are assaying a higher percentage of pure metal, that the worth of the Bible is increased by these honest investigations of many men, and that it is becoming an indisputable guide to happiness. Between a preachment like this, and those methods of research and criticism he was being taught at the Medical, there was no hiatus, there needed no reconciliation. Jack was at peace in both . . . and rejoicing!

CHAPTER VI.

“George,” said Emma one evening when they were sitting round the Sunday fire—the last fire of the season, perhaps; for it was April, the days were lengthening, and against a tender and a watery sky the young leaves on the brown boughs were already showing, “George, tell me: What is it you have against the clergy?”

“Oh, they make me tired! To begin with, there isn’t a man in a thousand who will bring these supposed institutions and doctrines of Jesus up to the test of Jesus’ own words: ‘By their fruit ye shall know them!’ If they did, they’d find out pretty quick how manmade they are . . . cut out of whole cloth. Otherwise they wouldn’t have had the kind of fruit they’ve had throughout the ages. Talk about your Moloch! There never were any victims for such advice as ‘Love One Another’. Or for such commands as ‘Unto Seventy times Seven’, but for these other things. Well, as old Bob Ingersoll used to say, the bones of the victims of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Virgin Birth, and Transubstantiation or the Real Presence whichever you like . . . the victims of these could be piled as high as the Alps—and then some!

“As for these modern fellows and their ‘new readings’, what are their ‘readings’ doing for life? What are they doing for good health which means good morals; for good feeding which means good morals and good brains into the bargain; for good living conditions which means all three—good morals, good brains and a sense of order and beauty . . . the love of life and the realization of its worth-whileness; every instant packed with meaning?

“Fearless? They call these modern chaps fearless. Why fearless? What in heaven’s name have they got to be afraid of?

“All very well to be afraid in the days when excommunication meant starvation and ostracism and sometimes prison and death; when heresy ended at the gallows or the faggot! But what do either amount to in our time? Why they amount to intellectual prestige and social distinction; that’s what they amount to! Inside any one of the separate sects, I suppose, things might be made uncomfortable for the man who cares. But the great world . . . the great world only reads his articles and his books all the more after the Church has thrown him over, than it did before.

“If it comes to fearlessness, the people who arraign dishonest governments or who in the interests of justice defy the law, they’re the fearless ones. The Suffragettes over there in England going through their forced feeding . . . whatever you may think of their cause or say of their

conduct, you must acknowledge that they're fearless all right; they risked something tangible when they undertook to follow Campbell-Bannerman's advice that they should make themselves disagreeable.

"Or Elizabeth Gurley Flynn down there in New Jersey. Leading Labour in its war against Capital, is what the Flynnites call it—inciting to riot, say the police. And Elizabeth lands in the cooler. . . .

"Or if a great war should ever come; say this long-expected burst-up with Germany they've been talking about ever since I was born. Suppose in the heat of the thing, that certain men and women in England, or in Canada itself for that matter, should get up and give it as their opinion that war is crime—just legalized, nationalized murder, nothing more or less; and should urge men in the name of humanity they share with the men of Germany or whatever nation it might be, not to enlist: that would take fearlessness, wouldn't it? You bet! The sort of fearlessness that ends in a cell, or against a long gray wall with a dozen bullets in your brain . . . to teach you that after all the spilling of blood in the cause of liberty there has been, when it comes to a show-down, the brains of ordinary people were not given them to think with, but simply that they might obey the fellow higher up. Talk of the fearlessness of any one you like, only not of the fearlessness of those fellows in the pulpits. They're safe all right!"

"But it isn't just physical fearlessness we mean, George," said Emma, "nor even the kind of moral courage that stands out against other people's opinions; it's something deeper. Look here! Don't you think it takes as much fearlessness to face yourself as it does to face other people? Then how about the man who sets himself to work to find out what he himself thinks about the most important thing in the world . . . to confront all his inherited tendencies and all his sentimental prejudices and try to get back of them and deep down beyond them to his own conception of things and his own reason; to shut out all of the world and much of himself and to stand there alone with what is left . . . his own soul?"

"It is so easy for any of us to be wrong. And yet there the thing stands . . . right or wrong, we must be true: for to be true is the best part of the right as we see it. What do you—Emma Winchester, we'll say—what do you think? Come now, Emma Winchester, tell us. Believe me, George, it has taken far more fearlessness on my part to face my own self, than it ever took for me to face Mr. Broadhurst and tell him what I thought, afterwards. . . .

"And these men whose courage you make so light of: I believe, I am certain, that before he has been able to speak each one of these has had to go

out into the wilderness of his own fear and has had to be weary there, and hungry and naked, and lonely and alone. No,” Emma corrected herself, “he hasn’t been alone. He’s been lonely but he’s never been alone . . . though mind you, few of us know at such times that we are companioned. Even Christ didn’t. Even He doubted . . . I love Him for that, George.

“It’s ideas that count. Look at the progress that has been made in your own science. How was that progress made? By the way of ideas, wasn’t it? Research, experimentation; and then the new idea . . . the new idea and the fearlessness in expressing the new idea. You’ll acknowledge that for science, won’t you? Well then, you have to give the laboratories of the Church a chance; the Church has got to experiment, too. From your point of view, things are at a standstill. But if that is so, will you tell me how you got your point of view? Somebody has been teaching, somewhere; or you would have exactly the same point of view your grandfather had before you. The religion of your grandfather would have been good enough for you . . . but it isn’t.

“Think of the new ideas about God that Jesus brought into the world! There were so many of them and they were so strange to people brought up as the people of the world are brought up, that even though we’ve been experimenting with them ever since, we haven’t begun to catch up with the Science of God . . . as Jesus understood it.”

* * * * *

George was silent and a bit taken back. He began to wonder if he hadn’t been too hard on these fussy modern people. . . .

PART V

CHAPTER I.

Summer was at its high tide. The public schools were about to close. In universities and colleges the long vacation was already almost five weeks old.

Jack had gone home with George for a fortnight. And now George had come to stay a month with him. The two were studying half days. The rest of the time they were fishing, rowing, walking. . . .

Emma had put up a second bed in Jack's room, she and Jack together, laughing and puffing as they went, had struggled up the narrow stairs with the smaller of the two kitchen tables which she covered and set near the window so that the boys might have quietude—and a place for their books.

The weather was so fine, however, and the prospect about the village so fair, they were spending the greater part even of their study period out of doors.

Linked arm in arm or going single file where the ferns pushed fresh fronds through last year's leaves, they threaded the woods. Stretched out side by side, resting on their crossed arms, their books under their noses, they lay in the shadows of oaks and beeches that bordered grassy places. Discussing, arguing, gesticulating . . . they climbed into Emma's hills and all unconscious of the part the scene had played in her life and in Jack's, they sat down on the terrace overlooking the valley. There, with feelings as different from hers as the poles are wide asunder, they watched the light on the plain as she had watched it nearly nineteen years before them.

One Monday afternoon—the last day but one of that splendid June, as they sat thus, together, George said: "Say, Winchester. Isn't that bank queer . . . that bank, the bank the other side of the river, I mean . . . it's so low and so green right here in front and over there beyond the dam it's so high and so yellow; don't think I ever saw such a quick change in a bank before. Seems to be good swimming down there, though. Come to think of it, that's about the only thing you and I haven't done together; we've never been for a swim . . . let's go this evening, will you?"

"I don't swim."

"Don't swim?" George flung himself round on him. "And you brought up here by the river. Well, that's the queerest!"

“Of course I can swim, but I don’t,” said Jack. “See that smooth bit of water the other side of the bridge . . . there where the old willow is hanging over?”

George sprang to his feet: “Yes,” he said, “I see! Fine looking swimming-hole it is, too. Well, what about it?”

“My father was drowned in that hole as you call it; and a hole it is, you may be sure, the river’s full of them . . . drowned with as many fellows as there are there now and no one could get to him quick enough to save him. It was the summer before I was born. Mother had me taught to swim; Tom taught me. But she would never hear of my going in with the other boys, or alone; I always had to go with Tom. I hated it . . . it used to make my life miserable. Afterwards when Tom told me all she went through, I didn’t mind so much. I guess swimming is the only thing she ever denied me . . . couldn’t have Tom all the time, you know, and even with Tom she was anxious. So I got out of the way of it.”

George was silent a moment. Then he said: “Tough, wasn’t it? Tell me about it, will you?”

So Jack went over the story. When he came to the part where Emma knelt down in the gravel path and prayed for her reason, his voice faltered; and George broke in:

“By Jove! That was fine! I always knew there was something different about your mother. A whole lot of women would have knocked right under; there are mighty few who could have gone through with it . . . that’s why she is what she is . . . some woman, I tell you!”

The air of the summer afternoon was so clear, that presently they heard a church clock ring . . . Jack said it was two miles off.

“Five o’clock! My stars! I heard Mother saying something about pancakes. Besides, there’s that cow . . . the old girl will be kicking up a horrible rumpus, unless Mother’s milked her already; she does sometimes when I forget. Come on. . . .”

They began to run. Down hill and down hill and down hill, legs and arms flying. Crunching among fallen twigs and branches, jumping over logs, climbing a fence here and pushing a gate open there, muddying their boots in a bit of marsh where the bracken grew; then raising the dust along a length of road where the Black-eyed Susans were flaring, they arrived at length, radiant and breathless, in front of the smithy.

Tom was sitting on the round of wood just inside the door, reading his paper. He had one leg thrown over the other so that his leather apron was tucked in between; he was so absorbed he didn't hear them coming.

Jack stooped down, picked up a pine-cone from under a tree and let fly. The cone lighted almost at the smith's feet, but failed to arouse him. Jack threw another. Tom looked up.

"Hey, you! Stop that!" he shouted. Then he spread the paper over his knees, smoothing it out with his fingers, and went on talking: "Nice doings over in Europe! They've killed the Austrian Archduke and his wife. Bombed them in their motor car. The cable's from Vienna."

Jack and George were at the door and Tom continued: "It was at a place called Ser-ra-jay-vo . . . if that's how you say it? Anyway, it's the capital of Bosnia; you know, the province Austria annexed in the last rumpus. It happened yesterday, Sunday; a Servian holiday of some sort, and the Servians in Bosnia were mad because the Archduke had come down to lord it over them in the province Serbia wanted for herself, to pay her for all the trouble she's had. They say a Servian patriot did the bombing. Lots of rioting . . . every Servian house in the place burned . . . massacres all over. Like to read it? Read it aloud, will you?"

Tom handed the paper to George. And George, after humming a moment for place, began on the Associated Press comments on the tragedy:

Ever since the confusion of the Balkan campaign, when the interests of Austro-Hungary prevented Serbia from obtaining her desired naval port on the Adriatic, Pan-Servian propaganda has admittedly been carried on in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Slav districts of Southern Hungary, where the people are believed to be favourable to the Greater Servian movement. It has for years been the hope of the extreme Servian patriots, that the province of Bosnia-Herzegovina, nominally Turkish but administered by Austria since 1778, would one day be a part of Greater Servia. This hope was shattered by the formal annexation of the two provinces in question by Austria, after the Turkish revolution; an act which the Servians, rightly or wrongly, attribute to the influence of the murdered Archduke. For this reason the Austrian government appears to be inclined to hold the Servian government responsible for the propaganda which has led to so much unrest in the annexed provinces. The position taken up by the Servian Press is that Austria desires peace, but not peace at any . . .

The reader's voice trailed away into little mumblings and half-articulated sounds. Then he flung the paper on Tom's knee:

"Bother the Austrian press," he cried. "Now I suppose they'll fan this thing for political reasons between themselves and Servia. And the other papers all over Europe and America will fan it to keep the news coming. Then presently the whole thing will blaze up again; and there'll be more fighting . . . more men killed . . . more women outraged . . . more children starved and tortured. There'll be more monstrous things going on like the things Alfred Noyes had in that peace play of his last Christmas. Did you read that play, Jack?"

"Not that I remember."

"I forget the name of the piece. A one-act thing. They gave it at Christmas in one of the New York theatre clubs and it was published in the papers afterwards. The most horrible scene you ever heard of. I remember it was the inside of a house somewhere in the Balkans. The people were the widow of a soldier, her little girl, a half-demented old chap who had been a schoolmaster, and a couple of enemy soldiers who were quartered on the widow. Oh, yes; and there's a phonograph standing on the table.

"Well, the schoolmaster, whose brain has given out and who has got his Darwin fatally twisted anyway, keeps on mumbling about the 'survival of the fittest', over and over again in the most idiotic sort of a fashion. . . . Nobody can have any complaints coming because you see, this world is made for the strong and the strong is quite right to get his own out of it . . . murder, rapine, destruction; well, if you're the under dog . . .

"The girl—she isn't much more than a baby as I recall it, questions her mother about her father. Why doesn't he come back? It is Christmas Eve and on Christmas Eve he always played the phonograph for them. The widow is silent; she is scared half out of her senses by the look of the soldiers. . . .

"The usual thing happens: the soldiers order up everything in the house. They get drunk and drunker. Then they set the phonograph going . . . it plays a hymn tune, but they dance to it all the same. Then they insult the widow woman. She fends them off for awhile, uses every trick she knows to keep them occupied. But it isn't any use . . . in the end one grabs the woman and the other grabs the girl and presently from the other room comes the sound of a scuffle, a woman's screams and a child's crying. That tells the story!

"The play ends with the stage empty of all except the schoolmaster and the phonograph. The schoolmaster keeps on about the 'survival of the fittest'. The phonograph plays 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo'!

“Just to read the thing makes one go cold all over. They say Noyes intended it as his contribution to the Peace Movement. And if the Pen really were mightier than the Sword . . . ? But don’t you believe it; it isn’t! Not yet. . . .

“To my mind there never was a more perfect indictment of the pen than that play. Just see! Here on the one hand, you have ‘Glory to God in the Highest’, in the midst of the most frightful human cruelty. And on the other hand you have science perverted: the theory of the ‘survival of the fittest’ wrenched from its context, robbed of all its scientific significance and used as a reason and an excuse for greeds and passions the very brutes would be ashamed of. Both this kind of religion and this kind of science are man made. . . . And the world is full of them!

“Of course I don’t know; never having asked the poet what his intentions really were . . . but to my way of thinking Noyes seems to say that both this kind of religious teaching and this kind of scientific teaching are to go down before the sword. Yes, I guess that’s it! I guess it won’t be until this old earth gets religion and science out of the hands of the priests of science and religion . . . breaks up all this close-communion business in both departments . . . puts its back up against loose generalisations and false statements for the benefit of an uneducated public . . . that we’ll beat our swords into ploughshares. You remember it was ploughshares, not pens, the prophet talked about . . . back to the land for Isaiah!

“Well, thank goodness, it’s Austria and Servia; not Canada and the United States that are into this business! . . . Say, Winchester, there’s your mother calling. Pancakes for mine! And the last one in the pan for the hindermost. . . .”

He was off up the road as he spoke, Jack following and overtaking him before he got half way to the gate. Tom, left alone in the quiet evening light, returned to his reading. . . .

CHAPTER II.

Every day now Tom was more and more interested in his paper, a noon edition which came out from town and reached him about five o'clock. He read it first himself, leaving off work awhile to do so. Then after tea, he took it up the road and read it to Emma . . . to the boys, too, when they would listen.

George maintained that so far as he was concerned the Balkan affair was one gigantic puzzle . . . he never could get those people's politics straight and he didn't see why he had to anyway. As for Austria—the House of Hapsburg, Emperor and all the rest—he believed they were about as rotten a lot as well could be. He guessed if the truth were known, this Ferdinand only got what was coming to him. . . .

Once, however, he was really interested. It was when the Servian papers were reported as saying that the Archduke Karl Stefan was responsible for the murder. The psychology of that appealed to him . . . he thought it well within the probabilities that a line of people inbred like the Hapsburgs and given to intrigues and adulteries and suicides as they were, might also produce a specimen with the taint of homicidal mania, who would be guilty of fratricide should the time come when a member of his family got in his way.

Europe showed her dry-rot in these royalties anyway. The mistake England made was in not sticking to the idea she had in the time of Oliver Cromwell . . . if England had been faithful to the revolution in those days there wouldn't be a throne in Europe now. And if there wasn't a throne there couldn't be intrigue. And without intrigue there was little danger of war. . . .

Jack, his imagination and his heart caught up in a contemplation of the age-long miseries of "little peoples" which the re-opening of the Near-Eastern question had brought to the surface, shuddered away from the panorama of horrible scenes he pictured lying back of the Serajevo tragedy. The sensitiveness of a young man brought up in a country where political oppression, if there is any, has been practically speaking obliterated by material prosperity; and where political crime, like that in the Balkans, is unknown, made him thrill with a sympathy all the more painful because it was helpless and inert.

When Tom caught him red-handed, he would stay and listen. But when he could make his escape without giving offence, he was up and off to his beloved trees . . . to the cool winding paths through the woods and

meadows. There was a cotton-tail rabbit whose nest he was watching over there in the river bank . . . he took more interest in the way she had lined that hole with seed fluff, her cunning in the matter of leaves and grasses to hide her procreant cradle, than in the whole body of statecraft in Europe. After all when it comes to a question of policy, Machiavelli himself, he thought, isn't in it with a little woodland mother whose policy is the policy of love. . . .

For a day or so Tom's paper had display headlines calling attention to the Austrian assassination, with a column or two of descriptive matter underneath and some editorials and press comment on an inside page.

It was reported that the two murderers—both young men—who had been arrested on the day of the murder, were being examined. Excitement ran high in Bosnia. Serajevo was in disorder, with horrible excesses against the Servians. In Croatia twenty thousand men marched in procession, shouting: "Down with the Serbs! Down with the murderers!"

Throughout Austria proper the opinion prevailed, and was emphasized by those in authority, that Serajevo was the seat of a conspiracy against the Dual Kingdom and that the successful assassins had come from Belgrade . . . both the murderers confessed to having received the bomb with which the Archduke was slain in the Servian capital. One of the assassins had added by way of extenuation, that he returned to Serajevo with the express intention of killing the heir to the throne because he wanted to save the Servian nation from oppression. The murder, according to official determination, was, then, neither a Socialist nor a Terrorist attempt, but a purely patriotic undertaking . . . not a first step in the reform of the monarchical state under the present Austrian regime, but an effort put forward towards the destruction of the house of Hapsburg in Bosnia and in the adjoining provinces . . . a deed of cold blood committed for national ideals and in the interest of the Big Servia movement.

Later accounts brought detailed descriptions of the funeral of the royal pair . . . all Vienna was in mourning . . . the magnificence of the ceremonial, its ecclesiastical dirges, the thrill of military music . . . Emperor Francis Joseph, whose personal sorrows had been greater than those of most men, prostrate with grief.

There were accounts, too, of noisy demonstrations against the members of the Servian Legation in the Austrian capital . . . infuriated crowds making unsuccessful attempts to tear down the Servian flag, driven off by the police and then re-forming and marching on the Russian Embassy, shouting:

“Down with the Servian murderers and their friends, the Russians!” Teuton and Slav finally fallen foul of each other and at it in good earnest.

Then for awhile the delirium of reports died down. The boys no longer made their escape by the back door and over the fence when they saw Tom’s long legs bringing him up the path for the hearing which Emma alone seemed willing to give. Tom himself was able to turn with a quieter mind to markets and crops . . . shipping on the Great Lakes . . . the price of pig iron . . . special correspondence from the surrounding towns and villages.

To be sure there were still rumblings. Fresh examinations of the assassins with, it was claimed, fresh revelations of Servian complicity; bitter attacks by the Servian Press on Austria, her police and her judicature; answered with equal bitterness from Vienna and Budapest. The whole affair discussed in a joint Ministerial Council at Vienna, with the Chief of the General Staff and the Commander of the Navy . . . clearly a review not only of the political situation but of the military and the naval situation as well.

For all this Vienna through her official organs protested that there would be no fracture of the peace . . . Austria’s love of peace amounted to a perfect passion; though in view of the attitude of the whole Servian Press it was difficult for her to preserve that love. Meanwhile it was reported that in the Viennese Bourse—somewhat affected since the days of the assassination—the fall of prices was marked!

During the early days of July these events and opinions, while they no longer obsessed him, gave the smith endless topics for conversation. Hammering away at the anvil, trying to shape a shoe for a difficult hoof; bending his great back to the adjustment of parts in a broken-down reaper; whatever he was doing, he talked the Austro-Servian difficulty to everyone who would listen.

Tom’s hearers were many; his listeners, few. The farmers round about were far more interested in the way oats were heading out than they were in the utterances of the Hungarian Prime Minister, when, with the accustomed phantasy of politicians, he told the Hungarian Parliament that Austria-Hungary wished for peace but not “peace at any price”. The phrase was new to the peace-glutted agrarians of Western Ontario . . . the facts back of it unrealizable. Their indifference amounted to disdain.

Even the assassination itself fell flat. For home and countryside murder, these men who stood in the blacksmith’s shop, moving the quid from cheek to cheek, punctuating Tom’s story with tobacco juice, had the instinct of bloodhounds . . . an appetite the modern newspaper increases even while it

feeds it. What the scenes in the arenas were to the rural populations round about ancient Italian cities, these pictorial representations, dramatic dialogues, gruesome descriptions were to them. A murder thousands of miles away in a country nobody had ever heard of, albeit that murder was the murder of an heir to the throne of one of the Great Powers, was a different thing . . . it lacked local atmosphere . . . the accustomed delightful particulars—blood-tracks, stained clothing, the corpse with its bulging brains or its purple marks of strangulation.

In this dearth of appreciation the smith turned to the rector who, though he had been forty-five years in Canada, was still paramountly interested in Europe; in an especial degree in the affairs of the “Motherland” from whence as a young man he had come to throw in his lot with a people of a world in which old conditions mingle with the new . . . old faiths indoctrinated in the midst of an education more or less progressive . . . old feuds, the seeds of which had travelled mysteriously and far like the seeds of certain noxious plants unknown to the wilderness, but which spring up as it were in a night so soon as the wilderness becomes the habitation of man.

CHAPTER III.

One morning late in the month, Mr. Broadhurst threw himself off his horse Mike at Tom's corner. The pockets of his clerical coat were bulging with books and papers, for the rector was a travelling library . . . dropping a book or a paper there . . . picking one up here . . . and always contriving to arrive at the rectory empty-handed.

He whistled through a gap in his front teeth, and Tom, who knew that rasping in-take better than he knew any whistle in the district, stuck his head out of the smithy door.

"Hello," called Tom.

"Hello," echoed Mr. Broadhurst. For an Englishman the rector was becoming a surprisingly good Canadian.

The smith was sharpening a saw. He had finished his top-jointing and setting and was down to the filing process. Scrape! Scrape! Scrape! . . . with a lift of the elbow every trip for the escape of the file on the backward journey. Scrape! Scrape! Scrape! . . . with narrowing eyes watching angle of file and pitch of tooth in true master fashion. Scrape! Scrape! Scrape! . . . the wonder was he could hear the sound from the roadway.

Mr. Broadhurst seated himself on the community drum-head, the block of wood in the doorway, and began to attend to a refractory cuff-button. He asked how things were going.

"All right," said Tom, his face coming up from the file, red as a lobster. Then he reached for an oilstone, turned his blade and began his side-jointing. Scrape! Scrape! Scrape! . . . softly now like a woman scouring.

"Any news this morning?"

"Yes. Just as you and I expected. Austria has delivered her ultimatum. I thought things were looking that way. Dillon didn't send in that report to the *Telegraph* the other day for nothing."

"What does Austria want?"

"Everything!"

"What in particular?"

"Well, it's the most drastic, the most humiliating thing you ever heard. Servia won't accede. What would be the use? You've only got to run the stipulations over to see that what Austria wants is war. She's got her policy

all cut and dried; had it cut and dried from the beginning. And Germany will back her . . . stand by her 'in shining armor' . . . you remember that was what the Kaiser said he would do in 1908 when Austria annexed Bosnia, and Russia and the Powers protested? And he's going to do it now, that's certain."

"How about France and England?" asked Tom.

"Dillon gives it as the prevailing opinion in Vienna," said the rector, "that France will do all she can to prevent hostilities instead of localizing them as people have been saying; and that Great Britain will stand aloof. On his own part he keeps hammering away at the idea that these things are just the preliminaries, the first skirmish between the Slav and the Teuton. He claims that the Slavs and the Teutons are about to try for the mastery of Europe and it may be of the whole world. This is the morning sheet . . . we have the full report just as they have it in London. Your noon edition may have something later, but I doubt it."

While he was speaking, Mr. Broadhurst took a much bundled up newspaper out of his pocket and stuck it on a cross beam, next to where some screws and bolts were lying.

"Thanks," said Tom without looking up from his work. And the rector went on talking. He was immensely grave.

"Poor old Salisbury! There are a good many people this morning, I imagine, who wouldn't mind going back to 'splendid isolation'. And we could have done it, too! What would Germany's fleet have amounted to, supposing Canada and Australia and New Zealand had each gone in for a supplementary navy? As for the army . . . a million men in arms would have been enough. No need for conscription or any of those autocratic regulations they have on the continent; just the Service made so attractive and paid so well that we wouldn't have any trouble getting men. What's a million men out of the Empire? Get them and train them and keep them mobile by sending them here, there and everywhere throughout the British possessions. A supplementary navy, Tom! A million men in arms! And preferential tariff. Wouldn't that have made us gloriously independent?"

"I wish Lansdowne had pushed that idea instead of the Triple Entente he and King Edward were so fond of. I never did like the Triple Entente. The French are a godless race . . . see the influence Paris had on King Edward when he was Prince of Wales . . . there used to be shocking stories about in those days. As for the Russians and their worship of icons, they're only half civilized anyway . . . why should we have made an alliance with them, I'd

like to know? It seems to me that God made England an island and peopled her with the Lost Tribes for the express purpose of her standing off from continental disputes, so that she could attend to the larger business He has in mind. We'd have been safer and better off, I believe, if we'd kept ourselves to ourselves and just gone on with the task God gave us . . . which is to take Christianity and civilization and the English tongue to those unfortunate Hindus, and to the millions and millions of poor creatures in Africa who are sitting in darkness waiting for them."

There was a twinkle in Tom's eye and the hairs at the corners of his mouth moved suspiciously once or twice. Because his head was bent, the rector, however, did not see; and he contrived presently to change both twinkle and smile into a gravity befitting the occasion. After a moment still softly scraping, he said:

"Russia! Well, I dun'no. It's so hard for me to understand the politics of a foreign country . . . can't even understand the politics of my own sometimes. What I go by now most of times, is the things a people makes . . . their books, that is, and their art and all that! Of course I've got to take Russia on faith a good deal so far as their music and their statuary and their painting and all that goes; but they do tell me the things those people do are wonderful. . . . What I do know something about, though, is their books . . . I don't believe that I could call anybody half civilized who could produce such writers as Tolstoy and Dostoievsky (you must excuse the way I pronounce those names. Parson; they go me one too many), and that old prince, Prince Kropolokan, I think the name is, . . . the fellow who wrote the book about animals . . . where he shows how inside their own tribes at any rate animals often help each other . . . that it isn't always just the 'survival of the fittest' even with the wild beasts. No, I dun'no! If it's Christianity—the real thing—you're going after, it seems to me that the Russian writers I know anything about have got that down pretty fine . . . and Christianity's civilization as we understand it; ain't that your opinion?

"As for Germany, you may be right, of course . . . 'splendid isolation' was an idea there's no mistake. And yet when I come to think of it . . . when I remember how they pulled off that Moroccan business, even with that smart Frenchman against them; and what they've been doing down in South America; and when I see the trade they've scooped all over the world, and the way they've scooped it . . . it seems to me we'd been meeting the Dutchmen everywhere we went anyway. Say! don't you think with all these speed-engines and power-motors and flying-ships we've got now-a-days, that isolation's a gone goose whatever way you look at it. Why, when I read

about all these inventions for going fast and killing quick, it seems to me that this old inhabitant of the earth we call man, isn't just man any more . . . he's man plus! And the 'plus' is so much six of one and half a dozen of the other, that by the Lord Harry, I think the best thing we could do is 'get together' . . . as the business men say."

Mr. Broadhurst sighed. "Well," he said, "there's one thing I'm thankful for—those creatures who wanted the tunnel from Dover to Calais never got it through. England's safe there at all events."

Tom looked up hurriedly from his scraping. "All depends on who your friends are, that does. With this alliance with France on the carpet, I don't believe that tunnel would have been half bad . . . it would certainly have been a sight safer than getting back and forth on the sea."

CHAPTER IV.

How little the world knows about the speculations of women, where, shut up in the cave-dwellings of civilization, they beat out the immensities—three meals a day and the week's washing.

To man, the world's spokesman and artist, these inarticulate ones whose creative impulse seldom finds expression other than in the living manuscripts that are their children, must often seem to be without either inventive faculty or analytical thought.

Every little while, however, a poet like Robert Louis Stevenson, a philosopher like Nietzsche, will be found holding the opinion that the wisest persons in all time—are old women. Their wisdom is lost to the world, of course, because being ineffectual from the point of view either of the logician or the artist they—like the poor dog in the adage—have had a bad name given them by these gentlemen of the syllogism and the strophe:

“Old Wives’ Tales!” . . . What could prevail against that age-long shrug of the shoulder?

The wisdom of women, too, is different—something which is neither the result of the acquisition of knowledge nor a deduction from experience; but rather a crystallization of living. More properly speaking, one may say, perhaps that both poet and philosopher theorize their wisdom as mention which might have trickled off the surface of being in diverse streams of imagination and of fancy; but which instead has gathered and pooled itself in the heart . . . where it remains and at certain seasons is troubled for healing.

A few persons go to the waters. To the greater number, they are too accessible and too inglorious!

CHAPTER V.

She was plodding home through the August night from Eliza Springer's house at the rear of the grocery. She was anxious to get back. It was Sunday and the two boys had gone into town for service . . . she thought it gracious of George Cummings to go to church and she was eager for his impression.

Young Eliza and her children were at the Springer house. The baby, a boy of thirteen months not yet weaned, had been in convulsions on and off for forty-eight hours. She had been helping the grandmother look after him while the distracted mother slept off her weariness. The child was very ill. Young Eliza had let him eat an olive out of a bottle opened from the stock in the grocery for her home-coming. The doctor was not at all sure what was going to happen.

She was hot and tired and worried. Everything the doctor had ordered, everything their two brains could devise, she and Eliza had done—and yet the baby seemed to be slipping away from them. Her heart was heavy for young Eliza.

As the smell of the thick dust rose to her nostrils, the tang of mortality in it not yet obliterated, she caught herself wondering why there is so much pain and ugliness in the world. An impulse moved her to raise her eyes to the sky. It was studded that night with great stars, each star a solitude—their remoteness not only from herself but from each other, comforted her with the sort of comfort one gets from the sublime impersonal. "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him," she half ejaculated.

The ejaculation gave a new turn to her thoughts. She began to image life in the terms of a poem she had once read . . . as a great tapestry of which each worker has before him a small square, and at that he must work wrong side out. When the tapestry is finished—said the poem—and the web turned, then we shall see the pattern.

Disquieting reflections would follow. All very well; but the tapestry-weaver has the whole design in a coloured diagram before him—any moment he may lift his eyes from the monotonous details of his own little branch or hillock and refresh them with the broad spaces of the finished landscape. While we? Not on the walls of the earth, not on the dome of the sky, can we find our perfect pattern.

The perfect pattern! Over and over again she repeated the words. Presently, her mind taking a new direction, she forgot all about the emblem

of the tapestry-weaver, about there being such a thing as a design to life . . . she was considering the word “pattern” from a different angle.

Jesus! She had always been taught that His life was the perfect pattern. Was it? She didn’t know. There were dark things about Jesus of Nazareth . . . “hard sayings” as He himself might call them, with which it was impossible for her to bring herself entirely into sympathy. That time at the Marriage Feast when His mother wanted to show Him off . . . that was one. It was so natural that Mary should want to show Him off . . . all mothers do. And His answer! No, she couldn’t get over it.

Oh yes, Jack’s friend, Mr. Brooks in the city, had explained that in the original the word we translate “woman” is not harsh as it sounds to us, but tender . . . the tenderest word in the language . . . our “dearest” is not so sweet. But still it always seemed to her as though He were saying: “There! God has used you to bring a great man—a saviour of men—into the world. That was your part. Let it suffice.”

Continuing to reflect, she questioned if this is the way men have with mothers when their careers, their loves, any great question is uppermost? With Jesus it was His career . . . He must be about His Father’s business . . . must answer the call of His genius . . . of the “Cause” for which, that genius whispered, He had been sent into the world. With other men?

She remembered a wedding she had been at years ago and how the bridegroom there had taken leave of his mother. What a careless word; what eagerness to post to other arms. And yet how faithful the arms that had held him . . . empty arms now; and though the face was bright, listless. Would Jack leave her some day in one of these two ways—for a career or for a woman?

Men who study and teach the Bible talk about that sort of thing as “the sword that must pierce the soul of the woman” . . . just as old Simeon in the Temple said that a sword should pierce through the soul of Mary. But why? It cannot be possible that woman really is intended to bring forth in sorrow and all the rest . . . that there was such a thing as the “fall” of man for which she was responsible . . . and that this “sorrow”, first in conception and then in the growing egotism of the being conceived, is her punishment and her destiny?

No! Science has made an end of such thinking. There is something else . . . something no one knows yet . . . some secret.

Again her reverie took fresh colour. Her mind was occupied with the word “sword”. By and by there flashed across it a combination of words:

“Cherubims and a Flaming Sword”. She felt as though she were on the brink of a great discovery. Was it possible? Could it be that the sword that pierces the soul of the woman and the sword that keeps the way of the Tree of Life, are one and the same sword? And when the woman has grown wise and strong, will the Cherubim lower it . . . lower it to her who in her own flesh has borne the anguish of giving life; that she may go in and see; that she may come out and show . . . that her beloved may put forth his hand and “live forever”? Life! The realization of the sacredness of life! Is that to be the woman’s message?

With the European trouble, over which Tom seemed daily more and more disquieted, looming large before her eyes, Emma found herself considering the fact that man dealt paramountly in property . . . and that property is always highly protected. That women deal in life . . . and that life is the cheapest commodity in the world; the first thing to be thrown away when the interests or the rights of property are threatened.

A vision rose before her: a vision of mothers . . . of women who had lost or who were about to lose their sons, because Austria had annexed certain lands that should never have belonged to her, because a fraction of its people wanted a “Big Servia”.

Why? Why should man’s investment be made to bring in the largest possible returns at the expense of woman’s investment? Again she questioned

But the question had scarcely flashed upon her when her mind concentrated upon young Eliza and the baby. Here was a case in which it was a woman who had squandered life . . . thrown away the thing she loved. Men were not alone to blame. All the world over, through ignorance, women were wasteful too.

The Tree of Life . . . Emma began to feel the immensity of this thing she had been claiming for her sex . . . the tremendous issues ahead not only of woman but of the race before the sacredness of life will have become a part of human consciousness. Batter up against the gate of existence at this point—she said to herself—and quick as lightning the flaming challenge turns and is there before you. Attack it from that point and the fiery counter stroke has already sent a thrill of pain down your sword arm which wounds if it does not disable.

Ever since she had known Tom, her mind had been adjusted to the idea of the evolution of life rather than to the dogma of special creation. Latterly she had heard nothing so much as she had heard Tom and Jack arguing upon

the subject. Tom, crude in many ways, was in this one branch of knowledge, ripe to maturity. Jack, dear boy, was still pretty well bound in between the covers of his text books. Their wrangles delighted her.

And yet . . . these ancient sages of the Bible . . . after all what had Tom and Jack to say in detail that they had not said in general terms? In a dim uncertain way, but with that occasional flash of illumination that was her heritage, Emma pictured the men who wrote the first chapters of Genesis as Titans brooding above the universe, seeing with the flash of an eye the lapse not of years but of ages. As their words came back to her she found that they were poets visualizing in a few glorious sentences the slow up-building of worlds and of systems. She could not put it as Jack would have put it, but in her own way she realized that men whose vision peopled the water first with living creatures, and then the land, who spoke of the earth as bringing forth “grass and herb yielding seed after his kind”, such men were scientists, observers of detail, thinkers whose solicitude for truth had taught them to count step by step the ordered unfoldment of organic life.

Nor when her mind reverted to the hypothesis of the “seed of the woman” at war with the “serpent” did she fail to see that there, in that marvellous book, lived and moved psychologists who, ante-dating all others, worked from evidence to evidence along paths of intuition and consciousness and postulated at length the cosmic man.

Religionists and theologians had localised the idea of the cosmic man . . . made it conform to a given personality . . . turned it about so that it was taken to be the foreshadowing of a specific leader, the Messiah of a special nation. The notion got abroad. It worked upon the imagination of a fervid people. The hope that she should be the “chosen of the Lord”, the “mother of the Highest”, permeated the meditations of every pregnant woman. In the fullness of time those imaginings and that hope had their effect. . . . He came. . . . Not indeed “The Holy One of Israel” as these had anticipated; but a greater, a more universal . . . even Christ Jesus!

Then the religionists and the theologians got to work again. They claimed the ultimate. Everything had been accomplished. This was perfection. Once and for once only, the “Word was made Flesh” . . . God was incarnate.

The result was stultification. For now, no prophet announced, no woman hoped . . . the stars pursued their courses but in all their number there was no star to lead to, and to stand over—“the place where a young child lay”. The

greatest event of time was over. The eyes of men were turned back, not forward.

This, Emma argued with herself, is the crime of Christianity. That crime had been revealed to her by her perception of the egotism, the natural boyish egotism of a young man beginning to be conscious of unusual powers in himself and in his delight at the strange new inner wonder lording it over the creature he loved best . . . his mother. Yet oh, how gloriously he was to come back to her. Out of the darkness that fell on Golgotha, Emma heard that cry. *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani!* But out of that darkness, too, she heard the whispered word: “Woman, behold thy son!” . . . profoundest testimony of the ages to the divinity of faithful human love. Her resentment passed. Deep down in her heart she loved him all the better because of the touch of imperfection in him . . . because on her side, as well as his, there was something to forgive.

Finally there was the immortal challenge of the Flaming Sword. Nobody had ever even hinted the idea to Emma. It was all her own. Here on the road in the silence of the summer night, she was almost afraid to think it. And yet . . . ?

To herself she said that the lost Eden is a fable of the childhood of our race . . . a picture of conditions as they exist and will continue to exist so long as man continues to think some intelligence other than his own is directing his earthly career . . . so long as he subordinates his mind to his instincts; submits to nature, even his own nature, instead of taking his stand against her. Man, the only rebel. . . . Man, the “living soul”, whose destiny if he will have it so, is—“dominion”!

The Tree of Life and the Flaming Sword . . . that is a fable too. But may it not be that the very inconclusiveness of it proves it a prophecy as well . . . a prophecy of the day when the Two who were driven into the wilderness of human consciousness, having tilled that soil and garnered its harvest, shall return for the second combat: return, illumined with the revelation of the earth, armed with a more than angelic passion?

Boldly she pictured how since all ages God has looked on man and seen the image and the likeness of Himself . . . “as through a glass darkly”. But when the Flaming Sword has found its rival; when he, who has eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, eats of the Tree of Life whose fruit is Love, and lives forever—for Love alone has eternal life, is the sole immortality—then God and man will see each other face to face and the “new earth” will be accomplished.

Emma's hand was on the latch of the green gate before she knew it. For a moment she stood there dreaming. Then the boys sitting on the verandah saw her and came down the path.

CHAPTER VI.

Jack opened the gate. "At last," he exclaimed. "I thought you were never coming. I was just going down to see what had happened. You're tired out, aren't you?"

"I am tired."

"How is the kid?" asked George.

"No better."

"Will it die?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so."

Jack threw his arm around his mother's waist. "Poor old girl," he said, "you're all in. Wait a minute and I'll get you something. What will you have—tea, milk, lemonade?"

Emma and Jack on the path, George on the grass beside them, the three walked back to the verandah. She dropped into a chair. She was used up. Her face had gone white as the apple blossoms the May brought to her dormer window . . . white and yet to Jack it seemed to have an unusual brilliance about it, almost a glory. A thrill ran through him. He knelt beside her. Then: "What is it, Mother?" he asked. "What have they been doing to you down there at the Springers?"

She caught his bright hair in her fingers. She was laughing now and curiously happy.

"Above all things," she said, "a cup of tea. You can make it on the coal-oil stove. Go with him, George. I'll rest here till you come back. Yes, I'm all right . . . very comfortable."

Jack rose. He was almost reluctant to leave her. "Come along, George," he said, "let's see the fist you can make at bread and butter."

She sat on, gazing once more at the August sky; the fiery heart of the Scorpion blazing out at her from the south-west where it hung low on the horizon. She had always believed in the inherent goodness of man, yet with certain modifications and reservations . . . the perfection of goodness, she had thought unattainable. That burden had dropped from her. Jesus of Nazareth Himself had communed with her concerning those "greater works" even than the works He had accomplished. Henceforth in her faith there could be no such thing as resignation . . . never again could she submit to the

idea of the inevitableness of human misery. It is not true that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. It is not true! It is we who scourge ourselves and each other. By our excesses we pile up in the race its heritage of weakness and disease. By our greed and passion we project war. It is perfectly certain that all disease is preventable. It is perfectly certain that all accidents are preventable. It is perfectly certain that all war is preventable. We are too lustful, too lazy, too litigious, to prevent these things, and so we call them “visitations of Providence”. Emma clasped her hands. “Dear God,” she said, “Thou pure and holy One, may I keep my heart from shifting its burden from me to Thee.”

A clatter of dishes announced that the boys were coming back. Chairs, windowsills, steps; they covered all with the simple feast they set before her. Jack poured the tea. George passed the bread and butter. Emma sat chatting about the beauty of the night and the glory of the stars . . . her spiritual oasis widening so that it became a world, a universe . . . unfading and undying . . . beyond the touch of time. . . .

It was clear that the two boys had something on their minds; that they had been holding off from speaking about something, on account of the unusual state in which Emma had returned from the Springers. Now, however, Jack broke out:

“Fearful excitement up in town.”

“Over what?” asked Emma.

“Germany has declared war on Russia. A couple of English merchantmen have been detained in the Kiel Canal. All the British naval reserves are called out. The English bank rate has jumped again—ten per cent this time . . . you remember it was eight on Friday. The king has signed a proclamation authorizing a partial moratorium.”

Emma put the cup she had raised to her lips down again in its saucer. “What is a moratorium?” she questioned.

“Oh, it’s some kind of a process for the postponement of bills of exchange . . . everything’s on the queer over there now, you know, financially. Germany hasn’t declared war on France yet; but France has mobilized. They say Luxembourg has been invaded. I guess it will be war before morning. The Germans are still hedging on the neutrality of Belgium. That’s where England comes in . . . England’s got to stick by Belgium, that’s certain. You never saw such a crowd. The streets have been full of extras all afternoon. They’re running bulletins now and the people are as thick as bees. George and I got an extra on our way up to Sarah’s. Can you fancy Jimmy?

His Irish is up, I tell you. He says he hopes England does go to war . . . says she's stood about enough from Germany . . . she could lick her with one hand anyway . . . forgot all about that stiff leg of his and capered around like a two-year-old."

"Have you told Tom yet?" queried Emma.

"Yes; George and I went in on our way back."

"What does he say? Does he think England will go to war?"

"Says it all depends on Germany. If Germany could declare war on Russia like this . . . in the very middle of all the talk . . . while the Czar and the Kaiser were telegraphing peace messages to each other, why, she can do anything. Belgian neutrality won't stop her. Phsaw! I don't believe it myself. Germany will never go to war with England. Why, we come from the same stock . . . have the same ideals, religion, art, home . . . we're the two great Protestant peoples of Europe. Believe me, such a thing couldn't happen! Down at bottom the German people are the same people as we are . . . they've been travelling along pretty much the same road, so why shouldn't they be? And then just think what they've done for science and music and all the rest. You and I, George, would be pretty badly off to-day if Germany hadn't been sitting on the job of chemistry and optical instruments and all that. Besides, Germany's agreed to preserve the neutrality of Belgium and she can't do anything else. Think what the world would say. . . ."

"That's all very well," said George. "But you see, it isn't the old philosophic and religious and musical Germany we have to do with . . . it's modern military Germany: and modern military Germany is a most miserable liar. You remember the false telegram Bismarck sent to bring on the Franco-Prussian War . . . everybody remembers that! And you remember what Carlyle says in his 'Frederick the Great' . . . ?"

"No, I don't. I never read it."

"Well, Carlyle says that when he was writing his 'Frederick the Great' he had the greatest trouble ever. Why? Why, because—I think it goes like this: 'Because of all nations the Germans are the most conspicuous and persistent liars'. That's something, coming from a Germono-maniac like Carlyle! But you mustn't forget, it's military Germany he's dealing with too."

"So far as I go," George continued, "I believe in man only when man believes in himself. Otherwise I don't see much difference between us and the rest of the brute creation. When man's a poet, an artist, he believes in himself. When he's a scientist, a discoverer, he believes in himself . . . turns

his thoughts inward and sees either by vision or by argument, what is that best thing which he can do to forward the knowledge, the health, the happiness, the beauty of human life. But when a man's a soldier, then he believes in somebody else, somebody other than himself . . . takes his word for it. And that somebody is usually some king or governor born and bred into an overweening idea of his own importance, and with a homicidal mania to help him out so far as the importance of the rest of the world is concerned."

Jack looked distressed. "Well, I don't understand it," he grumbled. "All my life I've heard nothing but Germany this and Germany that. Germany even for Shakespeare . . . why, yes, they've actually said that Germany understood and appreciated Shakespeare better than we do. And then it's always been what kind hearts the Germans have . . . what good friends they make. Why, only in June when that violinist girl . . . that Miss What's-her-name?"

"Armstrong?" suggested Emma.

"Yes, that Miss Armstrong; when she went away. . . . By the way, come to think of it, it won't be very nice for that girl, will it? Do you suppose she'll see any of this trouble?"

"If things are kept down to France and Russia, I guess she'll be all right," said George. "But if England gets into it, 'good night!' Dundas has a sister over in Belgium; it's his eldest sister—she has a couple of young girls at school there. Lots of people I know have friends over just now . . . my aunt's there, but she's in Switzerland. Won't there be a scattering? Wonder what Cook will do? No more 'Cookies'. A war in Europe would about put a stop to the small cake business."

George's sally raised the ghost of a laugh . . . the only kind of a laugh possible that evening. Then Emma suggested bed. George went off first. Jack and Emma stood side by side for a moment before they said good night.

"Don't you be afraid, Mother," he said. "Most of this is newspaper talk. There isn't going to be any war between England and Germany!"

CHAPTER VII.

On Tuesday, in the forenoon, young Eliza's baby died. Emma was at home at the time, getting dinner. All at once Peter Wilson stood before her, his face white against the wild-grape vine that covered the kitchen porch, and told her the baby was dead. She dropped everything and went back with him.

Young Eliza, her guilt more poignant even than her grief, lay on the bed in the back room, with the blind down; her drab hair in disarray; her tumbled pillow wet beneath her streaming eyes and beneath her mouth all distorted with its sobbing. Not even Peter Wilson could help her. Peter read the 14th Chapter of St. John's Gospel to her twice over . . . sitting up close to the darkened window . . . letting the sunlight slant along the edge of the blind onto the page of the thick small-lettered Bible. But for all his reading there was no peace in her heart. She wanted her own flesh and blood, her baby—that's what she wanted . . . she wouldn't be comforted.

Eliza, in whose bewildered mind the pretty ways of two generations of youngsters were for the time being confused, talked about the dead child, and as constantly interrupted herself to talk about a child of her own, dead twenty years ago at the same age, of a fever. With now a story about one baby and now a story about the other, she followed Emma from room to room.

The Springers' house was fearfully hot. As soon as the baby died, all the blinds had been lowered and the front door closed. There was a wood fire in the kitchen stove, and above the kitchen the sun poured out of the August sky until it seemed as though the roof of the cottage were itself a furnace. Every time the screen door into the back yard was opened, more and more flies came in and settled on the dishes still standing from the breakfast.

The dead child was in the front bedroom across the hall from the parlour. When the water in the kettle was warm, Emma got ready to dress it. Eliza wanted to come too, but Emma said she had better not; wouldn't she go back into the kitchen and tidy up a bit . . . Emma would call her later. Eliza threw her checked apron over her head and stood outside the closed door for a moment, crying. Then she dragged herself together and went to do as Emma suggested.

He was lying on the sofa dressed as far as the petticoat worn by such young children. His bare arms were not thin from his illness, but softly

rounded; the blue look about the mouth was gone; already the smile of death had settled down . . . he looked as though he were sleeping.

Eliza came at Emma's whispered word and stood over him. Only a day or so back she had been playing with him, and he so gay and lively; feeding him as he sat in his high chair and scolding him when he got his bib dirty; stealing him away from the others and carrying him out into the yard or up the road, that she might have him all to herself—Granny's baby! Only a few hours since she had been watching the contortions of his little face when the spasms came; putting drops of brandy and water into his gaping mouth and feeling so thankful when the brandy went down instead of gurgling up again at the stiffened corners . . . and he was still her baby.

Now as he lay there her awe of him was such that she was afraid almost to touch him with the tips of her fingers. What change was this? It seemed as though they two had shifted places. How old he was, he that was so young! And how wise, he that was the merest infant!

Emma went close to Eliza and slipped her hand within her arm, and they stood thus for a few moments. Then she left her alone . . . she said she would call young Eliza.

CHAPTER VIII.

The two boys had taken the car for the city. They stayed in town all afternoon, and night found them still talking about that which Emma had almost forgotten . . . the prospect of war between England and Germany.

She was in the kitchen when they got back, ironing the baby's best dress to put on him when he was in his coffin. George came on to the house with the news. Jack had stopped for a moment at the smithy.

"Take that chair," said Emma to George, as she ran the point of her iron up among the tiny gathers. "Read me what it says, will you?"

George opened the paper along the end of the ironing-table and read the latest cables.

The German Ambassador had been withdrawn from Paris. Germany had delivered a note to Belgium proposing friendly neutrality on condition of the free passage of troops through her territory. Belgium had refused; and Germany had sent a second note to the effect that she was prepared to carry out her proposal of passing through Belgium into France by force of arms if need be. Belgium had applied to Great Britain, and Great Britain had answered that in case of pressure being brought by Germany to induce Belgium to depart from her neutrality, Belgium would be expected to resist by every means in her power . . . in which event Great Britain would support Belgium and in that support make common cause with France and Russia.

It was exciting news. It was more; it was alarming. Jack's eyes were blazing when he came up from talking it over with Tom.

"Say, Mother," he said, "will you cut me a slice or two of bread over night? I'm going to wheel into town at five in the morning . . . we must have the first paper. . . ."

CHAPTER IX.

Tom was standing in the smithy yard in the early morning light, as Jack wheeled past, his pockets stuffed with papers.

“Come on up to the house, and I’ll read it to you.”

Tom dropped the chips he was gathering for his new fire, and followed. Jack hallooed to Emma and George . . . she came from the kitchen where she had been just about to begin getting the breakfast . . . he appeared half dressed out of the bedroom window, crossed the roof of the verandah and slid down one of the end pillars. By this time Tom was part way up the path. And in a moment all three of them were listening.

The paper was red hot with cables. Jack read Sir Edward Grey’s speech to the House of Commons first . . . the reasons he gave why Great Britain must find it incumbent upon her to help France against Germany . . . how both on moral, political, and diplomatic grounds it was her duty to fight for the liberty and independence of smaller states; to resist the breaking of ancient treaties and to throw the whole weight of her influence with the Triple Entente.

Then he read John Redmond’s pledge for the Irish people. Then Bonar Law’s contract for His Majesty’s Dominions beyond the seas. All this, together with a short cable under blazing headlines. The cable ran:

BRUSSELS, August 4th, 1914.—Military attache has been informed at the War Office that German troops have entered Belgian territory, and that Liege has been summonsed to surrender by a small party of Germans who were, however, repulsed.

Tom shook his head. To him it seemed as though Germany were playing for position. Discontent in India . . . the wobbly condition of the Irish . . . revelations in the French Chamber relative to military slackness . . . the French premier off in Russia. . . .

“A frame-up! That’s what it is,” he said, “in my opinion.”

As usual the boys were divided. George still stuck to it that diplomats and newspapers were at the bottom of most of the trouble.

“We have too many lawyers in government,” he said; “what do lawyers care, except to get the right side of an argument? I tell you what it is, this little old world needs more scientists and more educationists and a few

mothers at the head of things. There you have it! Oh, you can say what you like!” as Tom’s face went up in a whimsy and Jack struck an attitude. “I tell you we’ve got to get a little more heart into this business of public house-keeping, and a few ideals; and I don’t know any people who would bring those things along with them better than some of the fellows up at the School . . . and a few women like Mrs. Winchester here.”

Jack in the meanwhile was experiencing a strange feeling at the pit of his stomach. He agreed, of course, about women like his mother . . . that is, if you could find any, which he doubted. He still clung to his idea that the German and the English peoples were too close of kin to go to war . . . something would happen at the last moment. For all that he wished that he hadn’t cut out altogether when he left the High . . . he was a fool not to have joined the militia, when old Finnigan the drill-master wanted him to. . . .

Presently Tom went off and Emma returned to her breakfast getting. The boys were due at ten o’clock for a row on the river with the rector’s grand-daughters; she must be quick.

When her morning’s work was done, Emma walked down the road to the Springers. She had a bunch of day-lilies in her hand and one white rose, the last rose in the garden. As she passed the post-office, Rance Thompson, the post-master, came out of the door at a quick run. Rance was in his shirt-sleeves and although he had not run far, he was breathless.

“Mrs. Winchester,” he cried, “say, I’ve just got a telephone from town. There’s another extra. England declared war on Germany at midnight! Canada is mobilizing! Ottawa’s calling for twenty thousand men! So long . . . I promised I’d let Tom Moore know if I heard anything.”

Emma stood in the broad sunlight watching Rance speed down the road. What a dust he made! How long was it since there’d been rain anyway?

War! England and Germany at war! The words had no meaning . . . she went on down the road carrying her day-lilies to young Eliza.

PART VI

CHAPTER I.

Six persons from Emma's village were taking the car for town. The party was to meet at the smithy door . . . the smithy itself was closed. Tom, too, was going.

Emma and Jack came down the garden path single file. With her right hand she held a light-coloured parasol over her head, and in the fingers of her left she gathered the folds of her muslin skirt . . . lifting it for fear its ruffles should draw dust onto her recently polished shoes. He, gay and talkative, with expectation all agog, walked at her heels . . . he had polished those shoes himself and he was as anxious as she that they should make a good showing.

Half way down the path she stopped and turned around. "Jack, I don't believe you put Pluto out after all. I believe I saw him in the kitchen when you came through from the shed with these shoes."

"Oh, bother! What an old brute that cat is! I'm always forgetting him. Hold on a minute, will you?"

He put his long legs to it to get back to the house. He hoped they wouldn't be late, that was all.

She waited for him at the green gate, her face shaded by the parasol, her eyes looking over the snake-fence and the elderberry bushes, past the yellow fields to the broken line of the hill-tops, on which the heat of the summer morning simmered.

She was thinking neither of snake-fence nor elderberry, fields nor hill-tops, though all these things made a part of her self-communing. She was thinking rather, of that May day, the very first day that ever the idea of Jack came into her mind . . . and of how she had waited here for Jack's father.

She saw him round the corner . . . saw his hair shine as it was lifted by the breeze . . . saw him taking the glance of the sun with the undaunted pride that came of the ability his gray eyes had to look straight into the heart of a great splendour. How wonderful he had been! And how wonderful the son he had left her!

"All right, Mum," cried Jack, bounding off the steps and down onto the gravel. "The poor old devil was asleep as usual. He didn't want to go out a bit. It was a good thing I went back though. Ha ha! Miss Always-Careful . . . you left the kitchen window open!"

Emma laughed, but she did not turn around. Without her eyes she could see the audacity of the dear picture. Every day now he was growing more and more like his father. His glance looked out at her through eyes that John had given him. The brightness of his hair—the brilliance of his skin—his white teeth—his long supple body; all these things were John. Only the soul was different; a new soul, closer to hers, perhaps, than even John's had been, which reminded her now of John and now of herself, and now of someone she knew not whom, back of herself, against whose life her own life was projected. Warp and woof, warp and woof . . . intuition and understanding, faith and aspiration . . . her soul and John's commingled; and over the whole the glancing sunlit, lovely pattern that was Jack himself and none other.

The joy of it all! All that John might have been able to do and yet had not done because death stayed his hand so early; all that she never could have done because she was uneducated, limited by poverty and commonplace surroundings, because she was a woman in a world where men were the doers . . . Jack would do! They two—John and she—they would live the world-life that had been denied them, in him. It would be a full measure. Emma hugged herself in anticipation of it.

At the smithy corner, Eliza Springer in her new black, was talking to Rance Thompson. On account of the unwonted stiffness of a high collar, Eliza's large face with its rolls of fat about the chin, was redder than usual. Her matronly person, buckled in considerably for the occasion, exuded a warmth not all due to the heat of the morning . . . some of it must be charged to the whiff of a storm she was brewing.

"I was telling Rance," she said in a fretful tone as Emma and Jack came up, "that he hasn't any need to be so scared about leaving Jacob. Jacob's seventeen now. I guess he knows enough to sell sticky fly-paper and a cake of soap without somebody standing over him! He didn't watch his father selling groceries for nothing!"

Emma smiled at her old friend, whose grief had made her testy . . . and smiling she nodded her head as though she would say that she knew Jacob junior very well indeed . . . Rance need have no fear about the drug counter in the post-office.

"You'll be all right," said Jack, addressing the worried looking druggist. "Just you wait until the last man has passed the corner; then jump on the car and you'll be out here in twenty minutes. I'll bet all told, you won't be gone over three hours!"

Mr. Broadhurst had ridden over from the rectory. After his three miles, old Mike was fairly warm . . . the rector and Tom were trying to make him comfortable under the lean-to. Tom had hung up a bit of sacking to keep off the sun, due to be pretty hot at twelve. The rector had taken off Mike's saddle and had given him all the rope he wanted. Among his other duties, Jacob junior had been put in command of the rector's nose-bag . . . when Mike was cool he was to get all that was good for him.

For a considerable distance in all four directions the two main streets of the city were densely crowded. People stood from the building-line shoulder to shoulder, sometimes clinging together with hands that trembled. And where the streets cross, the police were put to it to keep order.

Far up to the east the fifes were shrilling; and under the fifes the thin rat-a-tat-tat of drums. Even now long-sighted eyes could discover a khaki-coloured mass bearing down upon them . . . in passing it would show a lengthened line; six abreast, a thousand strong and over.

Step by step they came, symmetrical, equipoised . . . the click of feet as regular and monotonous as clockwork. Two blocks off and the sun on the tips of their bayonets. A block away and their faces clearing. They are here! They are passing! Eyes front! Not a muscle moving . . . !

The fifes and drums round the corner, and in rounding they stop beating . . . there is a moment when the only sound is the sound of marching. Then the bugles and the cornets and the piccolos, the drums and the cymbals, the whole band breaks into music.

One or two officers bring up the rear; the Colonel, a slim brown-faced soldier curbing his mettlesome chestnut. Round the corner, and round the corner! Tramp, tramp, tramp! Fading away in the distance; footsteps, music fading . . . fading away!

* * * * *

Those who saw the first city regiment leave for the front had the greatest difficulty, afterwards, in describing what they had seen. They heard the pulse of drums. They recognised a familiar face or two . . . dear faces, dim and dimmer. Those who were not there could get from them nothing further. Whether the people cheered and made an outcry; or were hushed and silent. Nobody seemed able to answer. All thought was concentrated upon the men . . . graybeards and striplings, defiant of danger . . . marching, marching; even then marching to a tryst with Death. Stout-hearted ten hundred!

CHAPTER II.

The suddenness with which Canada found herself at war is unique in history. A week, a day, an hour, and a people agricultural and industrial, practically speaking non-military, whose only experience of warfare within the memory of the living had had to do with a handful of half-breeds in a prairie province, found itself arrayed against the most arrogant, the most proficient and the most pre-determined military power on earth . . . against an ancient warrior; a once-chivalrous Roland, now maw-crammed with forty years of preparedness . . . a colossus akimbo; his brow dark with defiance; his mouth detonating both challenge and contempt. To that Goliath, this David, ruddy and fair of countenance come up from his native fields with corn and cheese for his warring brethren. And behold! the lad had not even his sling ready.

For an instant the powers that be were themselves staggered. It was the long vacation. The premier was out of the capital . . . the farmer and countryside legislators, the jurists, bankers, commercialists who make up the national executive were scattered to their business or their pleasure from the Atlantic to the Pacific; from the farthest north to the seats of customs.

That instant past, the central authority of the Dominion reacted. Premier and ministers, the cabinet, returned to Ottawa. There was a period from which the general public was shut out . . . a period of apparent pause which was rather a period of the most deceptive speed. Then, at a touch, before the country realized the cord was off . . . and the national top, bumping and bobbing about as tops will, had settled down to the momentum we call its "sleep".

The west changed from gold to bronze and was cut and stacked among the stubble. The corn shook down a russet tassel from the sheath. Melon and marrow ripened. Spring lambs arrived at the awkward stage, gave themselves airs before their mothers. The later rains came and Emma's road that had been thick with dust, showed alternate lengths of mud and puddle. Everything happened that happens in rural places between the beginning of August and the end of September.

In town the pageant was, perhaps, a little less spectacular . . . a procession of bright days moved along with skies blue as far-flung banners, followed by a procession of dark days, their colours draggled; then bright again, then dull as befitted the changeful season. The grass on lawn and boulevards turned from green to umber. In the gardens dahlias and asters

took the high place of lilies and roses. The labour of the watering-carts grew lighter.

And between the beginning of August and the end of September, what else, what sequel? Listen back and you will catch the roar of furnaces at white heat, the clangour of steel on steel, the first purr of the wheels where the mills began their interminable web of khaki. Put your ear to the past as the Indian puts his ear to the ground and you will hear the pulse of steam engines, the clatter of horses' hoofs, the tramp of feet . . . cavalry, artillery, infantry, ammunition waggons; men, men, men gathering through the day, and through the night—gathering, gathering! So came Valcartier!

The first army of Canada! Where were the spirits of Wolfe and Montcalm on that September night when in the midst of rain and darkness the fleet of Atlantic liners assembled at Quebec, took aboard the hosts of the Dominion? Did they see the travail of their souls? And were they satisfied?

Nine days later, on an October morning, the Canadian transports convoyed by British battle-ships steamed out of Gaspé Bay on their journey across the Atlantic. All faces were turned abaft, all minds focused, all eyes save a few only in that hour looked their last on the Maple Leaf forever.

CHAPTER III.

Have you ever watched fire in the grass at midsummer? If you have, then you have noticed that it burns for a space with something of a steady flame, but presently as though discouraged by the greater ardour of the sun, blackens and goes out. That blackened breadth has but masked itself; drawn its visor down . . . beneath the disguise, venom is raging. A breath will fan the fury. See! there it runs and there and there . . . a spark, a smoulder, a snake of fire that lifts no head but which goes slipping and sliding so far and so long as anything remains to feed its hunger. The question is a question of supply . . . your fire is a gross feeder.

There was fire at work in Canada that August. At first only the larger cities burst into flames . . . then the towns and villages . . . then little by little as the months went on, as troops and more troops, were mobilized, sent over-seas, arrived in England, were transported to France; little by little as news came back, the situations lengthened, here a coil and there a convolution, until suddenly those that watched saw the sky above the prairies dyed with a crimson more terrible than the Northern Lights, on every mountain height a flame, the waters of the great lakes and the little lakes red like blood.

The truth could no longer be disguised. That which had started out an expeditionary force, became at length, by the adding of force to force, a mighty army . . . one of the mightiest armies of time. Twenty thousand grew to forty thousand. Forty thousand waxed to one hundred thousand. One hundred thousand quadrupled itself. Four hundred thousand sons of Canada! And still the gross feeder fed on!

The first had given themselves in the spirit of those who sacrificed to the Minotaur . . . to the few, the honour of saving the many. Alas! Compared with this monster, the mighty bull born of the adultery of the wife of Minos, was satiated with a mouthful. The few had become the many. Shade your eyes, Canada—watch them marching past!

CHAPTER IV.

The surrender of Liege three days after the neutrality of Belgium had been violated was the first set-back to the hopes of those enthusiasts who prophesied that the war would last a matter of weeks, who gave it as their opinion that the Belgian fortress could hold out until the arrival of the British forces . . . and after that the deluge!

Instead, even while melon and marrow ripened, the cables added to the tale of that three days' tragedy the story of the occupation of Brussels and the reverse of Mons; quickly followed, however, by accounts of the defeat of the German navy off Heligoland. Then September broke upon the world . . . that year not simply a September with flying tresses and the tang of the frost on her garment, but a September trumpet-tongued, blowing to the round world the news of the German advance on Paris.

What saved the French capital? Was it, indeed, better generalship on the part of the French; or was it that the stars in their courses fought against the Hohenzollerns? Was it, perchance, the guardianship of altar-fires alight for a thousand years in the heart of the grape—altar-fires kept burning by the industry of the French people, glowing amber and red, year upon year, century after century, unto the day when the Spirit of Wine—in France no foul-mouthed Bacchante but a vine-wreathed mother—should arise in the defense of the sanest and the most frugal of her children? Now, in the hour of extremity, did she, the cheerful presider at the French hearth, suddenly throw intoxicating fumes in the face of the foe—flush his cheeks, muddle his brain, play tricks with his legs, until from being the punctilious militarist, the man of blood and iron, he became an inglorious reveller, a maudlin carouser, screwed, lit-up, drunken? Then while the despoiled châteaux of the Marne echoed to the sounds of his orgy, did the defenders of France seize their moment and beat the invader back to the fastnesses of Argonne.

The Marne is a champagne country. There, almost every acre is given up to the cultivation of the grape. Each community has its still. The cellars of ancient castles, walled farmhouses and peasants' cottages alike, are filled with the heady wine. Paramountly, and above all other investments, the capital of the district is invested in champagne.

After the Battle of the Marne was lost and won, people returning to their homes found thousands and thousands of empty wine bottles scattered about the fields and orchards, overturned in the cellars and outbuildings, stacked up against the walls of living-rooms and bed-chambers, standing upon tables

still set for the feast . . . tables deserted by their guests at the unexpected approach of the French troops; the terrific onslaught of the hastily-accoutred Republic in the defense of her own.

What part did the champagne play in the subsequent defeat of the German forces?

CHAPTER V.

On his way back from church one Sunday morning, Jack dropped in again at Sarah's to change into his every-day clothes and get his wheel.

The Medical was open for the fall semester. He had been busy for a week past getting his programme started and he wanted to talk things over with his mother. The cars didn't run his way on Sundays; so he was going to wheel out.

Sarah and Jimmy were still at church. Jack piled into his things, ran down stairs, jerked his wheel out of the porch where Sarah let him keep it and was gone . . . he didn't want to be detained . . . if Sarah got him, dear old girl, it was all off!

There was a short cut through side streets by which he could leave the city. But no, hurried as he was, he went around to the main thoroughfare. He must have a look at the news.

When he came to the first newspaper office, he found a crowd of motors and carriages, bicyclists and pedestrians, people who like himself, had taken the long way around . . . he couldn't get within reading distance of the bulletin. It was a silent crowd for the most part, with occasional scraps of intelligence and awe-struck exclamation sweeping its edges as a sudden breeze sweeps the rushes of the margin of a pool and makes them shiver.

"What was that you said?" called one man to another as Jack came alongside.

"Germans bombarding Rheims! Cathedral gone. People taking to the cellars!" the other called back.

The Cathedral of Rheims! It seemed to Jack that his heart stopped beating. He was still too close to his school-days to have forgotten what Rheims stands for in French history. The memory of Joan of Arc was too fresh and too beautiful . . . why, only in the summer he and George had been reading Mark Twain's history of the "Maid"! Rheims! He couldn't believe it!

With a wrench he brought his wheel up onto the side-walk. He would push it as far as the corner and see if he could get a better place at the next office. Yes, things were better. He managed to make his way to the middle of the road, well in front. There, scarcely an elbow's length away from a

stylish-looking motor in which sat two elderly women and a young girl, all in their autumn finery, he stood to read the despatches.

The girl in the motor was tempestuous . . . she was talking so much and in tones of such indignation and sorrow that he couldn't resist a glance at her. From under the brim of a large felt hat looked out two big dark eyes. He saw that they were filled with tears.

"The brutes! The brutes!" cried the girl, clenching her gloved hands. "Mrs. Mackenzie, it was the most beautiful thing in the world! It was, wasn't it, Mother? Mother and I were there just this time last year. This is the 20th, isn't it? . . . and we left Paris on the 16th of September. And now it's gone! Oh, I'll never forget it . . . all those lovely sculptures outside and then inside just the tall white pillars, and the dim roof like a cloud hanging over. You could say your prayers there even if you weren't a Catholic. And the statue of Joan of Arc in front; on her horse, you know, just as she brought the king to be crowned. . . . I wonder if that's gone, too? The brutes! How I hate them!"

"Hush, May, hush!" cautioned one of the elder women. "People are looking at you."

"Well, I can't help it, Mother, if they are! The poor French! Think how they'll feel. Why, it's just as if they bombarded Westminster!"

"Let 'em try it!" cried a Cockney voice from the roadway, and a little man with a peaked cap pulled well down over a rusty pair of eyebrows squared his elbows and turned his face to the motor.

"Let 'em try it, I say! They'll be 'unted to 'eaven if they do. That's what! We gave it to 'em at 'Elgoland; an' we can give it to 'em again! Let 'em try it, Miss! That's what I say!"

Jack moved off. He would dearly have loved to talk it over with the girl in the broad-brimmed hat. Her indignation sent his blood pumping. Her tears seemed to pierce down into him and make him shiver. He breathed hard. A red glow that was almost physical in its texture seemed to drop from his brain and cover his eyeballs. As he wheeled along he found himself saying the very words the girl had said: "The brutes! The brutes! Why, it's just as if they'd bombarded Westminster!"

Pshaw! He couldn't stay in the "Med". How on earth could a fellow study with this sort of thing going on? Those Belgians . . . those girls in Louvain . . . what would he do if some miserable beast attacked a girl like that in the motor? What would he do? Yes, that was the question.

Jack felt his fingers grip his handle-bars, and beneath his grip the wood burned as though it were the throat of a lecherous Uhlan. He found his knees pressing . . . pressing. Something cracked. Good God!

So he went on and on and the dust of the road went on and on with him. . . . A pillar of cloud. . . . The Lord Himself leading him through the wilderness of his indecision.

CHAPTER VI.

From the beginning, the two boys were keen for war news. In the morning when they met at the school each confessed to the other that he hadn't been able to eat a bite until he had gone through all the headlines and at least a part of the text of the cables. Noon, when, because George lived at a distance they had dinner together at Sarah's, found them talking, not as formerly about lectures and laboratory happenings; but about the Czar's ukase on the vodka question, about the relative tractability of planes and dirigibles, about the effectiveness of the new French "seventy-fives". At night, so far as his means would permit, the study table of each was littered with books and magazines dealing with the one all-important topic.

Between them they bought a war-map with an accompaniment of tiny flags on pins . . . this they kept in Jack's room and by staking now a French, now a British, a Belgian, a German flag, they were able to keep track of defeats and victories, maintain a long-distance survey, a telescopic view of phenomena before which the surprised and non-expectant world stood confounded.

The weather grew dark and darker. The news was more and more discouraging.

City after city, town upon town, the Germans progressed through Belgium and the north of France. Their military tradition of ceaseless victory had been broken at the Marne, but these successes were reinforcing it. A thing once broken is never so strong again, no matter how well it is braced and fortified. The world did not realize that then, however, and it suffered accordingly.

Early in October word came of the siege of Antwerp . . . tale of treachery and unpreparedness. The flight of the Belgian court to Havre followed, together with the final capitulation of the tragic old city on the Scheldt. Then in rapid succession came the occupation of Ghent . . . Bruges . . . Ostend; and before November was two weeks old, the sand dunes of Dixmude were stained red as the sunset over the North Sea with the blood of her indomitable defenders, whose trenches, marked here and there with a lonely poplar-tree cross, are the only graves on one of the greatest battlefields in history. . . . And yet, a king without a country, all that had been his of the rich provinces of Limburg, Antwerp, Brabant, Hainault and the Twin Flanders, reduced to the tiny south-west corner across which the Yser flows, Albert of Belgium fought on.

To those dark days, too, fell the terrible first fighting in the Argonne . . . tough bush-fighting along forest-clad hills. Then the newspapers bristled with strange names and with stranger rules for pronouncing them . . . so that people in offices and workshops, on the streets and in the street-cars wrestled almost as mightily with continental vowels and French terminations as the forces on the Aisne wrestled with the enemy.

Three weeks before Christmas the cables announced that the “Princess Pats” had been moved out of Salisbury, brigaded with English regiments and sent across the Channel.

Nobody knew it at the moment, but from that cable—interminable knelling in Canadian hearts—is dated the history of the mysterious dread words: “Somewhere in France!”

Morning after morning ducking his head toward the electric light above an eight o’clock breakfast table, Jack read aloud to Sarah such scraps as his hurry permitted . . . and Sarah, guardian of the teapot, listened, shivering under her gray shawl even more than the weather warranted.

Jimmy didn’t get up for breakfast these days. He delighted, nevertheless, in the somewhat garbled but always interesting edition of things Sarah carried to him, where, propped up on his pillows, he ate his oatmeal . . . ears pricked and all attention.

The bombardment of Hartlepool on a morning in mid-December, brought his trembling old hands to Sarah’s hands for comfort. He had taken Charley’s mother to Hartlepool on their wedding trip. Maria’s people came from Newcastle . . . Jimmy had had to go there for her to be married . . . the trip to Hartlepool had been a side issue, a two days’ excursion undertaken with youthful pride and middle-aged caution. Neither of them had had any idea of Canada in those days. They expected to live their lives out in Belfast . . . and why not? . . . sure, Jimmy wasn’t to know that he’d be burned out of house and home three months later. After that? Well, after that there was nothing for it but Canada. Well, the cake swelled in the baking, praise God!

Yes, he remembered the white pier and the gray waters. Maria wore a fawn-coloured pelisse and a pink bonnet . . . she was as brave a colleen as need be in her wedding fixings . . . they took long walks on the shore. Yes, he remembered!

“Killing women and children, eh? Blowing up buildings? ’Twas all so peaceful in our time. What would Maria say to such works? Ah, it’s miserable I am, Sarah! It’s miserable we all are at the dregs o’ the year!”

“There, there, Jimmy!” said Sarah, hanging over him more like a mother than a wife. “There, there, man! Just you lie back on your bed and be thankful that the big, blithering brutes and their great murdering machines weren’t there to spoil the courting! You gave Maria the best that you had, Jimmy. You made her happy. And sure she was a good wife to you and a good mother to your children. She’s well out of this world now, I’m thinking . . . and may the heaven of the saints be shut against them as makes me say it! Lie back on your bed, man. Arrah, lie back! I’m going to fetch you your tea and I’ll not be a minute. . . .”

A break in the bad tidings came in January when the Fleet under Sir David Beatty defeated a German cruiser-squadron in the North Sea. That break heartened the country up for the long-expected news which followed. The Canadians were to be moved . . . were being moved . . . had been moved. The Canadians were going . . . they had gone. Finally at the end of the second week in February, tidings were definite; the First, Second and Third Infantry Brigade and the Artillery had been landed at St. Nazaire.

“Somewhere in France!” Limitless as eternity, a tide with no turning, the phrase caught them. A voice here. A voice there. An occasional strong arm above the surge, signalling cheerfully. Then suddenly, without warning, the sea rose, hung poised, fell. And they were gone!

CHAPTER VII.

First it was the February fighting of the “Princess Pats” at St. Eloi. Then the March fighting of the same regiment, where it received special commendation for bravery and lost its commander.

Casualty-lists began to appear in the papers, cautiously inserted, with much pomp and circumstance. The “Roll of Honour” was established. People caught themselves avoiding other people’s eyes when they met and talked together. The unrealizable had begun to happen . . . these dead, whose names they were printing in those lists . . . they were Canadians . . . they were our boys!

Now it was a Montreal fellow with the very finest sort of a future . . . several people in town knew him well. Now it was that bank chap so popular at all the dances a few years back; he had enlisted at Winnipeg. Here one and there another . . . names for our “Graveyard in Flanders”.

Then came those unforgettable days in early April when the British made their first attempt to pierce the German lines, since the open-field fighting of the Marne . . . Neuve Chapelle with its agony of miscalculation and shortage; its gallantry; its glorious defeat when mortal men performed immortal deeds and died unconquered.

In the Canadian woods the anemones and the bloodroot had had time to blow before Canada knew definitely how far her sons had been employed in that tremendous struggle . . . and in the meanwhile it became certain that, twenty thousand strong, they had been rushed to the Ypres salient.

A fortnight later there came over the cable for the first time the dread word “Gas”. And in the wake of that portentous message, slowly at first and then with words falling thick as hail, all that is as yet known of the audacity and the contempt for danger which painted in letters of gold on Canadian annals the name—St. Julien!

Festubert followed, the first Canadian offensive . . . “Gunners’ Day” they called it. And even in that sea of fire, the Boys held. Then Givenchy . . . Givenchy, where the slender brown-faced colonel whom the city had last seen when the First Western Ontario regiment passed through the streets on its way to Valcartier, died the death of the military hero. . . .

Mourning in Canada, but over in France salvation! Tears with us; with them rejoicing. And for all the world this spectacle . . . the Canadians held. In two weeks they had lost six thousand. They had written across the Ypres

salient its name—"The Bloody Angle". But they held . . . they still held the gateway to Calais!

PART VII

CHAPTER I.

Click! Click! Click! Purl and Plain! Purl and Plain! Interminable gray knitting . . .

The pucker between her brows was more accentuated than it used to be. The fine lines at the sides of her mouth were a recent graving.

When she finished a needleful, she drew her yarn sharply with impatient fervor. When a row was accomplished on all four needles, she turned the sock fiercely and began another as though she were knitting on time, to win a wager. The ball rolled out of her lap and down onto the grass and she leaned over and jabbed at it; disquieted at the interruption she could not get it back quickly enough, her fingers fairly twitched with excitement. The task was too accustomed to make counting necessary and yet stitch after stitch she counted . . . purl and plain . . . purl and plain . . . click, click, click . . . the gray yarn jerked through her fingers.

It was August again and the war was a year older. It was two o'clock in a world that was strangely quiet. There hadn't been a cart or a motor along the road for twenty minutes. Done with the morning's crowing, the cock sat with the hens under the breadth of the rhubarb leaves . . . and all were silent. Down on the river not a whiff to disturb the light dance of the midges or move the water-bugs sheltering from the glare in the shadows of stones or bridges. White hot in a fleecy sky, the sun even seemed to loll in the lap of indolence . . . asleep of his own ardour.

Emma had been at the machine with little respite since early morning, and now, in a fresh cotton frock, she was sitting out under the apple trees, stealing a few moments from her eternal task of money-getting. Time was short and socks were needed. As she knitted she had a vision of hot feet and tired feet and wet feet . . . feet of Canadian men tramping, tramping.

A battalion is going up to relieve. The rain comes down pitilessly on the long trail of men who stagger along heavy-laden. Presently the winding line leaves the road and strikes off across the plain. This is not ordinary mud . . . it is slippery beyond belief and beyond belief tenacious. The men struggle on one by one, or close up so close in the effort for places that they have scarcely room to move. A man slips and tumbles. When he pulls himself up he is a mass of mud . . . his rifle barrel is choked . . . it is in his hair, down his neck, everywhere. Yet on he goes to more mud and more mud and more mud . . . the mud of the marsh . . . the cold-clinging deathlike mud of the trenches!

Emma came back with a start to her own summer day under the apple trees. Then the needles flew faster than ever.

By and by a man came in sight, walking down the road half hidden in the blur of the dust he was raising. The man whistled. She looked up in time to see a hand go to a straw hat and wave it gaily.

“So glad to see you, Mrs. Winchester,” exclaimed George, coming up the pathway.

“And I am glad to see you,” Emma answered. “Haven’t you come a day earlier than you said? I thought Jack told me that he expected you on Friday?”

“Yes, he did. But, you see, Father had to come into town to-day about some Red Cross business, so I thought I’d come along with him. He’s at it now. That’s why I’m here.”

The newly-awakened light in Emma’s eyes faded to be replaced by an anxious expression which, like the counting of stitches, seemed to have become habitual. “Where’s Jack?”

“In town.”

George seated himself swing-wise on the edge of the hammock and took out a cigarette to light it. Emma picked up the sock she had dropped when she greeted him and went on knitting. There were a few words of ordinary chatter between them. Then she began: “George! Tell me what sort of letters has Jack been writing to you this summer?”

“Oh, just letters.”

“No, George, tell me. Has he been talking much about the war?”

“Talking much about it? Well, I should say! He hasn’t talked much about anything else . . . has anybody?”

Emma hitched her shoulder nervously, her eyes were strained and she seemed to shiver.

“George, you don’t think Jack is going to enlist, do you?”

“Enlist? Well, I should hope he isn’t . . . not until he gets his sheepskin, anyway. He’d have to get your consent before they’d take him . . . and you wouldn’t give it, would you?”

“Why, what can I do?” asked Emma in a voice like a thread. “Jack is Jack. When he comes and stands before me and looks at me with those eyes

of his, what can I say? Jacob Springer enlisted last month . . . came home from town one night about ten o'clock and told his mother. Poor Eliza! Jacob's her youngest. Only eighteen. It was after the mayor's procession of little children. That was too much for Jacob. He's always been so fond of little children . . . the big brother idea got him."

"What did Mrs. Springer do?"

"What could she do; what can any mother do when her boy tells her that he must go? Besides, the boy had enlisted . . . she couldn't shame him up at the armouries. She just had to let things be. She says now she's glad Jacob had it in him . . . they all say that. All the boys about here are going—Billy Hodge and the Jones boy and even poor Albert Johnson we used to think such a sissy. I can see Jack getting more and more restless every day. He doesn't say much, but I know him too well not to know that he suffers. If I thought he'd go with the Red Cross or the Medical Unit—but he won't. Tom tells me, he says . . . Oh, George, it isn't because I'm just selfish, just thinking of myself . . . it's because . . . George, are you listening? It's because he'll have to kill; Jack will have to kill . . . there isn't a night I don't take that thought to bed with me!

"I go over all our lives together ever since he was a baby; I remember all the things I've taught him and the things I've failed to teach him. I remember how I used to teach him not to pull the wings out of flies and that he must be kind to birds and animals. Then when he grew older I used to tell him that Jesus was the perfect gentleman and that Jesus said: 'Love your enemies'; 'Resist not him that is evil'; 'Whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also', and all the rest. And now . . . ! Of course, I know that at the same time I talked about 'great' men until he must have thought that great men are necessarily good men. I let him believe in such men as Napoleon. I let him think that there is heroism and righteousness in killing for a right cause; instead of teaching him that the higher and the more exalted the cause the less justification. And now that I don't believe these things any more myself, it is all coming back on me in him. Oh, George, if we could only trust God as Jesus trusted Him; and be willing to go down rather than to turn back . . . !"

George answered, "Yes, I know. You let him get his ideas of patriotism out of school readers and anniversary day poets and all the rest. Well, that's where most of us get it, isn't it? And the Germans get theirs in the same place. Then some day there's a clash of opinions, or a meeting of jealousies . . . and pouff! it's all off.

“Patriotism’s a mighty fine word, if only it didn’t cover the multitude of sins . . . believe me, there isn’t a greed or a crime in the catalogue that hasn’t been listed some time or other under the name of patriotism. I won’t let any one in the world say that he loves his country better than I love mine; but, mark my words, the day will come when we’ll no more believe in the sort of patriotism we believe in now . . . than you and I, at this moment, believe in hell. We’ll slough them both together, I guess. And when we slough the idea of national exclusiveness, and the idea of eternal rewards and punishments . . . a tribal earth and a tribal God . . . we’ll slough war. Remember the story they tell about Lincoln?”

“Which story?”

“Why, they say that one day Lincoln was in a market-place, over there in a town on the other side, along with a lot of drovers and drunkards come for a sale of slaves. He saw a young negro girl stripped to the waist, with a couple of brutes punching her to see if she’d enough muscle in her for their money. He didn’t say anything for a while; then all of a sudden, he brought his fist down on the table beside him, and cried out, ‘By God, boys, I’ll live to stop this’. Everybody laughed, of course, but I guess there were a few who remembered. . . .”

“Well?”

“Lincoln didn’t have any idea of war when he spoke those words . . . the psychology of war wasn’t in him . . . it was the politicians put that job through. And how did they put it through? By a slogan of course . . . always have to have a slogan . . . the more high-sounding the better. Golly! How good the mass of mankind is away deep down. You can’t get men to move against men unless you fix some sort of a heroic picture up before their eyes . . . some great big human or patriotic reason. The German politician knew that when they told the German people that England was egging her enemies on to destroy the Fatherland. ‘Gott Strafe England!’ Pretty good phrase that, for a slogan. It got them. Why, they say they have it printed on everything . . . on the coal bricks they burn in their stoves, on the nipples of their baby feeding bottles, blood and iron with a vengeance. . . .

“Well, what happened over in the U.S.? The negro question could have been settled in a lawyer’s office . . . in Lincoln’s office; he was a pretty good lawyer. But no! They had to go and lose five hundred thousand men over it . . . best blood in the country. Five hundred thousand is a drop in the bucket to this carnage. But it was enough in those days. It settled their history; just

as this thing will settle ours if we don't watch it. Go into any of their big cities if you want to know what I mean.

"I've been thinking the whole thing over a good deal lately . . . I've been reading the Bible too, some, to see if I could find any practical working philosophy in it. And I found one thing sure . . . I found that Jesus Christ was right, you bet . . . philosophically right and physiologically right, too, when He said: 'All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.' The Civil War killed Anglo-Saxonism in the States. Perhaps they've something better, I don't know. . . .

"I always have to laugh when I hear men like Teddy Roosevelt and that Bishop What's-his-name talking about race suicide; about it being women's duty to their country to bear children. Fine encouragement this war business, century after century, is to women. . . . In the child's name, why should the women breed? That's what I say."

"Just what I think," said Emma eagerly. "I wish I were as strong as you are, George. I agree with everything you say; and yet see how I go on! The very first moment of the war my reason told me that if we women were only wise enough, if we could only have banded together, all the women in all the nations, and refused to do a thing . . . wouldn't nurse . . . wouldn't knit . . . wouldn't go into munition-works. If we just 'struck', the war wouldn't last more than a month.

"Yet here we are . . . here I am working away with all my might for the very thing that robs us. I'd like to know how long men would let women kill women? Suppose women had a war and killed each other by the million the way they do? We women go on as if we hadn't a bit of power in the world. Talk about 'Our Side' . . . the only side that's the woman's side is the side of life. Life! That's her patriotism! That's her country!"

"You've said it! There's going to be another Lincoln some day; another liberator . . . and the slavery he'll take a tilt at is the slavery of war. You thought I didn't believe in the soul, didn't you? But I do . . . and I know something; I know there isn't anything but a patriotic slogan of some kind—a darned clever scheme—that could so have knocked the soul out of any human being, the way this war has knocked the soul out of some of those Germans. Decent fellows enough before the war struck them, I'll bet a dollar. Why, sometimes I . . ."

Emma and George were so occupied, neither of them heard the gate click . . . neither dreamed he was near till he stood beside them.

Breathless, still in the act of pushing his wheel, his bright hair damp and curly, his gray eyes dilated and blackened, suddenly he was there. And the sunlight through the apple trees danced upon him.

“Hello, George! Say, Mother, I’ve enlisted.”

PART VIII

CHAPTER I.

Along the brow of a hill on the outskirts of the city, the camp was staked to one side of a long brick building . . . a military barracks. The hill dipped down to a broad valley. There, a railroad swept by with a sooty trail, and over across the railroad, grimy frame cottages and dull brick houses in dejected streets fringed the brighter houses and the livelier streets beyond.

On the other side of the camp lay a procession of farmlands and pastures, with here and there little dots of woods breaking the monotony of the landscape.

By reason of the years of peace the barracks had fallen into disuse . . . just enough going forward to keep it on the ledger of the Militia Department. Now, war had crammed it with men and officers. Its once drowsy exercise grounds were awake to the word of command, the rattle of small-arms, the evolution of companies . . . activities such as had not been dreamed of for it; no, not even by its most sanguinary subaltern. Its tennis court, a short while since the scene of a fusilade of eyes and a skirmishing of chaperones, had become the theatre of entirely different tactics. Its golf-links, like its golfers, were under canvas. There it stood, the headquarters of a tent town, a canopied metropolis. And the once-leisured road that ran past it had already assumed the style and the office of a suburban thoroughfare.

Motors of every kind ground the gravel of that road to powder. Shaggy-hoofed horses dragged the wheels of ordinance wagons where its grasses and its weedflowers grew. In a morning, roused from the dream of its former solitude, it found itself bordered by a parasitical assortment of stalls for the sale of soft drinks and gewgaws. A storm of bill-boards was rained upon it. It was flanked by poles and strung with wires. Time was when by ten o'clock at night the hurrying doctor alone disturbed the dark—now the glare of electric light that emblazoned the tree-tops, made plain, too, the manifold footprints of the crowd.

Jack had been in training for three months. He had enlisted as a private, but from the first his aptitude for the service was such that Emma parted with her other mortgage in order that he might qualify. The suspicion of a moustache which, according to regulations, streaked his upper lip, gave the finishing touch to his new manhood. Five feet eleven in his stockings and his tendency to weediness finally corrected by military exercise, made him one of the picked men of the corps. He was the youngest officer at the mess and

a favourite. With the men his rise from the ranks and his consideration for the members of his platoon were both in his favour.

Colonel Temple meeting and talking with Major Majoribanks on the day when he participated in his first important manoeuvre, the two agreed that “Winchester had the instinct.”

CHAPTER II.

There was a light variable wind, a wind that fluttered flags and pennants and which every now and again flung itself against canvas and cording so that they strained and rattled; a wind that puffed smoke in squalls above the tops of military kitchens and sometimes sent it down tin chimneys, where it added little to the joys of the commissariat. It was a wind which kept the white clouds coming and going across the sky, jostled the branches of trees, made sudden embarrassing dabs at ladies' furbelows and fluttered their ribbons. On it the brown leaves danced as though they thought to recover their hectic autumn . . . and mischievous as it was, it blew an added rose, June morning wise, into the cheeks of the very young. Moreover, there was youth in plenty for the wind to blow upon.

It was a great day on the Heights. Somebody was giving Jack's regiment its "Colours", and the whole camp had turned out to watch the ceremony. As chance would have it, the Dean of the Medical School had been chosen to make the presentation . . . the "Meds" were out in full force. People had come, too, by train and by motor from all the countryside . . . glad of the occasion to have a peep at the boys in khaki.

The regiment stood at attention opposite the saluting base . . . long steady lines of organized humanity . . . heads erect, carriage and figures begotten of training, faces tanned by health and weather . . . every man clean as a whistle.

At a distance and all along the hill other regiments and parts of regiments to the number of several thousands were grouped in waiting. The tent doors, the long canvas lanes, the open spaces were all crowded. Military cooks, their gray sleeves rolled above their elbows . . . orderlies rubbing their hands ferociously, trying to get the stain of grease out after their bout with tanned leathers . . . delivery boys gaping admiringly from beneath empty baskets . . . chauffeurs, drivers, stablemen, hangers-on, and followers of every description; with women and children out of all counting. Even a harpy or two from the eating-stalls on the road stuck a frowsy head around the fence posts of the compound. The guard-room windows glittered with envious eyes. In the middle of a sunny opening a yellow dog, undaunted by human self-sufficiency hunted one hind leg and then another in pursuit of his own familiar foe.

At three o'clock the officers took up their position in front. At three-fifteen a thousand bayonets swung to position to the order of command. The

bugles sounded and the regiment came to order.

Then, the Dean standing with one hand on the staff of the drooping “Colours”, his great voice, which even the wind could not waste, booming out sonorously over the massed heads and the set faces, spoke to the men long and earnestly on the subject of their duty to their bodies as part of the national asset . . . he told them that he was proud of them . . . Canada was proud of them . . . the empire trusted its cause to their keeping. He raised the flag and handed it to the Colonel. He wished them all “God-speed” and a safe return home.

“Home is where the heart is. Then, whether living or dead, a true man who gives his life for his country must always come safe back home. . . .”

The regiment replied with cheers. The crowd broke into a patriotic roar. The massed bands raised the strain “Canada” . . . then “God Save the King” . . . and it was over. Jack’s regiment broke rank. The whole scene melted into a many-coloured confusion.

Emma stood between Tom and George, in a good position. Most of the time there was a mist before her eyes. Most of the time her ears were deaf to everything but an inward ringing. It was true then. He was going!

Through all the long months since that first August day when Rance Thompson had bumped into her on the road, and told her that war had been declared, she had kept on saying to herself that it couldn’t be possible . . . the war would be stopped soon, somehow . . . President Wilson’s notes would take effect . . . the British drive would finish it . . .

But no, nothing had happened . . . nothing but more killing and more killing and more killing! More military posters flaming on barns and fences. More recruiting officers tramping up and down the land telling the farmers and the farmers’ sons that there is no place on British soil for the slacker!

Month after month she had seen the boys march away, alike from the doors of big farm houses and little log cabins. Month after month as she went to the meetings of her Women’s Institute she had found more women and more women in black.

Now it was her turn. All this time she had said to herself that he wouldn’t, he couldn’t go . . . and yet all this time deep down, something that defied argument, had told her that he could and he would. And he . . . he was her own making!

A girlish laugh rang out—high and scornful. Emma jumped. She felt George jump, too, as though a bullet had hit him. Last of all she saw also.

That girl—that bare-headed girl; yes, that one pushing her way through the crowd and looking back smiling, she did it! Did what? Took off her hat, ripped the white feather out of it, and flung the feather straight across George's shoulder . . . it lay there now, the long ostrich curl of it touching his collar.

For a moment Emma was transfixed . . . the feather seemed to have cast a spell upon her. Then breaking in on her own torpor with a great effort of will, she snatched the tricky, mocking thing and stuffed it into the front of her jacket.

After his first movement, George, too, had stiffened . . . he gave no further sign, not even a tremor. It was plain that Tom had seen nothing. Who had seen . . . had anybody but herself seen? There were hundreds on hundreds of eyes to see . . . and yet? The laughter and the talk went on around them.

Jack came striding up very straight and good to look at in his khaki and leather leggings.

“Well, you three! I’ve been trying for a good half hour to hypnotize you into looking at a poor lieutenant of infantry—but no, not an eye among you for any but his Dean-ship. Wasn’t he swell? Say, Mum,” slipping his hand into Emma’s arm, “I’m coming home. Just got leave this minute. Anything good to eat out our way?”

She laughed back at him . . . thankful that the boy in him was still rampant.

CHAPTER III.

By a quarter to seven the church was crowded . . . a sea of women's hats; and in the trough of the sea, the heads of men, who sat uncovered.

It was a wet night in January . . . pavements running and glittering with water under electric lights that threw long shadows of trees and poles across the widths of radiance. The snow of a few days back had narrowed down to an icy rim that outlined the gutters. Rain fell through a steaming fog which promised frost before morning.

Inside, what with the mass of people, what with overcoats and umbrellas, odours of wet cloth and damp leather mingling with steam heat and body heat, the atmosphere was well-nigh intolerable.

The regiment was having a military choir night and an address by Jack's rector. A man in khaki sat at the organ. Later on, other men in khaki would occupy the stalls of the choristers. Throughout the congregation there was a plentiful sprinkling of the king's colour.

The organist had a big touch and a vivacious manner, with but the faintest conception of style in church music. He was playing something flagrantly sentimental; and heaping the sentimental upon sentimental, he sent it pulsating through the building . . . it suggested a mixture of tinsel angels and dissolving views of sweethearts . . . it aroused belated anxieties on the subject of home and mother. Men grew restive under it. Women sank into romantic lethargy and meditated not so much on their sins as on their sorrows.

Presently the voluntary died down and the processional began. The west door of the church was thrown open and along with a rush of damp fresh air, the khaki-clad choir entered and passed up the aisle, two and two . . . hymn-books at attention.

They were a straight, clean-cut healthy lot; the best blood in Canada. They marched well. Their voices were sweet though untutored. For all that the door was open, their entrance made the breathlessness of the place still more breathless. That was because everything they did was touched to a curious finality by the intensity with which they did it . . . because the moment had the peculiar character things have that must soon be over.

The rector in his canonicals, whose white of surplice and red and green of hood and stole made a blur of ecclesiastical colour that mingled vividly with the neutral-tinted rank and file, walked alone at the rear of the numbers.

Not a man who was not devoted to the rector. His teaching was of a right manly sort . . . what Canada expected in the way of honourable conduct from her best blood; how it was being entrusted to them this task of showing the world the high place their country holds in the history of civilization . . . what God expected, since by long process of natural law they had risen out of and through many forms into the form called Man; a race so high that it had achieved the Son of Man himself. How in view of these things they must be true comrades one with the other. How they must look upon woman with holy eyes and that chiefly and before all things because woman, the sex itself, is man's completion; the vessel of life, her body called upon to entertain the Holy Spirit Himself while another body, a new temple of the Spirit, is in process of becoming. That to take a woman without love for her person and reverence for her office in its relation to the steep hill-climbing of the race, is, in effect, to offend the Creator who has made love alone the basis of creation; that such an act—and this on account of the unending chain of cause and effect it starts into being—may well be the supreme blasphemy of which Christ said that it could not be forgiven—that is, it could not be set aside or done away with—in this world or in the world to come.

To this teaching, Norman Brooks brought an eloquence which was not so much the eloquence of the orator overwhelming with floods of persuasive language the intelligence of men, as it was an unchallengeable perception of the relationship of things, the exquisite rightness of word . . . the gift of the poet.

With the first strains of the processional the emotion of the multitude brimmed over. The hymn was that beloved of evangelical communions —“Onward, Christian Soldiers”. The words were set to a march rhythm and both choir and congregation sang them with military enthusiasm. Was it the “Cross of Jesus”, or was it the standards of the Empire that gleamed that night invisible before them? Was it “Satan’s host”, or was it the armies of William of Hohenzollern that fled at the sound of their song?

For the moment Emma was not troubled by any such subtleties of questioning. Her voice struck out bravely and with single-mindedness, where she stood with George in a pew in a corner of the transept. The spirit of martyrdom was on her . . . she was facing her fire. For Jack’s sake she must stifle the very thought of cowardice. She dare not moan or cry. So she stopped her mouth with music.

Only once did her resolution falter. It was when she looked up from the page and with dry eyes saw his golden head high above the heads of his

comrades, where he walked in the forefront of the procession and his feet on the first step of the chancel stairs gave him height above those who followed. He was paler than usual. She realized across the spaces the scarlet of his mouth. She knew how his eyes shone. Then he mounted the steps, he passed the first row of stalls, he disappeared. She sang on.

There were two flags in the church . . . the Canadian flag on the wall back of the pulpit, the “Jack” on the lectern. As the service proceeded the rector went up into the pulpit to preach. His figure in its white robe was thrown out and emphasized against the scarlet of the national bunting. His hands, peculiarly expressive and emotional hands when their owner was in the expressive and emotional frame of mind seemed that night to be themselves separate and distinct entities . . . they scorned . . . they pitied . . . they prayed . . . they besought. It is said of Savonarola that he had hands of like character.

While the last verse of the hymn was being sung, Mr. Brooks stood looking out quietly over the congregation. When the hymn was finished, still as quietly he uttered the invocation. Then he took the Bible that lay on the pulpit desk into his hands, holding it as one holds something infinitely precious . . . and announced the text. All this while those who watched him saw that his face shone. Was that, too, by reason of the great contrast, or was it the radiance of sudden inspiration . . . a radiance that was to kindle and become a great light as more and more the spirit of the man poured through and illuminated his complex and responsive being?

The preacher told the story of Moses and the rod that was a rod in his hand, which became a serpent when he cast it upon the ground, then a rod again when he stooped and laid his hand upon it: the story of the transforming power of touch . . . the touch of love which is the touch of Man.

“Historically,” he said, “this account is no more true than the Witches of Macbeth are true. Shakespeare used a symbol to describe the process of ambition that broke down the soul of Macbeth. This early master of drama in like manner uses a symbol, but with a diametrically opposite purpose. What he wishes to show is how, by obedience to a high vision, a man became strong and wise to lead a people out of slavery.

“There is a rod in his hand. Will he make that rod an emblem of the power that enslaves . . . make of it the serpent of Pharaoh? Fear lurks in such a sceptre . . . the records of the Egyptian dynasties are records of blood . . . kings themselves fled before the serpent sceptre . . . even Pharaoh is uneasy

on his throne. Will he make it the rod of a shepherd? The rod of a shepherd is the symbol of love . . . it brings power of a great peace to him who wields it, and to those who know its guidance. Let him go not with the sign of fear, but with the sign of love unto Israel!

“Comrades, what is that in your hand? Men of Canada, why are you going forth from your homes? Is it to break forever the rule of Pharaoh . . . ?

“For centuries the world has shuddered and cried under the blows of the lash. Forced to make bricks without straw . . . labour divorced from love that is art, art that is joy of the craftsman in his craft . . . how the labourers have groaned! A great wrong, a wrong ancient as Nineveh and ruthless as Rome has wrought woe on the world of workers . . . woe which in these latter times has culminated in this war that now forces husbands from their wives and sons from the mothers that bore them. What do you hold in your hands against this ancient and persistent wrong?

“Comrades, the problem is cosmic. Not the Hun but mankind is responsible for the tragedy that darkens the eyes of our women. God is calling from the sunset of an olden day nearly done . . . day of tyranny . . . day setting in the night of world-woe . . . night that will break at length into the new day of the democracy of the brotherhood of the Shepherd’s staff, if, ah! only if . . . you go forth as Moses went forth against Pharaoh.

“The thing that you are about to do will have no eternal value unless the Shepherd’s sign is your sign of leadership. I bid you go consecrated to the new freedom of which Moses dreamed. I comfort your women.

“Go forth to make the human race free from the serpent symbol. Strike for the new democracy. Go, and as you go cry: ‘Our blood calls from the ground against all tyranny; Our blood be the pledge that the world shall be free to labour in love.’

“Go! And as you go, hold high the symbol of the shepherd!”

CHAPTER IV.

“Tom! Tell me, what do you think about George?”

“What about him?”

“It seems to me he’s awfully haggard-looking . . . and he’s so restless.”

Tom stretched his long legs and thrust both his great knotted hands into his yellow beard, turning the ends up toward his mouth, a way he had at times, when he was thinking.

“You’ve noticed him, haven’t you?” Emma continued.

“Yes,” said Tom laconically. There was a pause. Then: “I guess it’s got him!”

“You think he’s going?”

“I do.”

“But, Tom, how can he? After all he’s said? Why I’ve heard him say a dozen times that if he saw a man coming in at that door to kill him, and either had to kill or to be killed, the biggest hope he has in the world is that the old jungle instinct wouldn’t get him . . . that the man in him would stay uppermost.”

Tom grunted into his upturned beard; but not the grunt of interruption, but of comment. And Emma went on:

“With George war is murder, nothing but murder; its being legalized doesn’t make any difference. He calls the whole thing we are going through to-day the Nemesis of Louis Fourteenth’s frightfulness on the Rhine . . . and Napoleon’s frightfulness in Prussia . . . and Bismarck’s frightfulness in 1870 . . . and England’s frightfulness in letting Turkey have her way in the Balkans. Every bit of it the result and the outcome of wars. He believes that other wars will follow this war—that no civilization founded on blood will stand—and that no religion founded on blood will stand either. He believes that the Christianity we have now, is slipping away because it was founded on the idea of a blood sacrifice, rather than upon the idea of a living spirit . . . the civilization we have known will pass, is passing, and that for practically speaking the same reason. You’ve heard him talk that way, haven’t you?”

Tom nodded.

“George has a curious idea, Tom. He calls Christ ‘The Great Conqueror’ and he says he believes a day will come when there will be a Christ nation on the earth, just as there are and have been Christ individuals. That nation he thinks will give itself absolute just as Christ did . . . go down with the living Word on its lips, but without striking a single blow. He says it won’t be until then that the world will know anything about real conquest.”

“Yes,” said Tom, “I’ve heard him . . . he’s said all that to me, and he believes it, too, every word. But it’s got him just the same. You watch. When he goes he’ll be going against every hope and every principle that’s in him—but he’s going all right.”

“You don’t think it was that girl out at the camp that day, do you?”

“Not a bit of it! George has as much red blood in him as any fellow I know, and a thing like that from a bit of a girl hurts, you bet, but it wouldn’t send him. Then the other day when I was in to the foundry, you remember. We were in the street car together, George and I, and a couple of chaps in khaki got in and sat next. By and by, one of them leaned across and slapped George on the back. Called him a ‘slacker’ out loud so that all the car could hear . . . said it was to keep such dirty riff-raff as him above sod that he and his partner had to go over. That hurt, too. But that wouldn’t send him either.”

“Well, what would?”

“For one thing, the people down home are saying things to the old doctor. George can stand a good deal but when it comes to his father he’s apt to go up in the air. That isn’t the whole of it, though. My belief is the poor fellow has read so much and thought so much and argued so much that he doesn’t know his right hand from his left . . . he’s just clinging on now to something deeper down in him than anything he knows about. If you ask me what he believes with his head, I’ll answer you that he believes just as you’ve said he believes—in the power of a living ‘Word’ even when it costs you your life to say it. But if you ask me what I think George Cummings is going to do—then I’ll answer that he’s going. And he’s going to fight!”

Emma tightened her fingers on the arm of her chair.

“It’s got him, Emma; it’s got him!” Tom whispered. Then in a louder tone: “Not like it got Jack. Jack went into it from the very first moment on the old, old lines; slap bang for the honour and glory of his country; for his knightly duty to the down-trodden and the oppressed. Nor the way it got Broadhurst either—because it was the destiny of the British People—‘God’s Chosen’ that got him. Poor old Parson, ain’t he certain? No, not like them two! But it’s the way it got Matthewson, and the way it got Brooks, and the

way it got you, Emma, and me—and thousands of others. The upsetting of theories. The push to the wall. The press of it and the persuasion.

“George wants to keep faith with himself, but he can’t. I guess there aren’t many of us that can. I believe it takes a Jesus Christ not to go with the crowd. The crowd! That’s it! It’s the herd instinct most of all, I fancy . . . he thinks of that plain of draggled slime from Switzerland to the North Sea; that blood-soaked line where so many of the boys have gone down . . . that’s where his shoe pinches!

“All this talk we see in the newspapers about irreconcilable ideals—Anglo-Saxon democracy against Prussian militarism—is buncum to him, but it wasn’t buncum to them . . . they died for it! Yes, his pals have died, chaps he knows and chaps he never set eyes on—pals just the same—fought and died there on the line to keep the Germans back. If I know George Cummings, he’s saying to himself, ‘By God! if it costs me my eternal soul I’m going to lend a hand for their sakes . . . no dream of killing war by war had got me, I’m no homeopathist . . . it can’t be done!’ The pure quill for George. It’s all that that’s got him, Emma. And it’s something more . . . it’s Jack!”

Emma turned paler.

“‘What about your world?’ I asked when we were talking the thing over. And he kinda laughed an’ said: ‘My world? Say, Tom, do you suppose I thought I made it?’”

“Will he enlist soon, do you think?” Emma asked.

“He enlisted yesterday,” was Tom’s reply.

PART IX

CHAPTER I.

One night Emma dreamed a hateful dream. She dreamed that Jack had to go away suddenly, and never said good-bye.

Awaking out of that misery some time before it was dawn, she jumped out of bed, lighted her lamp, pulled her stockings to her knees, and wrapping herself in the old gray shawl, sat down to write him a letter to be opened at sea.

It was a difficult letter to write because she knew it would be the only letter he would have for a long time, and she wanted it to be a letter he could read and re-read and never tire of—one that would, perhaps, cheer him to know that he had—one that would show him clearly the love she had for him, the pride she had in him: that almost worshipful love and pride which had followed him all his days!

For the first time she herself spoke to him about the circumstances of his birth. The tragedy of his father's death she had, of course, recounted to him as soon as he was old enough to understand . . . but of the effect of that tragedy upon herself, and she hoped upon him, she had made no mention. Now she poured it all out. The terrible first shock and her reaction to the sense of motherhood. The subsequent agony of grief and self-preoccupation. How gradually he, her unborn child, had comforted her, stimulated her to the effort of those lonely months; been with her in soul she firmly believed even before his soul had inter-penetrated the flesh. What he had cost her in every way and in everything, she told him . . . not as a burden but as a bond . . . because she wanted him to know that if we love much, much love will be ours. And oh, what he had come to mean to her!

She spilled the choicest of her treasures for him—telling him that gradually, year by year, as he had become more and more like his father, he had more and more caught up and held his father's place—as the lover of her soul. How now, at this moment, he renewed for her the old romantic consecration to a loved one's career, which had been the best part of her life with his father before he was born.

Things had not turned out as they wished or expected. His studies had been cut short, but they were not on that account ended. The Medical School had promised to keep his standing for him. What he already knew of surgery and medical science might make him now, right off, even though he had not thought fit to join the Medical Corps, more useful than he knew. He would, he must, gain experience of many kinds. When the war was over that

experience would stand him in good stead in the profession to which he was dedicated.

She commended him to the God within . . . praying that the divine guardian of his soul would keep him and help him in all temptations of the spirit as well as in all temptations of the flesh . . . that he might put away pride and contempt and anger as he put away grosser things. She bade him remember the enemy . . . called upon him to realize that each individual man opposite him in the struggle, has love and necessity back of him, too, is the victim of the same catastrophe as he himself . . . that in all probability not one man he would meet is, in his own person, in the very slightest degree responsible for this horror that has darkened the world.

She kissed him and she dedicated him anew!

When Emma had finished her letter she watched the sun rise over the hills, and felt thankful to know that her boy was still with her—that the new day did not find her desolate.

CHAPTER II.

“Mother, I must go!”

Indifferent to the push and the sway of the crowd, deaf to laughter and to crying, they stood in the midst of the welter of things on the station platform — clinging together. That one spot of sun-baked plank was their only raft on an unknown sea; and they were aware that it, too, must be swept from under. All that they knew of time and the years was gathered up and centred in an instant, and they had scarcely breathed upon the instant when it was over. One thing held and one only . . . love held!

Stronger than he, since at last the parting had come, her arms were the first to loosen. Calm as when she had kissed him in his cradle, she kissed him now; then with a smile she put him from her. He turned away, gained the steps of a car, swung himself up and was lost in the crowded interior. A moment later he leaned out of a window. And straightway the train was moving.

Afterwards when Tom, who knew her need, had made an excuse and left her; when she could escape from Mr. Broadhurst and Sarah, she went straight through the town without seeing anything . . . stopping and staring in at shop windows and knowing nothing of their spring finery . . . walking in the park where lilacs were budded and magnolias were in bloom and catching sight neither of bud nor of blossom . . . rattling out home in the trolley, over “Pons Asinorum” and past Jack’s birch tree, blind even to the May-time dancer.

She tried to remember, but her brain seemed to have gone wrong . . . she could remember nothing; nothing that they said or did in the short while they were together. She had no picture even; except that she saw his long brown hands, split and roughened at the tips of the fingers, where they held to the ledge of the car window.

Then, by and by, coming out of the mist of things, there was a voice:

“Money! What’s money, girl! Go you to them as has it! I’ve naught else to give . . . my boy was killed last month in Flanders!”

Who said those words? Some one in the crowd? She couldn’t remember. . . .

CHAPTER III.

The summer went by hot, lonely and sad; and after a while the goldenrod and the asters bloomed again and were dusty.

She had a postal card from Montreal, and later a letter from Halifax telling of the trip down: Doctor Cummings had come with them all the way to see George embark . . . the dear old chap was hard hit but no one would know it, he was the life of the pullman . . . good old George being a corporal had to ride in an ordinary car; however he and the doctor had seen him a good part of the time . . . Colonel Temple was a man with a heart.

Before he sailed she managed to get a couple of letters to him as well as a telegram.

His next, which reached her the very last day of May, was from England. They had had a fine trip with merry incidents . . . a couple of thousand fellows on a single ship means something doing. They had reached Liverpool on a Sunday morning at two o'clock. Some anxiety with submarines when they entered the Irish Sea, but though several were reported they got through without seeing any. A special had carried the officers to Shornecliffe. He and George had been able to see a lot of each other on board but not so much now . . . things were different. However, they could still chum up when they were on leave. England was beautiful in its May dress, with all the green and the blossoms and the flowers; tiny fields set off by hedges, thatched cottages, and splendid old houses with twisted chimneys set back in park lands . . . the "stately homes of England," he guessed, if she remembered her Mrs. Hemans. The country was a delightful surprise to those who had never seen it before. For himself he was thrilled most by the thought that he was in Shakespeare's land . . . the land of poets and of heroes. What a little scrap of a place it was, so small he fancied he could hear the sound of the surf all round it; and yet how it craved the sacrifice of its sons . . . might be going to ask sacrifice of him who was two generations off, a sort of a great-great grandson. Well, he was ready. After all, it isn't life that's so precious; it's the flowering of life, isn't it? . . . some great work, some achievement.

"I don't know much about it yet, Mother," he wrote, "but I'm sure this is the great adventure. I'm sure, Mother . . . I feel it coming."

His address was:

*Lieutenant John Winchester,
Canadian Expeditionary Corps,
Shornecliffe, England.*

CHAPTER IV.

George wrote a cheerful letter, too. He and Jack had been having a weekend in London . . . great time!

Everything in London full up. They stopped at the "Maple Leaf" club . . . slept on couches because there wasn't a bed to be had in the place. She wasn't to believe all that story about Fleet Street and the Strand being blown up . . . nothing wrong so far as he could see . . . the Germans must have been fooling. How was this for a couple of hayseeds . . . They'd been to the Strand Theatre. In the lobby, he, George had shoved their tickets up to a small insignificant-looking man in a blue uniform. "I beg your pardon," said the man, "but isn't there a mistake somewhere?" Thinking they were in wrong, they looked around, and again George pushed the tickets at him and said: "No. Isn't this all right?" The man began begging pardon again, when they became aware of the fact that he was a naval officer. Wow! Mumbling out something which they meant for an apology, they disappeared up the stairs. End of the first lesson.

Funny, wasn't it? He'd heard worse, though. One fellow told him that he saw a man go into the Hotel Cecil and hand his valise to a General of the Republican Guard. Natural just the same . . . over home, except for "Shriners" and "Odd Fellows" one didn't expect to see people going around in fancy dress. A fellow isn't born knowing!

The biggest thing for the last thing: She was to tell Sarah that the other day out at camp he had run across an old Irish-Yankee who had enlisted out of Maine by way of Nova Scotia. They had got into conversation and had a long talk. Who did she think he was? . . . why "Pat the Drone" and none other! George told him all about Sarah . . . her marriage and everything, and Pat said he didn't know she was alive. He had a yarn as long as your arm about why he had never written. Hard luck and the devil of a wife, so far as George could make out. Well, the wife was dead now. Sarah might expect to hear from him any old time.

"P.S.—You are to tell Sarah that Pat says, 'How ever near be one's coat, his shirt is nearer!' Maybe she can get something out of that, but if she can she's smarter than I am. In any case don't forget to send her the message."

CHAPTER V.

One day there came a letter which was dated from Northern France, early in July.

They had been pushed through rapidly, he wrote, and sent across . . . the "Great Drive" was on. She would be glad to hear that though George was not in his platoon, they were still in the same battalion.

He spoke of the difference between the dark luxuriant green of England and the green of this lighter, more sketchy country . . . it must have been beautiful when the long roads were lined with poplar trees and the grass was full of flowers; the kind of thing the painter Corot did; she remembered, she'd seen them in prints and coloured reproductions on the schoolroom walls.

But there were no poplars now; no roads either, except the roads our fellows built at night from the bricks of fallen houses . . . and those the Germans blew to pieces next day with their "Silent Lizzies". There was no grass even . . . nothing but miles and miles of land blown into shell-holes, farm houses shot away to skeletons, churches so bleached and battered they looked like sick people staring strangely, as though their empty windows were delirious eyes. Oh, he could tell her horrible things, but he wouldn't.

Here where they were, the massing of troops was tremendous. At present they were being held in local reserve, but everybody believed they'd get into the advance trenches before long.

"Life in the trenches," he wrote, "is exciting at first, but one gets used to it and then it's as monotonous as a Methodist Sunday."

Where he was now dugouts were impossible. The position was a marsh. Trenches couldn't be dug, they had to be erected; all that was possible was to raise parapets of sand-bags above ground-level; and repair them nightly, seeing that the Germans scattered them by day. Now that he was finally into it, he expected that she and Tom knew what was actually going on at the front better than he did.

She would be sorry to hear that Lieutenant Francis, that chap George was always talking about, from out his way, was hit the other day by a big shell that took his head clean off his body . . . they couldn't find it afterwards, it must have been blown into dust. He was buried with a lot of other poor fellows, in a spot about half a mile from the advance trenches.

The “Last Post” was wonderful . . . he would never forget it. The mourners—every chance passerby was one of them; the intoning of the chaplain, fortunately he knew the words by heart, he never could have seen to read them—the subdued orders; the volley’s last salute. It was too far behind hell’s mouth for the devils to hear. Then after the volley the hands of the firing-party came down on the butts of the inverted rifles, and all heads were bent again.

“‘Last Post’ is as beautiful, Mother,” he wrote, “as the ‘Dead March’ . . . more beautiful out here, because it is more suited to the death men die. Do you remember the day I stood up in school and recited the ‘Burial of Sir John Moore’? Little we thought then. . . . But it is all so different! There wasn’t anybody ‘alone with his glory’ in this crowd. I love to think that ‘Last Post’ sounded out over all the countless dead in their nameless graves—Allies and Germans alike—and bound them all into a sort of brotherhood Mr. Brooks talks about . . . a brotherhood of men who have struggled to do the thing they thought right in the best way they knew how!”

By that she would see that he hadn’t forgotten what she wrote in her letter. He kept that letter in his tunic pocket . . . it was always with him. Perhaps—he hoped she wouldn’t think him superstitious—perhaps it would keep him safe and bring him back to her. What a son he would be if he only got the chance!

A second letter from France followed quickly. He had been under fire. He wrote:

“Having gotten to the trench and posted sentries, the other party, who had been guiding us, left, and our job began. Each man takes a turn of sentry go, one hour by night and two hours by day; and in our trench there were four double sentries. I moved about in a position where I could best supervise and help the men. There was a dug-out in this ditch—not a very good one—but I was in it for two hours and had some sleep.

“The men have to fire over the parapets and at the same time keep an eye on the ground in front, to see if there is anything doing. Of course if there’s anything special going, the whole crowd stand to their rifles. The first night (Monday) was comparatively quiet, our guns going the strongest. This condition of things lasted until Tuesday afternoon, about four o’clock. Then there were three terrific explosions which shook the ground tremendously, rapid firing was started by both sides, and the Germans gave it to us good and plenty. Then ours got going; they were wonderful, away better than theirs. The Germans came over until about two hundred yards from us and

from that point came some further. They did not come over opposite us . . . I will say no more. This continued until six next morning, and we were relieved on Wednesday night. The whole business wasn't half so bad as I thought, and I'm thankful we had the show we had. Except for you, I don't care now what happens."

"She would want to know, he continued, that there was little hate out there. New fellows like himself were apt to be a bit fiery, but the old hands had got all the hate knocked out of them. She was right . . . everybody feels that everybody else is in the same box . . . besides one can't hate a man after one has fought him; the suffering is too great. He believed the people over home really hated more than the men did. A fellow who'd been a prisoner and who had escaped, had told him that he had seen German soldiers when they were actually being driven back to the trenches at the point of the rifle; and he had heard them cry out: 'Jesus have mercy! Jesus save us!' . . . After that one threw anything like hatred to the winds. One just did one's duty."

Enclosed there was a note from George. It began: "If you could only have seen Jack standing on the wharf at Folkestone the day we came off . . . a matinee-idol isn't in it with him! The English ladies picked him out as the youngest officer of 'Ours' and they just showered him with stuff: books, fruit, flowers, all sorts . . . the bridal showers the girls have out home would turn green with envy. Jack stood it pretty well . . . but it was going some, believe me!

"Tough youngster, this kid of ours, Mrs. Winchester . . . seems as though he were made of whip-cord. I'd like you to watch him fraternizing with the old chaps who've been in from the start; drinking in their tales of blood and bravery. He'll come out of this with a V.C. or I lose my guess . . . soldiering seems to be his born business. Popular? Well, I should say! Not a man I know that wouldn't follow him to Berlin . . . that is, if he could get there!

"Seriously, though, don't worry any more than you can help. It's not dangerous once you get into the trench; the trouble is in getting in. Enfiladed fire from the snipers is the worst. But the British have learned caution if they haven't learned anything else . . . none of us are throwing away our lives these days, I can tell you. . . ."

CHAPTER VI.

“Somewhere in France,”

August 10th, 1916.

Dear Tom:

You went at me so hard before I left home about my being sure to write and tell you how I felt the first time I was under fire, that now I have been under, I suppose I must “’fess up”. . . . don’t show this letter to Mrs. Winchester though—if you do, you and I will break off diplomatic relations without any further parley.

Of our coming out you have heard from Jack. He tells me that he sent you a long letter describing the country and telling you how Canadian things looked to us at first in our part of the war zone. Villages badly mauled by shells, but with their street signs still sticking, and changed from French into English. Rickety buildings with half their windows torn out, floating awnings over the side walks to throw a hint of shadow with “Meals at all Hours” or “Tea and Cakes” painted into the canvas. Canadian and U.S. papers for sale in the shop windows—might have been Glencoe or Thamesville or any place on the old G.T.R., knocked into smithereens by an invading army!

Well, by slow marches we advanced nearer and nearer the line. My dates are a bit shaky, so I won’t try anything of that sort. We are in the thick of it now; that’s certain!

For awhile life was absolute hell for me, Tom; let me tell you why. On the night of the 21st of last month I was sent with a squad under Lieutenant Saunders as a covering party for a half dozen or so of the C.A.M.C. who were ordered to an advance dressing-post half a mile behind the trenches. It was fairly foggy—a light mist over the nearby fields, and the distance like a cloud bank.

Well, we were stumbling along a road dotted with shell-holes, when suddenly there came a sharp whistle. Saunders shouted: “Get down!” but the warning wasn’t needed. The whole company with two exceptions—myself and another fellow—flopped instantan. We, that is the other exception and myself, apparently lost our heads; we were too dumbfounded to stir. Then about fifty yards to our left came a deafening report, a thud and the sound of something rising—dirt, I guess, out of a field. I was paralyzed;

couldn't have made a move to save my soul, let alone the insignificant thing I call my body. Somebody grabbed me by the leg and shouted. I don't know what he shouted, but whatever it was it set me going . . . I melted. Three shells followed the first, in quick succession—their screech as they flew over was the weirdest thing you could imagine, it made me sick at my stomach. I wanted to get up and run and I couldn't. Cold sweat broke out all over me and I was all pins and needles.

Directly after the shell burst, Saunders let out three sharp blasts of the whistle and the men sprang to their feet like "Jack Robinson". How we managed to stick together passes me, but stick we did, somehow . . . the whole thing was like a nightmare, my knees felt silly and my feet were so far away I didn't know they belonged to me. Soon the shelling ceased. I was the most miserable man in Europe—I thought every one in the squad was looking at me for a quitter; I expected each minute to hear Saunders tell me I was a disgrace to my stripes. But no! Nothing happened! And presently we arrived at a shell-smashed billet—the cellar of a once fair-sized house. That was the dressing-post. The trip back was comparatively quiet and I was able to get through without a repetition of that kind of stage-fright. Eight days after, our battalion occupied German first-line trenches.

It is almost impossible for me to describe the time in between. I was at the point of a nervous break-down, I guess; at any rate, I know that I was morose and ugly, the ugliest chap out of Canada. But who could help it with that gnawing, feeling always inside . . . the feeling that when the time came, I'd turn coward? For the life of me, I couldn't help it. It was just sheer force of will that held me back from running when I heard those shells come screaming over—funniest ever! I didn't run though; I stayed all right. And now I'm used to it.

We are pushing them back, old man; I do believe it. The word here is that we've gone forward three thousand yards in the last twenty-four hours. Not three thousand on a stretch, you know; we've no continuous line . . . just a succession of posts and patrols in touch with each other, changing position as chance offers. However, you may know more about what we're doing than I do.

One thing I do know about, though, and that's what we're passing through while we push them. Ever since the "Drive"

began in July, our guns have been at it. No set battle, simply the “daily hate” to keep Fritz busy. And now that we have got them on the run, we know what the “daily hate” meant to them—we know what it was that was happening.

Tom, their front line—the part we’ve been through at all events—is just one big open grave . . . a grave where the quick and the dead have been rooming together. If I know anything, the Germans are being conquered this time by their own dead more than by anything else. No such thing as getting the bodies to the rear; no such thing as a decent burial; the dead have simply been tossed out of the trench by the men inside, and then tossed back again—arms, legs, hands, feet—tossed back again by the next shell that found them. Once or twice we have come across a grave dug in the side of a trench. But that wasn’t much good either. One of ours has screeched and the poor chap has stuck his hand out. The last salute! By God, it’s pathetic!

All communication trenches hereabouts have vanished. The whole place is blown into shell-holes, some with water in them and drowned men at the bottom of the water, swollen and fearful. The dead on the surface are dried and wizened like mummies. In one place I saw a man sitting cross-legged, tailor fashion—just the lower half of him—the upper had gone on a long, long journey. I thought I’d seen about all there was to see in the cellar down at the old Medical. But I’ve changed my opinion. Say, Tom, there are places where the human flesh is so pounded into the soil that they say it won’t grow anything for a generation. Do you remember that poem of Walt Whitman’s the Dean is so fond of, where he says:

*Oh, how can it be that the ground does not sicken?
How can you be alive, you growths of spring?
How can you furnish health, you blood of herbs, roots, orchards,
grain?
Are they not continually putting distempered corpses within you?
Is not every continent worked over and over with sour dead?
Where have you disposed of their carcasses?*

• • • • •

What chemistry!

• • • • •

*Now I am terrified at the Earth! it is that calm and patient,
It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions,
It turns harmless and stainless on its axis, with such endless
successions of diseas'd corpses,
It distils such exquisite winds out of such infused fetor,
It renews with such unwitting looks, its prodigal, annual,
sumptuous crops,
It gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such leavings
from them at last.*

I find myself saying those lines over and over again to myself out here. Good old Mother Earth! It will take her more than a dog's age to get her "chemistry" up to working point again in this country!

To-night Jack is taking out a scouting party. After a good deal of trouble, I got exchanged so that I could go too. The Germans are about five hundred yards away. There's a deserted artillery post about three hundred yards off. We shall have to look to it, not to get taken prisoners.

Now while I have time though, there's something more important than all this I want to talk about.

Tom, let nobody deceive himself any more that war is somehow after all more ennobling than peace, that a man has got more of the right stuff in him when he wears the king's colour than he has when he is in civilian's clothes. All rot! Life is all of a piece, I tell you. The man's the thing—not the circumstances. A fellow has no better chance of making good here in the trenches, than he has back there on the farm or in the factory. See what a narrow escape I had from going under! I guess it was only the good wheat of old Kent County, and the thought of that blessed

governor of mine that kept me straight those days; and those two things would keep me straight most places I fancy. It's the food that's gone into a man and the love that comes out, that count; they are the things that give him strength for his moment. And a man's moment comes any old time, anywhere!

I've seen wonderful things out here and beautiful things of course; but then I'd seen wonderful things and beautiful things in the hospital at home, and the Medical, too, for that matter. And if it comes to self-sacrifice and daring? why there's my old Dad! Only a country doctor in a corduroy road section in Canada . . . and yet when I think of his forty years' work out there . . . of the blizzards and the below-zero nights . . . of the death he's faced from every known kind of disease . . . Of the people he's cured and comforted . . . of the years and years he's fought for better feeding and better living conditions and better education and more decent manhood and womanhood . . . when I think of all that, Tom, this thing—but there, I mustn't!

It isn't so much the horror of war that gets me as it is the damned foolishness of having such horrors. Talk about your "Cheerful Tommies" . . . I tell you, Tom, the boys of yesterday are the old men of to-day . . . no more boyhood for them as long as the world shall last . . . they're like Dante in the "Divina Commedia"—they've been in hell—from now on men shall know them by the smell of their garments. Think of them as carrying on just because they hope by shouldering this thing now, they can save others from having to shoulder it later. And the tragedy of the whole thing is . . . they are so mistaken!

If I don't come back to-night—but I will, though—Tom, there is one thing I want you to do for me. I want you to speak out with all the strength of those big lungs of yours . . . speak out and say that in spite of all that the historians and the poets and the preachers have said for it: war isn't the last word in human wisdom; nor the warrior the greatest hero. Not by a long stroke. . . .

Peace is like Christianity, old chap, we haven't tried it! Tell them that from a fellow who may be looking into the eyes of death this moment. . . .

Write soon. And don't forget to send me some cigarettes.

So long!

GEORGE.

CHAPTER VII.

By the same mail, Emma had a wee note from Jack.

Mother! he wrote: Though you were always splendid about my coming over, I know you have wondered what it was I saw in it; why I was so determined. To tell the truth I have often wondered too.

Well, I know now . . . it has all been made clear to me in the look I see in the eyes of women; a look I'd never seen before and which you will never see, please God!

It was that look, as yet unseen, that drew me from your side . . . drew me across the sea . . . drew me, drew me! I know you've been expecting great things of me, Mother; but the things you have expected are nothing to this thing that has come. Talk about University honours, success, fame! Houses built upon sand, all of them; fallen in an hour of darkness and swallowed up in the waters of Lethe—!

But now! Now whether we that are in it come out of it or not; whether we die now, or in the dim future of some safe old age—"sans eyes, sans teeth, sans taste, sans everything"—we shall live forever. We shall live as those who won the "Great War". Our spirit and our memory shall endure.

Mother! This is a vaster crusade than has been—more light, more liberty for the world now; and for the little ones of to-day who will be the big ones of to-morrow, a surer guide. The men of the future—the future this war is going to make—will never see that look in the eyes of women. . . .

PART X

CHAPTER I.

Emma worked very hard all summer. She had the separation allowance of a widow with an only son; but she wanted to earn as much money as she could apart from that, so that there might be something in the bank against the day when he came home. For this she had nothing to depend upon but her ten fingers.

So she slaved at the machine, up and at it early in the morning, stitching away far into the night. In the great heat the weight of the cloth made her hands shake and tremble. The dyes wormed their way under her nails and into her fingers.

For hours and hours on that quiet road the click of the machine and the crowing and clucking of the cocks and hens, were the only sounds that reached her. Even with all the sunshine and the breeze and the perfume that came in through the open doors and windows, the house was empty. It was so empty that it began to fill itself of its own accord. There were moments when she was afraid to look behind her . . . sometimes, suddenly, when she was most occupied, the hairs on her flesh stood up, for it was scared of its own breathing.

Tom read the papers every night . . . a stolen hour between six and seven which he tried to prolong but couldn't because she was always so busy. Then he went home and walked the floor; or sat with his head in his hands . . . thinking! thinking! . . . trying to make his theory of "Thy Will Be Done" fit into his love and his agony for Emma.

The news Tom read was sickening. She began to dread the moon. The fields and the roads lay ashen under it, but it wasn't of the fields and the roads she was thinking. She was thinking of scenes the moon saw . . . she was thinking of unimaginable accursed things hidden from her but all laid out like a child's picture-puzzle beneath the bright splendour that sailed and sailed in the summer sky and never gave a sign of seeing.

The moon had always been a comfort to her before. Even when she had pictured it spelling out John's name on his gray grave-stone, touching letter after letter with its long beam fingers, she had had no feeling against it . . . everything was so peaceful in the churchyard, so familiar with flowers and grasses.

But now! Now at this moment what might not be happening where Jack was? . . . and he was somewhere over there, under the moon. If she could

only have swallowed him as a mother snake swallows her children! Why is there such power given to men, and such defencelessness to women? Why is it that they may make war or peace as it pleases them; make life hideous and death vile; while she . . . ?

Thinking these things, the very world grew hateful to her.

CHAPTER II.

The days went on. She continued to get up in the morning, dress, eat, tidy the house, feed the hens, go up the road to Sarah's old cottage to get a pint of milk from the woman to whom she had sold the cow; she continued to run the machine and go back and forth with her bundles. And carefully she counted every cent that she might add to her savings.

On Sunday she went to church and listened while Mr. Broadhurst told how the world had run away after pleasure and sin—and how that war is a mysterious dispensation of Providence. While he told his congregation not to worry about the Kaiser. . . .

“God will take care of him. God is saying to the Germans, ‘Thus far and no farther!’ The lives of the Canadians that are being sacrificed on the battlefields of France and Flanders are to preserve this Canada of ours and the British Empire. It is God's method.”

Listened while with one breath he urged repentance for the sins that had brought the war upon them, and in the next called upon them to continue in supplication to the “God of Battles” that he would grant victory to “The cause of righteousness and truth for which the Empire and her Allies are contending.”

She talked cheerfully with Eliza. She talked cheerfully with Tom who followed her ever more and more anxiously with his eyes. Occasionally she went to the Women's Institute to sew on hospital clothes and roll bandages; her glance bright and her tone lively. Occasionally she attended a patriotic entertainment and played the accompaniments of the girl singers. Occasionally she tried to read. But always when it grew dark she went indoors and drew the blind down; the weather was still very hot, yet she lay all night with her lamp lighted.

Could it be possible that her fears had any meaning in them? Was there any cause to be frightened because she was frightened? Why that lamp? No, no; she could not bear the moonlight on the floor . . . the eyes of the stars frightened her.

CHAPTER III.

It was the 15th of October, a bright, beautiful October, with the maple leaves drifting red as rose leaves and the sumacs standing pink as the rhododendrons had stood in June. Except for the drifting of the leaves, one might have thought it was still summer.

Emma woke early, a great longing for her dead husband clamouring at her heart. Never since the night before Jack was born had she needed him with the terrible need of that morning. The oil in her lamp was low, the smell sickened her. For a moment she lay half indifferently taking in the old details of the room; then fully awake, she sat up in bed, drew her knees to her chin and lowering her face, rested her forehead upon them. A shivering sigh shook her. Twenty years! It was all so like and yet so unlike . . . this cowering before the consciousness of day!

By and by she got up, put the lamp out and raised the blind. The sun was moving south with the decline of the year; it would be coming up over the hills in a little while and then there would be a glory. The village wasn't awake yet. She didn't want to be caught, she didn't want anyone to pity her . . . she wouldn't have their pity . . . she didn't need it any more than Eliza needed it, or the Hodges, or the Johnsons, or any of them . . . but they might think so if they caught her. And yet she must go, just for a moment. To be near something that had belonged to her, that had been her own, her very own . . . it might ease this pain in her throat, this stifling. Nobody would see her going. If they saw her coming back, she would have the milk-pail in her hand and she could make up some sort of a story. . . .

So she dressed and went down stairs. She got the milk-pail from its place in the kitchen, pulled a coat off the rack in the front hall; and as stealthily as though there had been someone in the empty house to hear her and call her back, she turned the key in the lock, opened the door and went out onto the verandah.

The morning was chilly. Emma buttoned her coat and hurried. She went down the path at the side of the road. The hens were the only things awake at Tom's corner. She turned and went along the highroad and just as she did so the first rays of the sun struck the tops of the trees back of the church at the upper end of the village. The straggling houses were wrapped in slumber. The post-office blinds were down. Eliza Springer's gray cat lay on the store steps; when Emma passed, it mewed as though it were cold and hungry. The Methodist meeting-house glared out of its blindless windows

just as it always glared. Beyond the fences the fields had a skim of frost on their stubble . . . there was frost on the road in patches . . . the webs in the grass were glassy. When the sun rose higher the frost would melt. It would be warm to-day. For all that, winter was coming.

She lifted the latch on the barred gate and entered the churchyard. To the east the wall of the little gray church shone like silver; the west wall was black with shadow. She went around to the back where the graves are . . . pyramids and scrolls and crosses rising out of ragged grasses . . . and as she went her feet made a noise of crunching in the dried growth of the trailing cone-shaped evergreen with which the ground is covered. She found the tiny scroll of grayish marble, the grave with its mantle of ivies. And she sat down beside it.

JOHN WINCHESTER
DROWNED IN THE RIVER THAMES

AUGUST 15TH, 1892

Now is Eternity. Now is the Immortal Life

Sitting there she leaned over and parted the ivies on the mound with her fingers. At the touch a horror ran through her. Those nameless graves Jack spoke about in the land of craters and shell-holes . . . there is desolation! No grave stones. No inscriptions. One woman's boy like every other woman's boy. Lost! Forgotten! And now, at this moment . . . ? His hands on the car window . . . the lips that she loved. . . .

"And they tell me," she cried to herself, "they tell me that somewhere out there beyond the skies, there is a God who has a part in this slaughter . . . they call Him whom they worship the 'God of Battles'. . . . they say that He takes sides with nations . . ."

Emma stood up. Her tall figure in its working dress, the rough coat roughly buttoned, her brown hair with its patches of gray, her stained fingers . . . she stood up, she was the only living thing against the sunrise.

"O Thou!" she cried, "Whoever Thou art that commandest the morning and causeth the day-spring to know his place: hear me! I am a weak untutored woman but I have never believed as these have believed, that Thy ways are my ways; I have not made Thee in my image; I have kept myself from idols.

"Amid all confusion and all sorrow one thing remains to me, which sorrow and confusion cannot touch—Thy holiness! And now if this thing, too, happen unto me . . . here by the grave of the man I love and in memory of the shadow of death through which I passed to bring a man child into the

world for him and for the world and for Thee, I know and confess that it is not Thy will that shall have brought it to pass, but man's will; the will of man alone: for man is the supreme intelligence of the earth and all the things of the earth are subject unto him. . . .

“As for Thee? The gentlest man that ever walked the earth was the greatest . . . He died to prove that gentleness is God!”

CHAPTER IV.

Jack never came back! On an October day, very early in the morning, he entered upon the supreme adventure. . . .

At home in Canada, as in all peaceful rural places, it was the hour of the second cock; when out there in "No Man's Land", where the cock no longer trumpets in the morn, suddenly, as though his heart beat had struck the moment, a young Canadian officer halted his party of scouts and bombers who were crawling over mud and debris on their way to the German line, set a patrol, and himself crawled on alone to reconnoiter.

In the faint light from a cloud-covered moon the patrol watched him make his way to the enemy's entanglement . . . now on his hands and knees . . . now stretched at full length, toilsomely dragging . . . now upright. They saw his form silhouetted against the dead white of the German parapet; and then in great wonderment, as though an hallucination were on them, they beheld a second form, a smaller form than his, silhouetted beside him.

Suddenly a rifle shot rang out. Those who watched, saw that the second man had leaped clear in front of the first, his arms stretched high as though with his very finger-tips he would shelter him. More shots followed. Some bombs were thrown. By the light of numerous flares sent up along the line the two men were seen to pitch and tumble.

Heedless of the machine guns turned against them the patrol rushed forward. They made desperate efforts to reach the prostrate forms but the entanglements were too thick for them; they could not find a passage. Several of their number were wounded. And so beaten off, they were forced to return to shelter.

* * * * *

After what appeared to be an eternity of blackness George managed to free his face from the mud.

"All right, old man?" he whispered.

And out of a dream—"Fine and dandy," Jack answered.

The moon was blotted out. Rain began to fall and was driven along by a stinging gale. The storm delayed the daylight. From the German position star shells and flares continued to streak and pencil with fire the heavy clouds. Then on an instant there broke from the British lines a ferocious roar.

The earth trembled. Darkness became light. In the distance the low-lying hills against which the Germans were entrenched, sprang out of shadow . . . staggering and reeling under the hurricane of shells. To its last lump of clay the ground was lurid. In the air the nebulous shrapnel splitting into suns, wrought a prelude to the dawn.

What rites! What obsequies!

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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[The end of *The Man Child* by Victoria Grace Blackburn]