THE SILVER MAPLE

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A Story of Upper Canada

BY

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I

IN THE VALLEY OF SHADOWS

Like the great rest that cometh after pain,
  The calm that follows storm, the great surcease,
This folding slumber comforts wood and plain
  In one white mantling peace.

—William Wilfred Campbell.

THE storm was over, the snow had ceased falling, and under its muffling mantle, white and spent with the day's struggle, lay the great swamp of the Oro. It seemed to hold in its motionless bosom the very spirit of silence and death. The delicately traced pattern of a rabbit or weasel track, and a narrow human pathway that wound tortuously into the sepulchral depths, were the only signs of life in all the white stillness. Away down the dim, cathedral-like aisles, that fainted into softest grey in the distance, the crackling of an overburdened twig rang startlingly clear in the awesome hush. The tall firs and pines swept the white earth with their snow-laden branches, the drooping limbs looking like throngs of cowled heads, bent to worship in the

sacred stillness of a vast temple. For the forest was, indeed, a place in which to wonder and to pray, a place all white and holy, filled with the mystery and awe of death.

But suddenly into this softly curtained sanctuary came a profaning sound; a clear, joyous shout rang through the sacred aisles; and, down the narrow pathway, leaping over fallen logs, whipping aside the laden branches and scattering their snow-crowns in a whirling mist about him, destroying, in his ruthless progress, both the sanctity and the beauty of the place, came a human figure, a little figure, straight and sturdy, and as lithe and active as any other wild, forest-creature. His small, red-mittened hands, the scarlet woollen scarf about his neck, and his rosy cheeks made a bold dash of colour in the sombre gloom, as his abounding life disturbed the winter death-sleep.

On he came, leaping from log to log like a hare, and setting the stately forest arches ringing to a rollicking Scottish song, tuneful and incongruous,—

> "Wi' a hundred pipers an' a', an' a',
> Wi' a hundred pipers an' a', an' a',
> We'll up an gie them a blaw, a blaw!
> Wi' a hundred pipers an' a', an' a'!"

But as he plunged down the hill into the grey depths he suddenly ceased singing. The awe of the

place touched his child's spirit. Reared in the forest though he had been, he suddenly felt strangely unfamiliar with his surroundings. He had never before experienced anything like fear in the woods. The rigours of seven Canadian winters had bred a hardy spirit in this little backwoodsman, and besides what was there to dread in the forest? It had been his playground ever since he was first able to steal away from Granny and toddle off to "the bush" to gather blue flags and poke up the goggle-eyed frogs from their fragrant musk-pools. But here was something unfamiliar; a strange uncanny place the swamp seemed to-day; and, being Nature's intimate, he fell into sudden sympathy with her awe-stricken mood.

He sped silently forward, glancing fearfully down the dim, shadowy aisles, so ghostly, so mysterious, dreading he knew not what.

"Eh, eh, it will be a fearsome place," he whispered. "It's jist,—eh, it must be the 'valley of the shadow'!" And then he suddenly remembered the psalm that Granny had taught him as soon as he could speak,—

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

He whispered it over from beginning to end, not

because he comprehended its meaning as applied to his case, but because it was associated with Granny and all things good, and, therefore, gave him a sense of comfort. For he felt as though he were home by the fireside, and she was smoothing his curls and singing those words, as she so often did when he was falling asleep.

"And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

As he whispered the last line he reached the top of the hill and suddenly emerged from the valley of shadows and fears into the light of day. Just ahead lay a clearing, with the rose-coloured sunset flooding its white expanse and glowing between the dark tree-stems. He ran forward with joyful relief and leaped out into an open world of beauty, all ablaze in the dazzling rays of the setting sun. Here was light and safety—yes, and friends!

He had emerged upon the public highway, known in that part of the country as the "Scotch Line," and there, coming swiftly down the glittering hill, was a low, rough sleigh, drawn by a pair of bell-less horses. The driver was an elderly man, tall, straight, and fierce-looking, with a fine, noble head and a long, sweeping, grey beard, which gave him a patriarchal appearance. By his side sat a young

man, almost his exact counterpart in face and figure, but lacking the stately dignity of years. Behind, on the edge of the sleigh, swinging their feet in the snow, sat two more youths, both showing in face and figure unmistakable signs of close relationship to the elderly man on the front seat.

As the little figure came bounding out from the forest the whole quartette broke into a welcoming shout. With an answering whoop the boy darted forward and pitched himself upon the sleigh.

"Horo, Scotty!" "Woohoo!" "How's our big college-student?"

He was caught up and flung from one to another like a bundle of hay, until he landed, laughing and breathless, in the arms of the driver. Big Malcolm MacDonald stood the boy up between his knees, his deep eyes shining with pride.

"Hey, hey!" he cried. "And how's our big man that will be going to school?"

The boy's dark eyes were blazing with excitement.

"Oh, Grandad, it would jist be fine! It's jist grand! An' me an' Big Sandy's Archie and Peter Jimmie is all readin' in one place, an' the master says I can read jist fine, whatever!"

"Didn't you get a lickin'?" demanded a voice from the rear of the sleigh.

The bright face suddenly fell, one could never aspire to be a hero until one had braved the master's tawse.

"No," was the reluctant admission. "The master would be jist fearsome to the big lads, but he would not be saying anything to me. But," he added, brightening, "I would be having a fight!"

"Horo!" the three young men laughed delightedly. "That will be a fine start, jist keep it up!" cried the youth on the front seat.

"Hoots, whist ye, Callum!" cried the elder man, reprovingly, while his dancing eyes contradicted his tongue. "What will his Granny be sayin' to such goin's on, an' the first day at school, too!"

"And who would you be fightin', Scotty?" asked Uncle Rory, leaning eagerly forward.

"Danny Murphy!" he announced truculently, "an' I would be lickin' him good, too!"

There was a chorus of joyous approval.

"Good for you!" shouted Callum; "jist you pitch into any o' yon Irish crew every time you get a chance!"

"Be quate, will ye, Callum!" cried his father more sternly. "The lad will be jist like yerself, too ready with his fists, whatever. A brave man will never be a boaster, Scotty, man."

The would-be hero's head drooped; he looked slightly abashed.

"What would Danny be doin' to you?" inquired Callum.

At the question, the proud little head came up swiftly.

"He said—he said!" cried its owner, stammering in his wrath, "he said I would be an *Englishman!*"

Small comfort he received, for the report of this deadly insult produced yells of laughter.

"Yon was a black-hearted Irish trick, an' jist like one o' Pat Murphy's tribe, whatever," said Callum, with a sudden affectation of solemnity that somewhat appeased the child's rising indignation.

"An' you would be pitchin' into him good for his lies, wouldn't you?" inquired Rory, encouragingly.

The boy looked up shyly at his grandfather. "A wee bit," he admitted modestly.

The father glanced significantly at his eldest son. "School will be the place to learn many things," he said in a low tone. The young man laughed easily. "He's bound to be finding it out some time, anyway," he answered, but not so low that the boy's quick ears could not catch the words. He looked up intently into the faces of the two men, a startled expression in

his big eyes. Then he suddenly scrambled out from between them, and went behind to where Hamish, his youngest uncle, sat. He felt vaguely that he was approaching some strange, unforeseen trouble, and Hamish was always sympathetic.

The sleigh had been moving swiftly through long, narrow forest aisles, and now it suddenly turned into view of a small farm, a "clearing," plentifully besprinkled with snow-crowned stumps and surrounded by the still unconquered forest, dark and menacing, but sullenly and slowly retreating.

Here was a home, nevertheless; a home wrested by heroic struggles from the wilderness. In the centre, on the face of a little sloping hill, stood the citadel of this newly-conquered territory,—a farmhouse and out-buildings.

They were all rough log structures, but the dwelling house had about it the unmistakable atmosphere of a home. Around it, even under the snowdrifts, were vague signs of a garden; from the low, wide chimney poured forth a blue column of smoke; and at one of the windows a candle twinkled cheerfully; both speaking of warmth and welcome within, very grateful in the chill, winter dusk. And at the side of the house, on a small knoll, spreading its bare branches over the roof as though to shield the home

from the biting blasts, grew a gigantic silver maple, a welcome shelter alike in summer and winter.

As the sleigh swept past the house on its way to the barn, Big Malcolm pushed the boy gently forward. "Run away in, Scotty, man," he said; "see, Granny will be watchin' for you at the window."

Scotty hesitated; he wanted to go on to the stable, and there give Rory and Hamish a more detailed account of his glorious battle of the morning. But Granny was expecting him, and he must not disappoint her; even Callum dared not do that, and Callum dared almost anything else. So the boy leaped down and ran swiftly up the rough little pathway. At his approach the old, weather-beaten door flew open; and he sprang into a pair of outstretched arms.

II

A NEW NAME

Outside, the ghostly rampikes,
Those armies of the moon,
Stood while the ranks of stars drew on
To that more spacious noon,—

While over them in silence
Waved on the dusk afar
The gold flags of the Northern light
Streaming with ancient war.

—Bliss Carman.

SCOTTY lay stretched before the wide fireplace, his tousled, curly head upon his small, brown hand, his eyes fastened dreamily upon the glowing mass of coals. He was waiting anxiously for the rest of the family to join him. Supper was over; and just as soon as his grandfather and "the boys" returned from the barn he was going to recount, for the fourth time, the great events of this, his first day at school. He felt like a hero just returned from an overwhelming victory. The whole family seemed conscious of his added importance. Even Bruce, his collie dog, sat close beside him, pok-

ing him occasionally with his nose, that he might have a share in his master's glory. And as for Granny, she stopped every few moments in her work of straining and putting away the milk to exclaim:

"Eh, eh, but it's Granny would be the lonesome old body this day without her boy!"

The little candle on the bare, pine table shed only a small ring of light, and the goblin shadows danced away from the wide hearth into the corners of the room. In the darkest one stood an old four-post bed with a billowy feather mattress, covered by a tartan quilt. Beside it hung a quantity of rough coats and caps, and beneath them stood the "boot-jack," an instrument for drawing off the long, high-topped boots, and one Scotty yearned to be big enough to use. In another corner stood Granny's spinning-wheel, which whizzed cheerily the whole long day, and beside it was a low bench with a tin wash-basin, a cake of home-made soap and a coarse towel. There was very little furniture besides, except a few chairs, the big table, the clock with the long chains and the noisy pendulum, the picture of Queen Victoria, and the big, high cupboard into which Granny was putting the supper dishes. This last article of furniture was always of great interest to Scotty. For away up on the top shelf, made doubly valuable by being unattainable,

stood some wonderful pieces of crockery; among them a sugar-bowl that Granny had brought from the old country, and which had blue boys and girls dancing in a gay ring about it. Then there was the glass jar with the tin lid in which Grandaddy kept some mysterious papers; one piece was called money. Scotty had actually seen it once, in Grandaddy's hands, and wondered secretly why such ugly, crumpled, green paper should be considered so precious.

"An' would Peter Lauchie not be coming across the swamp with you, *m' eudail bheg?*" his grandmother was asking for the fifth time.

"Noh!" The boy's answer was quick and disdainful. Somehow he would rather Granny would not pat his head and lavish endearing Gaelic epithets upon him to-night; such things had been very soothing in the past when he was sleepy and wanted to go to bed; but now he was a big boy, going to school, and had fought and defeated in single combat one of the MacDonalds' enemies, and he could not be expected to endure petting.

"Why, Granny!" he cried, "I would be knowing the road all right. Peter Lauchie jist came to his clearin', and I would be coming to the line all alone, and then I met Grandaddy an' the boys there."

"Eh, indeed, it is the great man you will be, what-

ever," she said, regarding him wistfully. This child, her last baby, and the best-beloved, was growing up swiftly to manhood, and like all the others would soon have interests beyond her. "An' would Granny's boy not be fearing to cross the swamp alone?" Her voice was almost pleading. She bent down, and her thin, hard hand rested caressingly on his dark, tumbled curls. She yearned to hear him confess himself her baby still. He threw back his head and looked up into her tender, wrinkled face; and one little hand went up suddenly to caress its rough surface. For Scotty had a heart quite out of proportion to the size of his body, and a look of grief on Granny's face could move him quicker than the sternest command of his grandfather.

"Yes," he confessed in a whisper, "I would be fearing jist once, and then I spoke the piece about 'the Lord is my Shepherd' and then I wouldn't be minding much. Sing it, Granny."

So Granny sang the Shepherd's psalm in Gaelic, as she went slowly about her household tasks; sang it in a thin, quavering voice to a weird old Scottish melody that had in it the wail of winds over lone heather moors, and the sob of waves on a wild, rock-bound coast. She came and went, in and out of the dancing ring of fire-light, a tall, thin figure, stooped and

aged-looking, apparently more from hard work than from advanced years. But her toil-bent frame, her rough hands and coarse grey homespun dress could not quite hide the air of gentle dignity that clothed her. There was a certain lofty refinement in her movements; and on her wrinkled face and in her beautiful grey eyes the imprint of a soul that toil and pain had only strengthened and sweetened. Hers was the face of a woman who had suffered much, but had conquered, and always would conquer, through faith and love.

To the little boy on the hearthstone, at least, the thin, stooped figure and worn face made up the most beautiful personality the world could produce. But he turned to the fire, and his dreams floated far away beyond the ring of fire-light, and beyond Granny's gentle voice. For he had entered a new world that day, the great new world of school, and his imagination had a wider field in which to run riot.

He was still dreaming, and Granny was half-way through the psalm for the second time, when the stamping of snowy feet at the door announced the return of Big Malcolm and his sons. Callum came swinging in first, Callum who was such a gay, handsome, rollicking fellow that he was Scotty's hero and copy. The boy sprang up, pitching himself upon

him, and was promptly swung over the young man's shoulders, until his feet kicked the raftered ceiling. Scotty yelled with glee, Bruce leaped up barking, and the room was in an uproar.

"Hooch! be quate!" shouted Big Malcolm. "It is a child you are yourself, Callum!"

At the sounds of the noise and laughter a small figure stirred in the shadowy chimney-corner, the figure of a little, bent, old man, with a queer, elfish, hairy visage. He sat up and his small, red eyes blinked wonderingly. "Hech, hech, and it will be the cold night, Malcolm!" he said in Gaelic.

"A cold night it is, Farquhar," cried Big Malcolm, piling the wood upon the fire. "But we will soon be fixing that, whatever."

"It will be a good thing to be by a warm fire this night," continued Old Farquhar solemnly, "och, hone, a good thing, indeed!"

Outside the wind had once more gathered its forces, and was howling about the house, and the swaying branches of the silver maple were tapping upon the roof as though to remind the inhabitants that it was still there to protect them. But the little old man shivered at the sound, for he had once known what it was to be homeless on those hills over which the blast was sweeping.

How Old Farquhar came to be a member of Big Malcolm MacDonald's family no one could quite tell. He was one of those unattached fragments of humanity often found in a new country. A sort of wandering minstrel was Farquhar, content so long as he could pay for a meal or a night's lodging at a wayside tavern by a song, or a tune on his fiddle. Thus he had drifted musically for years through the Canadian backwoods, until homeless old age had overtaken him. Four years before he had spent a summer at Big Malcolm's, helping perfunctorily in the harvest fields, working little and singing much, and when the first hard frost had set the forest aflame he had gathered his poor, scant bundle of clothes into his carpet-bag preparatory to taking the road again.

"And where will you be going for the winter?" Big Malcolm had asked.

"She'll not know," said Old Farquhar, glancing tremulously over the great stretches of dying forest, "she'll not know."

"Hooch!" cried his host angrily, "sit down with ye!" He snatched up Old Farquhar's carpet-bag and flung it into a corner, and there it had lain ever since.

And in another corner, the warm one by the chim-

ney, Old Farquhar had sat every winter since, too, smoking his pipe in utter content. Always in summer his Bohemian nature asserted itself again, and he would take his stick and wander away, remaining, perhaps, for months; but as soon as the silver maple beside the house began to turn to gold he would come hobbling back, sure of a warm welcome in the home where there was no stint.

The family gathered about the cheerful hearth: every one of them, to Scotty's great delight, for there was not half the fun at home when "the boys" went off in the evenings. At one side of the fire sat his grandmother, her peaceful face bent over her knitting, and opposite her Big Malcolm smoking and happy. Hamish, as usual, retired to the old bench behind the table, and with the one candle close to him, was soon absorbed in a book. In some miraculous way Hamish always managed to have reading material at hand, though the luxury sometimes cost him a tramp half-way across the township of Oro. Near the fire, balanced uneasily on the woodbox and whittling a stick, sat Callum; for Callum could never sit down quietly, even at home. Callum Fiach, or Wild Malcolm, they called him in this land of many MacDonalds, where the dearth of names necessitated a descriptive title. Unfortunately, Callum's especial

cognomen was quite appropriate and the cause of much anxiety to his gentle mother. But Scotty thought it was fine; he intended to be just like Callum when he grew up. He would stand up straight and grand and cut down great trees and fight the Murphys, and go off in the evenings and be chaffed about having a sweetheart. Rory was always teasing Callum about Long Lauchie's Mary, and Scotty was resolved that, when he was big, he would go to see Mary's sister, Betty; for then he and Callum could go together. He cordially despised the chosen Betty as a girl and a cry-baby, who gave her brother, Peter, endless trouble; but he was determined to shirk no task, however unpleasant, that would make him more like his hero.

When they were all ready to listen to him, the boy seated himself upon a bench beside Rory, and proceeded to relate once more to his admiring family the wonderful experiences of the day; the greatness of the schoolmaster; the magnificence of the school itself; the prowess of Peter Lauchie and Roarin' Sandy's Archie, how they declared they weren't afraid of even the master; the number of boys old McAllister could thrash in a day, and the amount he knew; such fearsome long words as he could spell, and the places he could point out on the map! He chat-

tered on to his delighted audience, but for some strange reason he made no further allusion to his fight.

When there was no more to tell, Rory crossed the room and with elaborate care took down a box from a shelf above the bed. From it he tenderly took out a violin, and after much strumming and tuning up he seated himself upon a chair in the middle of the room and struck up the lively air of "The MacDonalds' Reel." Scotty leaped to the floor; Rory's fiddle could do anything with him, make him dance with mad joy until he was exhausted, stir him up to a wild longing to go away and do deeds of impossible prowess, or even make him creep into the shadows behind Granny's chair and weep heart-broken tears into her ample skirts.

To-night the tune was gay, and Callum came out into the ring of light, and sitting astride a chair with his arms crossed over its back, put his nephew through the intricacies of the Highland Fling until he was gasping for breath. Granny saw, and stopped the dance by a nod and smile to Rory; the music instantly changed to a slow, wailing melody, and the boy dropped into a chair and sat gazing into the fire, dreaming dreams of mystery and wonder.

Then they all sang old-fashioned Scottish songs;

songs that were old before Burns came to give Scotland a new voice. And Old Farquhar struck in, during a short pause, with one of Ossian's songs of warlike doings and glorious deaths. He sang in a cracked, weird voice to a wild Gaelic air that had neither melody nor rhythm, but somehow contained the poetic fire of the impromptu songs of the old bards. Rory followed, putting in a note here and there; but as the song wavered on and showed no signs of coming to an end, he struck up, "The Hundred Pipers an' a' an' a'," and drowned out the old man's wail. Then Burns was not forgotten, and they were all in the midst of "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon," a song that always made Scotty's heart ache as though it would burst, he knew not why, when the door opened suddenly, letting in a rush of frosty air, and a visitor.

No one ever knocked at a neighbour's door in the Canadian backwoods, and James MacDonald, or Weaver Jimmie, as he was called, was such a familiar figure at Big Malcolm's that even Bruce merely raised his eyes as he entered. Mrs. MacDonald smiled her welcome, Big Malcolm shoved forward a chair, and the music flowed on uninterrupted.

Weaver Jimmie was a young man, short, and thick-set. He was something of an anomaly; for, while he

was the coolest fighter in the township of Oro, and gloried in strife, he was nervous and embarrassed to the verge of distraction when in company, particularly if it consisted of the fair sex. This diffidence partly arose from the fact that poor Jimmie was hopelessly ugly, and painfully aware of his shortcomings. His chief characteristics were a brilliant and bristling red beard and a pair of long, flat feet. He realised to the full that these obtrusive features were anything but things of beauty, and found them a sorrow forever in his vain attempts to conceal them.

At Big Malcolm's invitation he moved up to the fire in nervous haste, and with a deprecating smile; dropped suddenly into a chair, and tilted it back in imitation of Callum's easy nonchalance; but finding the character difficult to maintain in view of his feet, he suddenly came down to the horizontal once more, and in so doing descended upon poor Bruce's tail. That unoffending canine uttered a yelp of pain, echoed by Scotty, who sprang to comfort him; and Rory, whose musical ear had been irritated by the disturbance, suddenly drew his bow with a discordant rasp across the strings, and ended the melodious song with a long, wolf-like howl.

"Hoots, toots, Rory lad!" cried his mother re-

proachfully. "Come away, Jimmie man, come away to the fire, it will be a cold night indeed."

But Weaver Jimmie was so overcome by his embarrassing mistake that, instead of obeying, he backed away into the shadows like a restive horse.

"And how will all the folk in the glen be, Jimmie?" asked Big Malcolm.

Under cover of the conversation that ensued, Rory gently drew his bow across the strings, and softly sang an old ditty that had an especial meaning for their guest—

"Oh, Jinny banged, Jinny banged, Jinny banged the Weaver!
Ah cackled like a clockin' hen,
When Jinny banged the Weaver!"

Callum Fiach's eyes danced, and Weaver Jimmie laughed sheepishly. He took off his cap, replaced it again, smoothed his whiskers furiously, and then gazed around as if seeking a means of escape.

"Don't you be heedin' the lad, Jimmie," cried Mrs. MacDonald. "It is jist his foolishness."

"Hooch," cried Weaver Jimmie, with a fine assumption of disdain, "it's little I'll be carin' for the likes o' him, whatever."

"D'ye think she'll ever have you, Jimmie?" inquired the musician with great seriousness.

"I'll not be knowing for sure," replied the Weaver, throwing one knee over the other in a vain attempt to appear at ease. "She would be lookin' a deal better these days, though!" he added, hopefully, as though the young lady of his choice had been suffering from some wasting disease.

"Hang me, but I believe I'll go sparkin' Kirsty John myself!" said Callum resolutely. "I'll be wantin' a wife bad when the north clearin' is ready, and I believe Kirsty's got a fancy for me."

"You'd better be mindin' your own business indeed, Callum Fiach!" cried Weaver Jimmie, with a sudden fierceness that contrasted strangely with his habitual diffidence. "She will be a smarter woman than you'll be ever gettin' with your feckless ways, indeed!"

"Well, I'm afraid there isn't much chance that you'll be gettin' her either," said Callum very seriously. "Man, she would be givin' you a fine black eye the last time you asked her."

Scotty turned away impatiently. The boys always seemed to get a great deal of fun out of Weaver Jimmie's tempestuous love-affair, but he found it very uninteresting. He slipped under the table, clambered upon the bench beside Hamish, and stuck his curly head between the book and the young man's face; for he had long ago discovered this to be the

only effectual means of bringing Hamish back to actualities. Such a proceeding would not have been safe with Callum or Rory, but Hamish was always patient. "What ye readin', Hamish?" he inquired coaxingly.

"Jist a book," said Hamish dreamily. "Be careful of it now. It belongs to the Captain!"

"Captain Herbert? The Englishman Grandaddy hates?"

"Yes; whisht, will ye? I didn't get it from him, though. Kirsty John's mother had it, and lent it to me."

"Was you ever at the Captain's place?"

"Yes, once."

"Is it fearful grand?"

"Yes, I suppose so. But I would jist be at the back door. Take care, now, and let me read!"

"The back door!" Scotty's eyes ranged wonderingly round the walls. With the exception of the trap-door leading to the loft the house had but one opening. "Eh, the Captain's folks must be awful grand, Hamish, to be having two doors to their house."

Hamish laughed. "There's grander things than that there; there's carpets on the floor, an' a piano to play on, an' a whole roomful o' books! Losh!" he

exclaimed, "I'd like to get my hands on them jist for a day!"

"How did Kirsty John's mother get this one?"

"The lady that lives there lent it to her. Kirsty's mother used to work for them. Go on away now, and let me read!" for the boy was running his fingers through the pages. "There's no pictures; go and play with Bruce."

But Scotty had turned to the fly-leaf and had discovered some writing. "What's that, Hamish?"

Hamish read the inscription, which was written in a round boyish scrawl, "Isabel Douglas Herbert, from her loving cousin, Harold."

"Who're they?"

"The boy's the Captain's son, and the little girl is his niece. I saw her once at Kirsty's. She's a pretty, wee thing."

"Huh!" Scotty was disdainful. "I don't like girls. They will jist be cry-babies. Is the boy as big as me?"

"He's a little bigger, I guess. He goes to school away in Toronto."

"Bet I could fight him. Is Toronto away over in the old country?"

"No, it's in Canada. Be quiet. I want to read."

"Oh! Is Canady very far away?"

"No, it's right here; this is Canada."

"Oh! An' will the school-house be in Canady too?"

"Yes."

"An' the Captain's house?"

"Imph-n-n."

"Oh! An' all Oro, an' Lake Simcoe? What will you be laughing at?"

"Wait till old McAllister learns you some geography. You'll hear something about Canada that'll surprise you, whatever."

"It won't be as big as the old country, though, will it?" But Hamish did not answer. He was far away with David Copperfield once more. The boy raised the fly-leaf and took another peep at the name. He sat very quiet for a few moment's and then he crept closer to his uncle, a red flush creeping up under the tan of his cheeks, his black eyes shining.

"Hamish!" he whispered, "Hamish, will that be an—*English* name?"

"Eh? What name?" Hamish awoke reluctantly to the troublesome realities. "I'll not know."

"Aw, tell me, Hamish!"

"My, but you will be a bother! Yes, Herbert will be an English name, but Isabel Douglas is Scotch, an'

a fine Hielan' name, too. But what in the world would you be wanting to know for?"

Scotty hesitated. He hung his black, curly head, and swung his feet in embarrassment; but finally he looked up desperately.

"Do you know what made Danny Murphy say I was an Englishman?" he whispered.

Hamish stifled a laugh. "It would likely jist be his natural Irish villainy," he suggested solemnly.

But Scotty shook his head at even such a natural explanation. "No, it would not be that, it would be—because—*the master said it*, Hamish!"

"The master?" Hamish's look of amusement changed to one of deep interest. "Why? What would he be saying?"

The boy glanced around the room apprehensively, but the rest of the family were still absorbed in Weaver Jimmie. "When we would be coming into the school," he whispered hurriedly, "the master would be calling all the new ones to the front. An' he says to me, 'What's your name, child?' An I says, 'It's Scotty,—Scotty MacDonald.' An' he says, 'Hut tut, another MacDonald! Yon's no name. Whose bairn are ye?' An' I told him I belonged to Grandaddy an' the boys; an' he says,—an' he says, 'Oh tuts, I know you now. You're Big

Malcolm's *English grandson!*" He would be saying that, Hamish! An' he wrote a name for me; see!" He had been growing more and more excited as the recital proceeded, and at this point he jerked from his bosom a torn and battered primer that had done duty in the few days that Hamish had attended school. Under the scrawling marks that stood for Hamish's name was written in a fine scholarly flourish, "Ralph Everett Stanwell."

"Humph!" Hamish gazed at the book, and a look of sadness crept into his kind, brown eyes. He glanced across the room at his father. Weaver Jimmie had just departed, and Callum was leaning over the back of his chair laughing immoderately, while Rory was out in the middle of the floor executing a lively step-dance accompanied by voice and fiddle to the words, "Ha! Ha! the wooin' o't!"

"Look here, father," called Hamish, "do you see what the schoolmaster would be writing in Scotty's book?"

Big Malcolm took the primer, adjusted his spectacles, and moved the little book up and down before the candle to get the proper focus. "Ralph Everett Stanwell," he read slowly. "What kind o' a name would that be, whatever!" he cried, with a twinkle in his eye.

"It's got a fearsome kind of a sough to it," said Callum apprehensively.

"It will be an English name!" cried Scotty fiercely, "an' Peter Lauchie would be saying it is jist no name at all!"

The young men burst into laughter, which served only to increase their nephew's wrath. He sprang out upon the floor, his black eyes blazing, and stamped his small foot.

"I'll not be English!" he shouted. "It's jist them louts from the Tenth is English! An' I'll be Hielan'. An' it's not my name!"

"Eh, eh, mannie!" cried his grandmother gently. She laid her hand on the boy's arm and drew him toward her. "That will be no way for a big boy that will be going to school to behave," she whispered. The child turned to her and saw to his amazement that her eyes were full of tears. His sturdy little figure stiffened suddenly, and he made a desperate effort for self-control.

"But it would be a great lie, Granny!" he faltered appealingly.

"Hoots, never you mind!" cried his grandfather, with strange leniency; and even in the midst of his passion Scotty dimly wondered that he did not receive a summary chastisement for his fit of temper. There

was a strange, sad look in the man's eyes that alarmed the child more than anger would have done.

"Granny will be telling you all about it," he said, rising. "Come, lads, it will be getting late."

The three young men followed their father out to the stable. Ordinarily they attended to the evening duties there themselves, but to-night Big Malcolm wished to leave the boy alone with his grandmother, realising that the situation needed a woman's delicate handling.

This new proceeding filled Scotty with an added alarm. He clambered up on his grandmother's knee as soon as they were alone and demanded an explanation; surely that English name wasn't his. He whispered the momentous question, for though Old Farquhar was snoring loudly in his corner, Bruce was there, wide awake and looking up inquiringly, as though he could understand.

And so, with her arms about him, Granny told him for the first time the story of his birth. How Granny had had only one little girl, older than Callum, eh, and such a sweet lassie she was; how just when they had landed in Canada she had married a young Englishman who had come over with them on the great ship; how they had left them in Toronto when they came north to the forests of Oro; how their

baby had come, the most beautiful baby, Granny's little girl wrote, and how she had written also that they, too, were coming north to live near the old folks when,—Granny's voice faltered,—when the fever came, and both Granny's beautiful little girl and her Englishman died, and Grandaddy and Callum had journeyed miles through the bush to bring Granny her baby, and how Kirsty John's mother had carried him all the way, and how he was all Granny had left of her bright lass!

At the sound of grief in his grandmother's voice, the child put up his hand to stroke her face, and found it wet with tears. Instantly he forgot his own trouble in sympathy for hers, and clasping his hands about her neck he soothed her in the best way he knew. He scarcely understood her grief; was Granny crying because he was only an Englishman after all? For to him, bereavement and death were but names, and in the midst of abounding love he had never realised the lack of parents.

He had often heard of them before, of his beautiful mother, whose eyes were so dark and whose hair was so curly like his own; and how his father had been such a fine, big, young man, and a gentleman too, though Scotty had often vaguely wondered just what that meant. But that his parents had left him an

inheritance of a name and lineage other than MacDonald he had never dreamed. And now there was no denying the humiliating truth; his father had been an Englishman, he himself was English, and that disgraceful name, at which Peter Lauchie had sneered, was his very own. Henceforth he must be an outcast among the MacDonalds, and be classed with the English crew that lived over on the Tenth, and whom, everyone knew, the MacDonalds despised. Yes, and he belonged to the same class as that stuck-up Captain Herbert, who lived in that grand house on the north shore of Lake Oro, and whom his grandfather hated!

He managed to check his tears by the time the boys returned, but during prayers he crouched miserably in a dark corner behind Hamish, a victim of despair. He derived very little comfort from the fact that Grandaddy was reading, "And thou shalt be called by a new name"; it seemed only an advertisement of his disgrace. He wondered drearily who else was so unfortunate as to be presented with one, and if it would be an English name. And afterwards, when they had gone up to the loft to bed, he crept in behind Hamish, and cried himself to sleep because of that, which, in after years, he always remembered with pride.

III

WINNING HIS SPURS

> The Saxon force, the Celtic fire,
> These are thy manhood's heritage!
>
> —C. G. D. Roberts.

OLD IAN McALLISTER, schoolmaster of Section Number Nine, Oro, was calling his flock into the educational fold. It was no clarion ring that summoned the youths from the forest, for the times were early and a settlement might be proud to possess a school, without going to the extremity of such foolishness as a bell, and Number Nine was not extravagant. But the schoolmaster's ingenuity had improvised a very good substitute. He stood in the doorway, hammering upon the doorpost with a long, flexible ruler, and making a peremptory clatter that echoed far away into the arches of the forest and hastened the steps of any tardy youths approaching from its depths. Good cause they had to be expeditious, too, for well they knew, did they linger, the master would be apt to resume the bastinado upon their belated persons when they

did arrive. This original method had other advantages, from the schoolmaster's point of view, for, as his pupils crowded past him through the narrow doorway, he had many a fine opportunity to transfer occasional whacks to the heads of such boys, and girls, too, as he felt would need the admonition before the day was over, and who could not manage to dodge him. So those approaching the school, even before they came within sight of the place, could reckon exactly the state of the master's temper, and the number of victims sacrificed thereto, by the intermittent sounds of the summoning stick. Indeed, Number Nine possessed an almost superhuman knowledge of their master's mental workings. When he was fiercest then they were most hopeful; for they knew that, like other active volcanoes, having once indulged in a terrible eruption he was not likely to break forth again for some time. He was quite dependable, for his conduct followed certain fixed rules. First came about a fortnight of stern discipline and faithful and terrifying attention to duty. During this period a subdued and busy hum pervaded Number Nine and much knowledge was gained. For Ian McAllister was a man of no mean parts, and, as the trustees of the section were wont to boast, there was not such another man in the county of Simcoe for

"bringing the scholars on—when he was at it." But the trouble was he could never stay "at it" very long. A much more joyous, though less profitable, season followed, during which the schoolmaster's energies were taken up in a bitter and losing fight with an appetite for strong drink. Poor McAllister had been intended for a fine, scholarly, upright character, and he struggled desperately to maintain his integrity. But about once in two months he yielded to temptation. During these "spells," as Number Nine called his lapses from duty, he still taught, but in a perfunctory manner, being prone to play practical jokes upon his pupils, which, of course, they returned with interest. When he finally succumbed in sleep, with his feet on the desk and his red spotted handkerchief over his face, Number Nine took to the bush and proceeded to enjoy life. That they did not altogether give themselves over to unbounded riot was due to the fact that the master's awakening might occur at any moment. And well they knew he was apt to come out of his lethargy with awful suddenness, with a conscience lashing him for his weakness and with a stern determination to work out tremendous reparation for the lost hours.

But Number Nine suffered little from this changeable conduct. They had studied their master so

faithfully that they could generally calculate what would be the state of his temper at a given time, and guided themselves accordingly. Indeed, Roarin' Sandy's Archie, a giant MacDonald who had attended every winter since the schoolhouse was built, could tell almost to a day when the master was likely to relax, and he acted as a sort of barometer to the whole school.

But to-day McAllister showed no signs of relaxation as they dodged past him and scrambled into their places. The room was soon filled, for the winter term had commenced and all the big boys and girls of the section were in attendance. The schoolroom was small, with rough log walls and a raftered ceiling. Down the middle ran a row of long forms for the younger children, and along the sides were ranged a few well carved desks, at which the elder pupils sat when they wrote in their copy-books. At the end nearest the door stood a huge rusty stove, always red-hot in winter, and near it were a big wooden water-pail and tin dipper. At the other end of the room stood the master's desk, a long-legged rickety structure, with a stool to match, from which lofty throne the ruler of Number Nine could command a view of his realm and spy out its most remote region of insubordination. Behind him was the blackboard,

a piece of sheep-skin used as an eraser, and an ancient and tattered map of Europe.

Scotty was already in his place; he had hurried to his seat as soon as he arrived for fear someone might ask him his name, and in dread lest he might be claimed by those English boys from the Tenth, whom his soul loathed.

He had started to school at a time when the several nationalities that were being welded together to make the Canadian race were by no means one, and he had inherited all the prejudices of his own people. Number Nine was a school eminently calculated to keep alive all the small race animosities that characterised the times; for English, Irish and Scotch, both Highland and Lowland, had settled in small communities with the schoolhouse as a central point.

The building was situated in a hollow made by a bend in the Oro River; to the north among the green hills surrounding Lake Oro, was the Oa, a district named after a part of Islay, and there dwelt the Highlanders; all MacDonalds, all related, all tenaciously clannish, and all such famous warriors that they had earned the name throughout the whole County of Simcoe of the "Fighting MacDonalds," a name which their progeny who attended Number Nine School strove valiantly to perpetuate.

From the low-lying lands at the south, a region called the Flats, which sloped gently southward until it sank beneath the blue waters of Lake Simcoe, came the Irish contingent, always merry, always quarrelling, and always headed by young Pat Murphy and Nancy Caldwell, who were the chief warriors of the section.

And over on the western plains that stretched away from the banks of the Oro, on a concession locally styled "the Tenth," lived a class of pupils whose chief representative had been overheard by a Highland enemy to say, as he named the forest trees along his path to school, "That there's a *hoak*, an' that there's a *hash*, an' that there's a *helm*." Though the youth bore the highly respectable and historic name of Tommy Tucker, he was forever after branded as "Hoak" Tucker, and his two innocent brothers were dubbed, respectively, "Helm" and "Hash."

One more nationality was represented in Number Nine, those who approached the school-house with the rising sun behind them. They were Scotch to a man; what was more, they proclaimed the fact upon the fence-tops and made themselves obnoxious to even the MacDonalds, for after all they were only Lowlanders, and how could the Celt be expected to treat them as equals?

When this heterogeneous assembly had all passed under the rod and seated themselves, the master tramped up to his desk and a solemn hush fell over the room. This was remarkable, for unless McAllister was in an unusually bad humour Number Nine buzzed like a saw-mill. But this morning the silence was intense and ominous, and for a very good reason. For only the evening before Number Nine had for once miscalculated their ruler's condition, and a flagrant act of disobedience had been perpetrated. McAllister had commanded that all fighting cease, and in the face of his interdict the MacDonalds and the Murphys, according to the established custom of the country, had manfully striven to exterminate each other. For between the Oa and the Flats there was an undying feud; partly hereditary, and partly owing to the fact that Pat Murphy considered it an impertinence on the part of anyone to come from the north when he chose to approach from the opposite direction.

During school-hours a truce was preserved, all factions being united against a common foe; but as soon as school was dismissed the lines of demarcation became too obvious to be overlooked. The outlandish Gaelic the MacDonalds spoke when among their brethren, their irritating way of gathering clan-like

for the journey home, always aroused resentment in the breasts of the assembling Murphys. So, five o'clock fights had long ago become one of the institutions of the school, and in the winter when the big boys were present the encounters were frequent and sanguinary.

The schoolmaster objected to all strife in which he had no part, and since the opening of the winter term he had set his face like adamant against this international warfare. But his opposition served only to increase the ardour of the combatants. In vain he scolded and thrashed. In vain he imprisoned the Scots until the Hibernians had had a reasonable time to make an honourable retreat. The liberated party only waited behind stumps and fallen logs, with the faithfulness of a lover to his tryst.

So at last McAllister arose in his might and announced that the next time such an affair occurred he would thrash the leaders of each party within an inch of their lives. On such occasions the schoolmaster was not to be trifled with, and for a few days even the Murphys were cowed.

But as time passed there grew up between the belligerents a tacit understanding that just as soon as the master entered upon a less rigid frame of mind they would settle the fast accumulating scores.

So the night succeeding Scotty's first day at school they felt the time was ripe. Roarin' Sandy's Archie assured all that a fight would be perfectly safe. The master's tropical season was already overdue some days, and on the morrow he was sure to be jolly. So the forbidden campaign had opened just a day too soon. It proved to be an Armageddon, too; Lowlander and Highlander, Sassenach and Hibernian, they battered each other right royally, and now here they were ranged before their judge to find to their dismay that he was clear-eyed, clear-headed, and ready to inflict upon the culprits the severest penalties of the law.

The strange, tense atmosphere filled Scotty with vague alarm. He felt that the air was pregnant with disaster. Danny Murphy nudged him when the master closed his eyes for prayer and whispered that "Somebody was goin' to get an awful hidin', likely the MacDonalds." Prayers were extremely lengthy, always a bad sign, and Scotty felt his hair rise as at their close the master banged his desk lid, and glared fiercely about him. Perhaps McAllister was going to thrash him for pretending he was a MacDonald, he reflected fearfully.

The master lost no time in going straight to the point, he knew his period of weakness was coming

over him with overwhelming rapidity; one more visit to that which lay in his desk would, he knew, destroy his judgment; and struggling desperately to do what he deemed right, he put his fists firmly upon the desk lid as if to crush down the tempter and proceeded to business.

"So, ye've been fighting again!" he cried, fixing the row of bigger boys with his eye. "Ye uncivilised MacDonald pack, an' ye savage Murphy crew! Tearin' at each other like wolves! Aye! Roarin' an' rantin' an' ragin' like a pack o' blood-hounds! Ah, ye're nothing but a pack o' savages! Jist uncivilised savages! But Ah'll have no wild beasts in my school. Ah'll teach ye! Ah'll take some o' the fight out o' ye!" He glared meaningly at Peter Lauchie, one of the most bellicose Highlanders, but that young man dodged cleverly behind Pat Murphy's broad shoulders. "Ye'll think Ah'll not find ye out?" the master shouted triumphantly. "But Ah'll soon do that! Aye, it was at the Birch Crick ye were fightin' like a pack o' wild beasts; ye thought ye were far enough away to be safe. But Ah'll find out who started it!" His eye ranged quickly round the room and fell upon Scotty, sitting open-mouthed straight in front of him. McAllister was not above extorting information from the younger pupils, and

Scotty went by the Scotch Line and could be made to tell. "You, Ralph Stanwell!" he cried, fixing the boy with an admonitory finger. "Yon's your road. Now, jist tell me all about this fight!"

Now, Scotty, in his eagerness to get home, had taken the short road across the swamp and knew nothing of the affray. But he scarcely heard the master's question; he had caught only that hateful name, the name that made him an alien from the MacDonalds and classed him with that baby, "Hash" Tucker, who was even now weeping behind his slate lest his big brother should be thrashed. Scotty's face flushed crimson, his hands clenched.

"Are ye deef?" roared the master. "Answer me my question, Ralph Stanwell!"

The boy leaped as if he had been struck. "That will not be my name!" he cried defiantly.

McAllister glared at him with wild bloodshot eyes; under other circumstances he would have been ashamed of the part he was playing; but now his nerves were raw and his temper was rendered wild by his craving.

"Are ye ashamed o' yer name, ye young English upstart?" he roared.

That opprobrious epithet "English" swept all fear and discretion from Scotty's mind. "I'll not

be English!" he shouted back, "I'll be Scotch, an' my name will jist be MacDonald, whatever!"

A low growl of approval came from the region of the MacDonalds at the back of the school, and Peter Lauchie MacDonald, who was Scotty's next of kin, came out from behind Pat Murphy and snorted triumphantly. The master reached out his powerful arm and swept the boy up onto his desk, holding him there in a terrible grip. "Ah'll MacDonald ye!" he shouted, shaking him to and fro. "Another MacDonald to be a wild beast in the school! Ah'll knock the MacDonald out o' ye! Ye young English wasp, ye!"

Scotty's face was white; but he remembered Callum and held his lips firmly to keep from crying out. Peter Lauchie half rose, "He'll be no more English than you!" he shouted. The master turned; he was facing rebellion. "Peter MacDonald," he said in a low, thrilling tone, "you will go out and cut me a stick, an' when Ah've taught this ill piece with it Ah'll break it over your back!"

Peter Lauchie's defiance melted in the white glare of the master's wrath. He arose and stumbled sullenly out of doors on his unpleasant errand. Scotty had been placed in his especial care both by the boy's grandmother and his own mother, and his soul writhed

under the master's command. Outside the door he paused, weighing the chances of returning without the weapon; the master's tawse had been removed the night before, and he might put off the day of judgment until the judge collapsed. As he stood, miserably irresolute, a low hiss sounded from beneath the door. Roarin' Sandy's Archie had crept to it on all fours. "Don't be hurryin' back," he whispered eagerly, "I'll tell ye when to come!"

Peter Lauchie stepped behind a hemlock and peeped through the window. The first glance convinced him of the wisdom of his friend's advice; delay was the watchword, for trouble had arisen in a new quarter.

At one of the side desks near the platform sat Nancy Caldwell. Nancy was the biggest girl in the school and the only person in the township of Oro whom old McAllister feared. She was a handsome girl, belonging to one of the leading Protestant families of the Flats; she was bold and fearless and had withal such a feminine ingenuity for inventing schemes to circumvent the schoolmaster that he regarded her with something akin to superstitious awe.

Nancy had a big, Irish heart, and it swelled with indignation when Scotty was put up for execution. She shrewdly guessed that McAllister was nearing

the limit of his strength, and thought she might try a tilt with him. So as he tramped angrily up and down the platform, she reached out, when his back was turned, and whisked the boy under her desk.

"Lie still!" she whispered. "Sure, I'll murder him if he touches ye!"

McAllister marched over to her, his arm raised threateningly; the girl sat and stared coolly back. For a moment the baffled man stood glaring at her. He would rather have met all the big boys in concerted rebellion than Nancy Caldwell, and felt that he must be fortified within before he could successfully combat her. He stepped up to his desk and clutching a half-empty bottle from it, drained the contents.

The tension of the school was immediately relaxed; the pupils nudged each other and giggled and Nancy Caldwell laughed aloud and pulled Scotty out from his hiding place.

As everyone expected, McAllister sank into his chair and glared sheepishly about him, making a desperate attempt to retain his dignity.

Peter Lauchie stepped out from his post of observation, with a light heart; and strolled off leisurely in search of a weapon. Since the master was now on his way to a better frame of mind, Peter was not

the one to retard his happy progress; so he sauntered about, knowing that Roarin' Sandy's Archie would summon him when the time was ripe.

His commander did not fail him. With the keen eye of an old campaigner, Roarin' Sandy's Archie saw the moment to strike. The master had worked up a little energy and was again making for Nancy; now was the time to divert his attention; he beckoned to his henchman. As Peter Lauchie entered he showed himself a worthy follower of a worthy leader, for he strode solemnly up the aisle, dragging in his wake a respectably-sized hemlock tree, the branches of which swept up the floor and whipped the boys and girls in the faces, evoking shrieks of laughter. He paused before the master's desk and solemnly handed him the sapling.

"Here's the switch to hide Scotty *MacDonald*, sir," he said with great seriousness, and a fine emphasis on the name.

The master turned like an animal at bay, and the school broke into a torrent of laughter. He grasped the tree and raised it above his head. "Ah'll batter the cursed impidence out o' ye, ye curse o' a MacDonald!" he roared, making a drive at the boy.

But Peter Lauchie knew that the master need not now be taken seriously; he darted down the aisle,

McAllister after him, bearing his clumsy weapon, and mowing down all within three yards of his path. The boy leaped over the wood box, dodged round the stove, upset the water pail over the girls and came careering back.

Number Nine rose to the occasion; their year of Jubilee, so long delayed, had come at last. The boys joined in the chase, and soon the master became the pursued as well as the pursuer. The girls shrieked and fled to the wall, all except such amazons as Nancy Caldwell and Roarin' Sandy's Teenie, who joined in the race, materially assisting Peter by getting in the master's way or catching hold of his flying coat-tails.

The chase did not last long; the prey, exhausted, fled out of doors and the master subsided into a chair. He brought the school to some semblance of order and made a feeble attempt at teaching. But by the afternoon he was uproariously genial. He spent an hour conducting a competition in which the boy who could stand longest on the hot stove received the highest marks, and finally went to sleep with his feet on the desk and his red handkerchief spread over his face.

But the affair was not without material benefit to Scotty. In his gallant refutation of the charge

against him, and in the miraculous way he had averted the master's vengeance, he had won a place in the heart of every MacDonald. Thereafter, no one outside the clan dared give him his English name, and at last the fact that he possessed one almost faded from his friends', as well as his own, mind.

IV

"CAPE CANADA"

The ocean bursts in very wrath,
The waters rush and whirl
As the hardy diver cleaves a path
Down to the treasured pearl.

—George Herbert Clarke.

THE days sped swiftly, and Scotty learned many things both in and out of school. In the latter department his chief instructor was his nearest neighbour. Peter Lauchie was fourteen, and a wonderful man of the world in Scotty's eyes; but in spite of the great disparity of years the two were much together. From his companion Scotty learned many great lessons. The first and cardinal principle laid down was that all who hailed from the Oa must wage internecine war upon the Flats and must despise and ignore all English and Lowlanders. Another was that one might as well make up one's mind to attend to business during McAllister's glacial period, but that, when a more genial atmosphere pervaded the school, the farther one went

in inventing new forms of mischief the more likely was one to become a hero.

Peter Lauchie further explained that all Pat Murphy's crew were nothing but Fenians. He pronounced the evil word in a whisper, and added in a more sepulchral tone that the Caldwell boys and a lot more Irish from the Flats, yes, and "Hoak" Tucker's people, too, were Orangemen. These terrible disclosures filled Scotty with vague alarm; for, though he strove to keep his companionship a secret, there could be no doubt that most of his time at school was spent in the very pleasant company of Danny Murphy and "Hash" Tucker; and furthermore that, since the day she had saved him from old McAllister's clutches, Nancy Caldwell had been the bright, particular star of his existence. He had no doubt that Nancy returned his devotion, either; for she brought him big lumps of maple sugar and the rosiest apples, and was always anxious that he should share her cake. Of course, she was apt to exact payment for these favours, and would chase him all over the school and kiss him in spite of his fiercest struggles. But, nevertheless, Nancy held his heart. Surely she could not be anything very wicked. Fenians he knew something about; the Fenian Raids had been talked of in his home ever

since he could remember. Orangemen might not be quite so bad. He made up his mind he would ask Hamish all about it.

There was quite a little circle of friends about the fire that evening; Long Lauchie MacDonald and three of his grown-up sons had come over for a chat, and of course Weaver Jimmie was there, having been turned out of Kirsty John's house at the point of the potato masher.

Like most of the Highlanders, Long Lauchie was aptly described by his name. He was a tall, thin, attenuated man. Everything about him seemed to run to a point and vanish; his long, thin hands, his flimsy pointed beard, even his long nose and ears helped out his character. He rarely indulged in conversation, coming out of an habitual reverie only occasionally to make a remark. Nevertheless he was of a sociable turn and was often seen at Big Malcolm's fireside.

The company sat round in a comfortable, hump-backed circle, emitting clouds of smoke and discussing the affairs of the Empire; for these men's affections were still set on the old land, and that which touched Britain was vital to them.

Then Old Farquhar started upon a tale, so long and rambling that Rory took his fiddle and strummed

impatiently in the background. Scotty understood enough of Gaelic to gather that it was the story of a beautiful maiden who had died that night when her father and brother and lover lay slain in the bloody massacre of Glencoe.

Impatient of the high-flown Gaelic phrases, Scotty flew to Hamish, and his indulgent chum put aside the book and told him the story, and why the MacDonalds hated the name of Orange. Scotty went back to the fire, his cheeks aflame with excitement. Hereafter he would fight everything and anything remotely connected with the name of Orange. See if he wouldn't!

The conversation had turned to quite a different subject. Weaver Jimmie had the floor now, and had almost forgotten his embarrassing appendages in the thrill of relating his one great story; the story of how his brother fought the Fenians at Ridgeway.

"Eh, eh," sighed Long Lauchie, "it would maybe be what the prophets would be telling, indeed, about wars and rumours of wars!"

For Long Lauchie not only saw sermons in stones, and books in the running brooks, but discerned in the everyday occurrences about him fulfilment of dire prophecy.

"Hooch!" cried Big Malcolm, "I would rather

be having a Fenian raid any day than an Orangeman living in the same township."

Long Lauchie sadly shook his head and went off into a series of sighs and ejaculations, as was his way, receding farther and farther until his voice died away and he sat gazing into space.

"Aye, indeed, and mebby you'll be gettin' one," cried Weaver Jimmie, wagging his head. "Pete Nash himself told me that Dan Murphy and that Connor crew an' all them low Irish would be saying at the corner the other night that they would jist be gettin' up a Fenian Raid o' their own some o' these fine days, an' be takin' the Glen, whatever."

"Horo!" Callum Fiach arose and came forward, the joy of a conflict dancing in his eyes. "Hech, but I wish they would!"

"Whisht ye, Callum!" cried his father sternly. "Let the evil one alone. I'll have no son o' mine mixin' with such goin's on!"

The young man eyed his father laughingly. "You'd stay at home if there was a Fenian Raid, wouldn't you?" he asked teasingly.

Big Malcolm glanced uneasily towards his wife. His was a hard position to fill amid the fighting MacDonalds; his whole life was a struggle between his inherited tendencies and his religious convictions. He

preached peace on earth and good will towards all men; and believed implicitly that the meek should inherit the earth; but his warlike spirit was always clamouring to be up in arms, and sometimes, in spite even of the strong influence of his wife, it broke all bounds. He shook his head at his son's raillery and made no reply. Not for a long time had he yielded to temptation, but he felt it was not safe to boast.

"Well, if the Fenians ever come to take Canady again, I hope I'll be there!" cried Rory gaily, breaking into an old warlike Jacobite air.

Weaver Jimmie threw one leg over the other, with great nonchalance. "They may take Canady, whatever; but they'll not be taking Oro!" he remarked firmly.

"Kirsty 'll be lookin' after Oro!" cried Callum. "Losh, but she'd bang the senses out of the wildest Fenian that ever grew, if she got after him!"

"They didn't take much when they did come," said Long Lauchie's Hugh. "Only a few bullets. Say, though, don't you wish you'd been there?"

Scotty listened, his heart torn with conflicting emotions. He wanted to fight the Fenians now, but with Danny a Fenian, and Nancy and Hash Orangemen, what would become of him? He guessed that Callum had some scheme afoot and he kept close to

him all evening and heard him conferring with Long Lauchie's boys in low tones. There was something about the Murphys, and getting them stirred up, and finally a compact to all be at the glen the following afternoon.

The next day Scotty used all his powers to effect a journey to the glen, too. He had some difficulty, however, for it was Saturday and Granny wanted him with her; but by dint of assistance from Hamish he accomplished his aim, and in the afternoon he drove away on the front seat of the big sleigh between Grandaddy and Callum, full of exuberant joy.

The Glen was a small community at a bend in the River Oro, just a mile east of the schoolhouse. Though it was near his home, Scotty had not been in it since he was a baby. He was wildly eager to see the place. To him it was a great metropolis, for it contained a tavern and a store, yes, and a real mill where they made flour. And Hamish had promised to show him the great water wheel that made the mill go, and they were to spend an hour at Thompson's store, and most of all he was anxious to learn the outcome of the boys' mysterious plans of the night before.

The day was delightful, with all the world a gleam of blue and silver, the glittering landscape softened

here and there by the restful grey tints of the forest. The blue skies with their dazzling white clouds, and the shimmering white earth with its bright blue shadows, were so bewilderingly alike that one might well wonder whether he was in heaven or on earth. The air was electric, setting the blood tingling, and, as the sleigh slipped along down the winding road that led to the river, Scotty churned up and down on the seat and could with difficulty restrain himself from leaping out and turning somersaults in the snow.

The highway suddenly emerged from a belt of pine forest and descended into a little round valley made by the bend in the river. Here lay "the Glen," the central point of the surrounding communities. Scotty grew quieter and his eyes bigger as they followed the winding steep road that led into its depths. There was the mill by the river, giving out a strange rumbling sound; and beside it the house of old Sandy Hamilton, the miller; and there, on the northern slope of the river bank, was Weaver Jimmie's little shanty, with the loom clattering away inside; and right at the corner stood Thompson's store and opposite it Peter Nash's tavern.

So many houses all in one clearing! Scotty could scarcely believe his eyes. And yet the poor little place had, after all, a greater importance than the

child could imagine. The Glen was to the grown part of the community what the school was to the younger portion. It lay within the boundaries of the four different settlements, and as clearings began to widen and social intercourse became easier, it had gradually become a place where men met for mutual help or hindrance, as the case might be. Here the several nationalities mingled, and though they did not realise the fact, here they were laying the foundations of a great nation. Such a vast work as this could scarcely be carried on without some commotion; the chemist must look for explosions when he produces a strange new compound from diverse elements; and it was, therefore, no wonder that the crucible in the valley of the Oro was often the scene of much boiling and seething. Then the tavern came, with its brain-destroying fire, and sometimes after harvest, when the Fighting MacDonalds and the belligerent Murphys met before it, the noise of the fray might be heard in the farthest-off clearing of the Oa.

Scotty's eyes rested fearfully on the tavern. It was a common log building, wider than the ordinary ones and with a porch in front and a lean-to behind. To the boy its appearance was a great surprise and some disappointment. Grandaddy always spoke

of it as "a den of iniquity"; and Scotty's fancy had pictured such a den as Daniel had been cast into, which he had seen many times in Granny's big Bible.

He was rather sorry they did not stop there, the inside might be more romantic; but he soon forgot it in the excitement of other scenes; for they went to the mill and Sandy Hamilton, all floury and smiling, took him down to where the water came thundering over the big wheel; and then, while the boys went off with the team, Big Malcolm took his grandson to the most wonderful place yet, the store.

This was the most important place in the Glen, and the man who kept it, James Thompson, or Store Thompson, as the neighbours called him, was the most important and influential member of the community. He was a fine, upright, intelligent man and was known far and wide for his learning. He possessed a vocabulary of polysyllables that never failed to confound an opponent in argument, and all the township could tell how he once vanquished a great university graduate, who was visiting Captain Herbert at Lake Oro. He was often identified by this illustrious deed, and was pointed out to strangers as, "Store Thompson, him that downed the Captain's college man."

Big Malcolm and Store Thompson, though the latter was a Lowlander, had been fast friends ever since they had come to Canada. They were slightly above the average pioneer in intelligence and had many interests in common; so for this reason, as well as a matter of principle, Big Malcolm avoided the tavern and spent his leisure moments with his friend.

As they entered, Store Thompson was busy weighing out sugar for a customer, and glanced up. He was a tall man, with a kind, intelligent face and a high, bland forehead. He wore steel-rimmed spectacles, but, when not reading, had them pushed up to the scant line of hair on the top of his head, and his pale blue eyes blinked kindly at all around. He stopped in the midst of his calculations to welcome his friends.

"Eh, eh, Malcolm, an' is yon yersel'?" he cried heartily. "It's jist a lang, lang time since Ah seen ye, man; aye, an' it's the wee man ye hae. It's a lang time since ye've been to the Glen; jist an unconscionably lang time; aye, jist that, jist unconscionably like!" He lingered over the word as he shook hands, and then, after inquiring for the wife and family, he turned his attention to Scotty, remarked upon his wonderful growth, and his sturdy

limbs, asked him how he was getting on at school and if he could spell "phthisis."

Scotty hung shyly behind his grandfather, and as soon as the host's attention was turned from him he escaped. He seated himself carefully upon a box of red herring, and his eyes wandered wonderingly around the shop. It was a marvellous place for a boy with sharp eyes and an inquiring mind. Down one side ran a counter made of smoothed pine boards and behind it rose a row of shelves reaching to the raftered ceiling and containing everything the farmers could need, from the glass jar of peppermint drops on the top shelf to the web of factory cotton near the floor. The remaining space was crammed with merchandise. There were boxes of boots, bales of cloth, barrels of sugar and salt and kerosene, kegs of nails, chests of tea and boxes of patent medicines; and the combination of odours was not the least wonderful thing in this wonderful museum. Nothing escaped Scotty's eyes, from the festoons of dried apples suspended from the dark raftered ceiling to the pile of axe-handles on the floor in the corner. He sat utterly absorbed, while his grandfather and Store Thompson talked. There was much to tell on one side, at least, for Store Thompson and the schoolmaster took a weekly newspaper between

them, and it all had to be gone over, especially the news from Scotland.

Store Thompson's wife, a bright, little red-cheeked woman came hustling in to greet Big Malcolm, and ask him in for a cup of tea. "Ah've had the Captain an' his sister an' the wee leddy to denner," she whispered proudly, "an' they'll jist be goin' in a minit, an' ye'll come an' have a cup o' tea with them, jist."

But Big Malcolm, who had arisen at her invitation, suddenly sat down again. His face darkened, and he stoutly refused the joint invitations of husband and wife. Then the lady espied Scotty in his corner, and bore down upon him; she secured a handful of pink "bull's-eyes" from a jar behind the counter, and slipped them into his chubby fist, patted his curly head and declared he was "jist Callum over again." And Scotty smiled up at her, well pleased at being likened to his hero; but when she caught his face between her hands and tried to kiss him, he dodged successfully; for, now that he was a big boy and going to school, not even Granny might kiss him in public.

When she had trotted back to her guests in the house, Scotty caught a few words of the conversation that aroused his interest.

"Ye hae the boys in wi' ye the day, Malcolm?" Store Thompson asked, with a note of anxiety in his voice.

"Yes?" Big Malcolm looked up inquiringly.

"Oh, Ah suppose it's jist naething, jist a—a triviality, like; but Ah see there's a great crood frae the Oa, the day, an' jist as many Murphys an' Connors; an' Ah heerd a lot o' wild talk aboot Fenians, an' the like. They would be sayin' Pat Murphy was a Fenian; an' that Tam Caldwell would be for sendin' him oot o' the Glen. Ah'm hopin' there'll be nae trouble."

Big Malcolm's face was full of anxiety. "Indeed, I will be hopin' so too," he said in an embarrassed tone. "You will be knowin' my weakness. I would not be hearin' about it. I hope the lads——"

"Oh, Ah suppose it's jist naething," said Store Thompson reassuringly. "Indeed it's yersel' that's past all sich things as yon, Malcolm, never fear."

But Big Malcolm shook his head; for years he had purposely avoided the Glen, to be out of the way of temptation; for the sound of strife was to him like the bugle call to a war charger. He fidgeted in his seat and looked anxiously towards the door.

Scotty went over to the window and stood watch-

ing the crowds of men come and go across the street.

He could not quite make out what was going on, but there seemed to be a great commotion, for a big crowd of men had suddenly appeared from nowhere. And there was Danny's father, and Nancy's father, apparently having high words; and yes, there was Callum right in the centre of the seething mass.

There were mingled cries of "Popery" and "Fenians" and "Orangemen." Then suddenly above the noise there came a roar, "The Oa! The Oa! MacDonald! MacDonald!"

"Grandaddy! oh, Grandaddy!" cried Scotty shrilly, "they're killin' Callum, they're killin' Rory!"

At the first sound of the MacDonalds' battle-cry Big Malcolm raised his head like a stag who has heard a challenge, and, at the boy's cry, he cleared the intervening space with one bound, flung open the door and shot out into the street.

"Malcolm, Malcolm!" cried Store Thompson in dismay, but Big Malcolm had heard the call to arms and nothing in the township of Oro could hold him back.

Scotty sprang to follow him, but Store Thompson closed the door, and his wife, who had re-entered, put her arms about the boy and drew him back.

"Ye mustna gang oot there, ma lad," said the storekeeper. "Yon's no place for a child; aye," he added, "an' no place for yer grandfather either!"

"Lemme go!" shouted Scotty, struggling equally with his captor and his sobs. "They—'re—killin' —Rory! Lemme go!"

"Yer Grandaddy said ye were to bide here, laddie, mindye!" cried Store Thompson's wife soothingly.

At the reminder of his grandfather's commands Scotty collapsed. He retired to the window once more, bathed in tears of helpless rage. But another shout from the MacDonalds sent him flying again to the door, where he once more encountered the ample skirts of his keeper.

"Ah'd niver look Marget Malcolm in the face again, Jeames, if onything happened the bairn," she cried, struggling with Scotty's sturdy muscles. "He maun jist bide!"

"What in heaven's name is the matter with that child?" demanded a laughing voice from the rear of the shop. "Has he an attack of spasms?"

Scotty stopped struggling and looked up. In his absorption over the battle outside he had not noticed that three strangers had entered the shop with Store Thompson's wife, and he drew back

abashed. The speaker was a short, well-built man under middle age, with an air and appearance quite different from the rough exterior of Scotty's own people. There was a look of command in his merry blue eyes and an air of superiority in his straight, trim figure, that impressed the child. The other two strangers stood back by the stove; one, a tall lady, the rustle of whose black silk dress gave Scotty a feeling of awe, the other a tiny girl, so wrapped up in furs and shawls that he could see nothing of her, except a bunch of golden curls.

"What's the matter with the confounded little fire-eater?" asked the man, coming forward.

"It's all his kin that's in yon fecht oot by, sir," said Store Thompson's wife apologetically. "The puir wee mannie!"

"Oh, I see; he's starting early. I never come to the Glen but you entertain me with a battle, James. A bad crowd, those fellows from the Flats. What's your name, youngster? Murphy, eh?"

"NO!" Scotty shouted the refutation in indignant horror. This was worse than being English! "It will be MacDonald!"

"Oh, by Jove, one of the Fighting MacDonalds!" The man burst into a hearty laugh. "I might have known."

"But yon's not yer real name, laddie," said Store Thompson's wife. "Tell Captain Herbert yer name; it's jist a fine one. He's Big Malcolm MacDonald's grandson, Captain, but his faether was an English gentleman, like yersel, an' his mither was a bonny, bonny bit lassie; aye, an' puir Marget lost her."

The man was gazing down at the boy absorbedly. "What's his name?" he demanded sharply. But Scotty stood silent and scowling. Confess his disgrace to this man whom he knew Granddaddy despised? Never!

"His patronymic," said Store Thompson ceremoniously, "is Stanwell, Captain; and his baptismal name is jist the same as his father's was, Ralph Everett; Ralph Everett Stanwell!"

When Store Thompson delivered himself of any such high-sounding speech he was always rewarded by signs of a deep impression made upon his hearers. He had come to look for such results; but he was totally unprepared for the expression of aghast wonder that his words produced in the face of Captain Herbert.

"Stanwell!" he cried, "Ralph Stanwell!" He glanced hurriedly at the two standing at the other end of the shop and an expression of relief passed over his face when he saw the tall lady was not

attending. "It can't be!" he said, lowering his tone, "Captain Stanwell's child died with the parents!"

"No, sir," said Store Thompson wonderingly. "Big Malcolm an' his son brought him from Toronto when he was jist an infant."

The man still stood gazing down at the boy. Scotty's face was dark with anger. Store Thompson, who pretended to be his grandfather's friend, to publish his disgrace before these strangers! It was unbearable! "I'll not be English," he muttered. "I'll jist be Scotch, an' my name's MacDonald!" He clenched his fists and wagged his curly head threateningly. "He must be right," said the man eagerly. "He should certainly know."

Store Thompson shook his head smilingly. "He lives in the Oa, sir," he confided in a low tone, "an' he wants to be a MacDonald. But yon's his name, nevertheless!"

Captain Herbert turned away abruptly, as though he had not heard. "Eleanor, I shall be ready almost immediately," he said to the lady in the silk gown, and, with a hasty good-bye, he stepped outside, Store Thompson following. Scotty slipped out behind them; the fight was over, the Murphys and their friends were evidently retreating. He could see his grandfather's tall, commanding form in the midst

of a victorious crowd. He drew a great breath of relief. As he stood gazing proudly at them, he felt his hand touched gently by little, soft, gloved fingers. He wheeled round to find a pair of big, blue eyes looking at him from out of the coquettish rim of a fur-trimmed hood. The eyes were very sympathetic. "I'm Scotch, too," came in a whisper from inside the wrappings, "an' it's nice to be Scotch, isn't it?"

Scotty's heart opened immediately; here was someone who evidently believed in him.

"But—but, won't you be Captain Herbert's little girl?" he asked, wonderingly.

"Yes," she answered with a baby-lisp, that made him feel very big and superior. "He's my uncle Walter; but my mamma was Scotch, an' my name's Isabel Douglas Herbert, an' Uncle Walter says I'm his Scotch lassie!"

"Oh!" Scotty looked at her with new interest. "An' you're Kirsty John's little girl, too, ain't you?"

"Yes," she cried delightedly. "Do you know Kirsty?"

"Yes."

"Oh, an' Gran'mamma MacDonald? An' Weaver Jimmie?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I love Jimmie; he tells lovely stories when I go to see Kirsty, 'bout fairies, an'—an' everything. Do you know any stories?"

A silken rustle in the doorway made Scotty draw back. "Come, Isabel," said the tall lady. She was a very pale lady, with a haughty, weary look in her eyes; and Scotty wondered how the little girl could catch hold of that silk dress so fearlessly.

"Goo-bye," she said, pausing a moment. "Goo-bye, little boy." She poked the fur-lined hood very close to his face, and Scotty drew back in alarm for fear she might be going to kiss him. The little girl looked disappointed, nevertheless she smiled radiantly. "I like you," she whispered, "an' I'm comin' to visit you next time I go to Kirsty's; goo-bye!"

She danced off towards the sleigh, and was bundled in among the warm robes. She waved her hand to Scotty as they dashed away, and turned back to gaze at him standing on the step.

"Man," said Store Thompson, stamping the snow from his feet as he entered, "Ah niver saw the Captain act like yon before. He was jist,—aye, he was jist what Ah would call inimical; aye, jist inimical, like!"

Store Thompson was more perturbed over the

hearty Captain's strange behaviour than he was over the commotion that had just taken place at his door. Such affairs were of too frequent occurrence to call for comment. But when Big Malcolm returned for Scotty, the fierce heat of the conflict still blazed in his eyes and his friend suddenly remembered what had happened.

"Eh, Malcolm, Malcolm, Ah'm sorry for this!" he cried. "These fichts are no work for a Chreestian man!"

"And would I be sitting here, James Thompson, an' see that piece o' Popish iniquity kill my son?" demanded Big Malcolm fiercely.

Store Thompson held up his hands. "What, what?" he cried, "would it be the Murphys and the MacDonalds again?"

"It was a Fenian raid, James!" shouted Tom Caldwell, coming up to the sleigh, with a proud swagger, "an' Malcolm here was helpin' us Orangemen put it down, sure!"

Weaver Jimmie, his diffidence all vanished, threw his cap into the air and shouted his old shibboleth, "They may take Canady, but they'll not be taking Oro!"

"The Orangemen 'll kape Canada!" cried Tom Caldwell reassuringly.

"Hoh, him an' his 'kape Canada,'" cried Callum Fiach in disgust, as he pitched himself into the sleigh. "Let's get out o' this!"

"Eh, eh!" cried Store Thompson, standing in the doorway to see them depart, "ye MacDonalds are aye too ready wi' the neeves!"

Big Malcolm took the reins and drove away without another word. The joy of battle was always succeeded by a season of depression. His old friend's reproof had already begun to work repentance in his breast.

The homeward drive was silent and gloomy. Even Callum forbore to talk; for he was uncomfortably conscious that he had had more to do with setting the Orangemen and the Catholics against each other than he would like Big Malcolm to know. He had not foreseen that all the MacDonalds would plunge into it, and his father with them, and was rather uneasy at the havoc he had caused. For this would bring sorrow upon the mother at home.

But Scotty could not be silent, he was alive with curiosity; and, taking advantage of his grandfather's gloomy absorption, he crept out from between the two on the front seat, and got close to the source of all knowledge, Hamish.

He overflowed with questions. Why should the

MacDonalds be helping Orangemen? And hadn't Hash Tucker's father and a lot more from the Tenth been on their side, too? And how in the name of all nationalities did it happen that the Caldwells and the Tuckers came to be fighting together against the Murphys? And weren't Orangemen far worse than Fenians, anyway?

The confusion in Scotty's mind was like that which befell the builders of the Tower of Babel; and for once Hamish failed to satisfy him. He seemed rather ashamed of the fact that they had helped a Caldwell in battle, and was rather inclined to drop the subject.

That evening at home was something new to Scotty. A gloomy silence pervaded the place, and there was a look in Granny's eyes that made the boy want to put his head into her lap and cry. There were no prayers before they retired, either; there always came a stage in Big Malcolm's repentence which consisted almost entirely of religious exercises, but that was not yet.

Scotty felt vaguely that there was something terribly wrong, for the boys, even Hamish, went off after supper, and Old Farquhar did not sing his accustomed song before retiring. And when Scotty went up to bed in the loft he left Granny praying by the bed in the corner, and he could hear the steady

tramp, tramp of his grandfather's feet up and down in the snow outside. He half woke late in the night and found that Hamish was beside him; the problems of the day were still troubling his dreams.

"Hamish," he whispered, "where's Cape Canady?"

"What?" growled Hamish sleepily.

"Where's Cape Canady? Tom Caldwell said somethin' about it, an' the Master learned the Fourth Class all about capes yesterday, an' he wouldn't be saying anything about that one!"

But Hamish was snoring; and outside the steady tramp, tramp of feet went up and down in the snow.

V

THE REFORMATION

O strong hearts, guarding the birthright of our glory,
  Worth your best blood this heritage that ye guard!
These mighty streams resplendent with our story,
  These iron coasts by rage of seas unjarred—
What fields of peace these bulwarks will secure!
  What vales of plenty these calm floods supply!
Shall not our love this rough, sweet land make sure,
  Her bounds preserve inviolate, though we die?

—C. G. D. Roberts.

THE fathers of the Scottish settlement were gathered about the stove in Store Thompson's shop. This emporium was a respectable rival of Pete Nash's tavern across the way. Anyone, weary of the noise and wrangling which characterised that lively establishment, might step across to Store Thompson's haven and find rest and quiet, a never-failing hospitality and a much better social atmosphere. To-night the company represented the best the settlement could produce, several of the MacDonalds and a few of the inhabitants of the Glen.

Big Malcolm was among them. It was his first

visit to the Glen since the day of his disgrace, and he had not yet quite recovered his old genial spirits.

One small lamp burned dimly on the counter and the forms of boxes and barrels loomed up fantastically in shadowy corners. In the circle about the stove the men's faces shone out spectrally from the cloud of smoke produced by some half-dozen pipes.

As usual, Store Thompson was taking the lead in the conversation. He stood leaning over the counter in the little ring of light, his spectacles pushed up on his benign-looking forehead, his finger-tips brought carefully together. In company with the schoolmaster, Store Thompson had begun his winter's course of reading and was more than usually oratorical.

"Aye," he was saying, "a dictionary 's a graund institution; aye, jist a graund institution, like. When me an' the master now meets a word we dinna ken, we jist run him doon in the dictionary, an' there he is, ye see!"

"Oh, books will be fine things," said Big Malcolm, "but that Hamish of ours will jist be no use when he will be getting his nose into one, whatever. And he will be making the wee man jist as bad. Eh, it's him that'll make the reader!" His eyes shone as they always did at any mention of his grandson.

"Aye, Hamish is the man for the books!" cried Store Thompson enthusiastically. "How is he gettin' on wi' Ivanhoe?"

"Och, he would be finishing it the night after he brought it home, indeed; and now the little upstart will be trying his hand at it whatever."

"Feenishin' it in twa nichts!" cried Store Thompson, aghast at such extravagance. "Hut, tut! yon's no way to use a book. When me an' the wife read Ivanhoe last winter, we jist read a wee bit at a time for fear it wouldna last; it wes that interestin'. Aye, books is too scarce to be used yon way."

"And what will you and the master be reading, this winter, James?" inquired Long Lauchie, who had just returned from one of his mental excursions.

Store Thompson's face beamed. "Eh, it's a graund book this time, Lauchie, jist an Astronomy, like."

"Eh, losh, an' what would it be about?"

"All aboot the stars, aye an' the moon an' the constellations, like."

"Eh, eh!" Long Lauchie was very much impressed. "And would it be telling about the comets, whatever?"

Store Thompson stood erect and put his finger tips together.

"A comet," he declared solemnly, "a comet, Lauchlan, so far as Ah can mak' oot frae the book, is jist naething more nor less than an indestructible, incomprehensible combustion o' matter; aye, jist that, like."

There was an impressive silence. When Store Thompson took his flights through the vast spaces of knowledge he was always hard to follow, but when he soared to the heights of astronomy the district fathers felt him to be unapproachable.

"'Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion.'" The silence was broken by a deep, rolling voice; a voice so powerful that even when softened, as it now was, it gave the impression of vast possibilities. The speaker was like his voice, huge and strong; the thick, waving hair covering his massive head, and his bushy beard were a dark iron-grey, which, with his strong features and bristling eyebrows, gave him the appearance of a man carved from iron. It was Praying Donald, the earliest pioneer of the Oa, and the most pious man in many settlements.

"'Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion,' that will be the word of the Holy Book, and it will be a poor thing to be seeking the stars first."

Every eye was turned upon the speaker. Praying

Donald was a man who spoke seldom, but when he did everyone listened.

"Yes, indeed, it is the Word of Jehovah we should be reading," he continued, "for I would be reading last night, and the Lord would be speaking to me through the Word, and it was, 'Blow ye the trumpet in Zion. . . . Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and gloominess and of thick darkness.' And it will be this land that it will be coming upon. For there will be the drink and the fighting, and there will be no minister, and no house of the Lord, for we will be in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity.

"Yes, we must be praying, praying night and day, and maybe that the Lord in His mercy will be sending us a minister; for if He will not be visiting us in His mercy, He will be coming in His wrath, and who shall stand in the day of His judgment?"

Weaver Jimmie flung one leg over the other nervously. Long Lauchie sighed, and Store Thompson murmured, "Undeniable, undeniable." But Big Malcolm sat staring at the speaker as if fascinated. Praying Donald's life of stern piety, and his knowledge of the laws governing human action, had often

enabled him to foresee events, and had given him the reputation of a prophet. The memory of the scene in which he had so lately taken part came over Big Malcolm with overwhelming force.

"It is the true word," he whispered, as though smitten with a sudden fear. "Och, and it will be Malcolm MacDonald that will be visited in wrath for his sins, whatever!'

"Ye're richt, Donald," said Store Thompson, at length, "what wi' the whuskey an' the wild goin's on this place is jist in a bad state. But it's thae Eerish. Man," he continued emphatically, "thae Eerish, whether Catholic or Protestant, are jist a menace to the country, aye, jist yon, jist a menace, like!"

"It is the Oa that will be as bad as the Flats," said Praying Donald relentlessly. "They will be forsaking their God and be following after their own evil desires!"

Long Lauchie suddenly opened his eyes. He was in the habit of seizing upon a remark and retiring with it slowly, repeating it over and over in a lessening whisper until he was lost in the echoing caverns of imagination, and was wont to emerge from these absent fits suddenly with the air of a diver who comes to the surface with a great treasure. He

came to life at this moment, his eyes wide open, his manner alert: "Eh, it will be a fulfilment o' the prophecy o' Jeremiah, 'Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.' Eh, eh, out o' the north—the north—it would perhaps be meaning the Oa," he whispered fearfully to Weaver Jimmie. "Out of the north—the north——" His voice gradually died away and he was lost in meditation.

"This place is not like the auld land," said old Sandy Hamilton, moodily. "Man, we werna bothered wi' ony Fenians, nor Orangemen, nor sik like there!"

"Times'll be better now the Murphys know their place," said Weaver Jimmie confidently, pitching one leg over the other. "Callum led a fine charge. The Fenians may take Canady, but they'll not——"

"Hooch!" Big Malcolm broke in fiercely. Weaver Jimmie did not properly belong either by age or sentiments to this gathering, and his remark regarding Callum was very much out of place. "Yon son o' mine will jist be a breeder o' mischief in this place, James MacDonald!" he cried, "an' it's little check you will be on him, whatever. It is high time, indeed, that ye were both settlin' down an' stoppin' such doings! But och, och," he added with a sudden

change of tone, "it is myself will be the worst of them all."

Weaver Jimmie heaved a sentimental sigh. "It will not be any fault of mine that I will not be settled down," he muttered gloomily.

Praying Donald's rumbling voice had arisen again. "Yes, oh yes, the evil will be growing; and the Judge will be coming in His wrath and we will jist be like Sodom and Gomorrah!"

"Oh, indeed," broke in Store Thompson, "the good Lord is slow to anger and of great mercy, Donald, ye mind!"

"Mercy!" roared Praying Donald. "Eh, James, do not be deceiving yourselves! He will be just. We must be reaping what we sow. This place is sowing the wind and it will be reaping the whirlwind. 'For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.'"

Long Lauchie came suddenly to the surface, this time with a precious pearl: "And showing mercy unto thousands," he continued softly. "Oh, yes, indeed and indeed, unto thousands, mercy unto thousands!" He sank again into the ocean of his imagination, and the tide of conversation flowed over him unheeded.

"'Visiting the sins of the father upon the children,'" repeated Big Malcolm bitterly. He dropped his head into his hands and groaned.

There was a long silence. These men were facing a great problem in the building up of this new nation, one which presented graver difficulties than they had met even in the toil and stress of breaking the forest. In the early days the social problem had not arisen; the settler had been too busy to permit of its troubling him. He needed all his time and strength to battle with this new land and compel her to give him his due of bread and shelter. But now, the stern young stepmother was yielding to those whom she recognised as worthy to be her sons, and was rewarding them with wider pasture-lands and waving fields of grain. Now the pioneer found time to draw breath and look about him. All through the years of weary hardship, homesickness for the old land had been heavy on his heart and his love for it had grown. And now, with some time for sentiment and reflection, he found his thoughts turning thither; old loves were re-awakened, old traditions revived, old enmities fanned into flame. The still wild stretches of forest called on all sides for wild, free action; the wind swept down over the Oro hills, straight from the vast expanse of the Great Lakes, setting the blood leap-

ing for vigorous action. Little wonder, then, that in their first days of leisure men should go a few steps farther back towards the savage stage from which we are all such a short distance removed. And little wonder, too, that the wiser ones trembled lest their new land of promise, now so smiling, so prodigal of her favours, might be scarred with the marks of evil.

And so, these simple seers, these men, ignorant in the world's wisdom, but many of them secure in the knowledge of One, whom to know is life eternal, turned in their fear and perplexity to the fountain-head of righteousness.

"We must be having a prayer meeting, lads," said Praying Donald at length. "We could be having them all this winter, once a week, and maybe the good Lord will be sending us a minister."

"Eh, if we could get a meenister like auld Angus McGregor!" said Store Thompson. "Ah jist heerd him once, but it was a veesitation, aye, jist a veesitation, like. D'ye mind yon sermon, Lauchie, on 'Simon Peter, lovest thou me'?"

Long Lauchie awoke from his reverie with a start. The mention of the great Scottish preacher set going a train of tender memories. "Eh, Mr. McGregor!" he cried, "Mr. McGregor,—eh, there will not be

such men nowadays I will be fearing. He was the man of God, indeed—yes—oh, yes——"

And as he faded away into the distance, the others made the necessary arrangements. They would hold a series of prayer meetings in the Oa and the Glen to last during the winter. Store Thompson made a feeble suggestion that they might join the Methodists, Tom Caldwell's faction in the Flats. For Tom, who was as active at wrestling in prayer as in any other sphere, in company with the population of the Tenth, had secured the services of a primitive Methodist preacher, and was holding nightly meetings in the schoolhouse, where much good was done. But the noisy devotions of the Flats met with little favour in the sight of the Oa. Praying Donald, conscious of the purity of their motive, had visited the Methodists once, and had now little to say in commendation.

"They will be doing the best they know, James," he declared, "but the Lord will be taking no pleasure in tumult and confusion, and we will jist be holding our meetings at the neighbours' houses, whatever."

And so the first meeting was arranged to be held at Long Lauchie's, and, before parting, the little group knelt about the boxes and bales, and in low, solemn tones like the breaking of waves on a rocky

shore, Praying Donald besought the Eternal Father for a blessing on this new land and an instilling of the righteousness that exalteth a nation.

The news of the meeting was spread through the community, chiefly by Weaver Jimmie; and was received with much thankfulness by most of the people, who had been longing all the days of their exile for something resembling the church services of the old land.

When the night of the first meeting arrived, Scotty was in a state of carefully subdued excitement. He knew by his grandfather's manner that the occasion was one calling for solemnity of demeanour; but he could not help feeling very much worked up over the thought of going away from home after dark; it made one feel almost as big and important as Callum. He could scarcely believe his senses when they covered the fire, closed the door and all drove away in the big sleigh. Granny sat on the front seat beside Grandaddy, another strange circumstance, for Granny never went anywhere either by day or by night, except when a neighbour was sick. Scotty further emphasised his grown-up feeling by sitting behind with the boys; they conversed in low tones, and Callum said he'd "a good mind to skedaddle off into the bush." But they were unusually quiet.

Rory even forbore to whistle, and the boy found he had to amuse himself by peering into the silent blackness of the pine forest, or gazing up at the strip of clear star-spangled heavens that shone between the lines of trees.

Long Lauchie's house, which stood on a hill at the end of a very long lane, was brightly lighted and very silent. This last fact was worthy of note, for what with the misdemeanours of Long Lauchie's own sons, and the assistance they received from Big Malcolm's boys, the place had long been a rival of Pete Nash's establishment for noise, though, happily, it was of a much more innocent character.

The room they entered, kitchen, dining-room and living-room, was furnished, like all the pioneers' homes, with the plainest necessities; but Long Lauchie's family had grown-up girls in it, and the place showed the touch of their fingers; a few bright rugs on the floor, and on the wall some pictures in homemade frames. Then there were some oil lamps, replacing the candles, and the house was so far in the van of progress as to possess a stove, which added not a little to the comfort, and detracted much from the picturesqueness, of the room.

The family consisted of a troop of boys and girls, all ages and sizes, from big, six-foot Hector to little

tangle-haired Betty. They were already gathered, and several of the neighbours' families had arrived and were seated on the improvised benches along the wall. There were Praying Donald's family, Store Thompson and his wife, several others representative of the Oa and the Glen, and, of course, Weaver Jimmie.

Jimmie's face shone with soap and excitement, and his manner was a series of embarrassed convulsions; for Kirsty John, the cruel object of his hopeless love, was there. A fine, big, strapping young woman she was, with a strong face, and a pair of fearless, black eyes. She sat bolt upright against the log wall, talking to Mary Lauchie, a sweet, pale-faced girl; and occasionally casting a withering glance in the direction of the bench behind the stove, where the Weaver was alternately striving to efface himself and to attract her attention.

Scotty soon managed to slip away from his grandmother, and join Betty and Peter in a corner. He found them in the same state of subdued excitement as he was himself. Peter informed him in a joyous whisper that there was a big cheese in the cupboard, and a johnnycake and blackberry preserves for the visitors, before they left. Scotty's interest in this delightful disclosure did not prevent his noticing

Callum's entrance. Callum had gone with Hector to put up the team and now came marching in, the object of many admiring glances.

He displayed none of Weaver Jimmie's diffidence; but went straight over to where Mary Lauchie sat, and whispered in her ear, and Mary flushed and smiled and her plain face grew quite pretty. Even Kirsty was gracious to the handsome youth, and poor Jimmie nearly twisted his neck out of joint in his jealous efforts to do something commendable in her sight.

But all sounds were suddenly hushed, for Praying Donald was rising to announce the first psalm:

> "I waited for the Lord my God,
> And patiently did bear,
> At length to me He did incline
> My voice and cry to hear."

His deep, rumbling voice had just completed the first few lines when he was interrupted by a clatter of bells. The door swung suddenly open, and, to the amazement of all the assembled Scots, in stalked Tom Caldwell with his wife and family!

The appearance of the leader of Methodism in the stronghold of the Presbyterians was naturally unexpected; but Tom Caldwell had been very friendly

with the MacDonalds since the day they "cleared the Glen of Popery," as he said, and hearing that they were about to imitate the Flats in having a season of prayer, had journeyed all the way to the Oa, resolved to give the neighbours a helping hand in the good work, and infuse a little life and fire into the dead bones of Presbyterianism.

The leaders arose and shook hands with the newcomer solemnly, but heartily; while Long Lauchie's wife and daughters welcomed the family.

"Sure, it's the right track ye're on, Donald!" cried Tom Caldwell heartily, as he seated himself and gazed happily about him; "the Glen's gettin' to be like Sodom, that's what it is, an' it's mesilf that couldn't be lettin' the matin' pass widout comin' up an' givin' ye a helpin' hand. We'll bring down a blessin', glory be; so let's jist fire ahead an' have a rousin' time!"

The MacDonald brethren looked at each other rather aghast. Tom Caldwell's fervour, though well-meant, was a foreign element, savouring of irreverence and Methodistic confusion; but his hearty good will was irresistible; Long Lauchie gave him the place of honour next to the leader, and the meeting commenced.

Scotty scarcely heard the words of the psalm, for

to his delight he found that Nancy had come, too, and was there seated beside her mother. In spite of the fact that Nancy was Irish and tainted with Orange sentiments, Scotty had found it impossible to tear her from his heart. He had long since made up his mind that when he grew big he would go to see her instead of Betty in the evenings. He wondered what Callum would think of her, and glanced up to see that young man staring with all his might at the subject of his thoughts. Nancy was certainly worth a stare; in spite of the fact that she was still at school, she was quite one of the young ladies of the Flats, and when occasion demanded could deport herself quite becoming the name. Her black, curly hair was tied up with a scarlet ribbon that matched her cheeks, her eyes were Irish blue, limpid and dancing, and she had a dimple in the centre of her saucy chin.

Seeing Callum so absorbed, Scotty slid softly up to him. "That's Nancy!" he whispered proudly.

"Is it?" said Callum, with an air of surprise. "Where?"

"Why, there beside Granny, where you're lookin'. Ain't she pretty?"

"Oh, I guess so." Callum showed an indifference that greatly disappointed his nephew. Probably,

though, he considered, Callum would not think of admiring an Irish girl.

At that moment the girl raised her eyes and glanced in their direction. She encountered Scotty's eager gaze, and returned it with a brilliant, laughing glance; then her eyes met Callum's and she instantly turned away with a coquettish toss of her head. Scotty felt she surely might have smiled at Callum, too. He glanced up at the young man again and was rather troubled. He was sure Callum must be very angry at either him or Nancy, for he had never seen his face get red like that unless he were in a rage.

But, meantime, Praying Donald had finished the interrupted psalm and Roarin' Sandy had started the tune. The elder men caught it up, then the women, and lastly the young men about the stove, and the song swelled out slow and solemn, the deep, full-chested notes rolling out into the winter night where the glittering stars and the solemn, silent forest seemed to give back in grand reverberations the words:

> "He put a new song in my mouth
> Our God to magnify!"

In the hush that followed, Praying Donald read a chapter from the Holy Word, read it in tones that

arrested the most careless listener, and even Scotty felt a little tingle go over him at the yearning words:

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

And then they all knelt in prayer, old and young, serious and careless; all bowed before the God for whom their souls, whether they realised it or not, panted as the hart for the cooling streams.

The prayers were all the heartfelt repetition of the sentiment expressed in the psalm. These pioneers were children in a strange land, surrounded by new conditions, and in their wise simplicity went as children to a father for what they most needed. After Praying Donald came Big Malcolm, then Store Thompson, and Roarin' Sandy, and then the leader called upon Tom Caldwell. Tom Caldwell's big Irish heart was overflowing with good-will to his Scottish neighbours; and carried away by his emotions, he prayed long and loud and shouted hallelujahs in a manner that rather alarmed the company. Indeed, Store Thompson's wife, who was considered quite a genteel person in the community, declared afterwards that "it jist garred her ears tingle," and Store Thompson himself, though never given to censure anyone, admitted that though Tom certainly

had a fine gift of prayer, he was, "jist a wee thing tumultuous-like."

The meeting had been very solemn and the youngest person there very well-behaved during the earlier prayers, but after Tom Caldwell came the host of the evening, and the young men began to grow restless. For Long Lauchie was never so long as when at his devotions. Indeed, for years it had been the scandal of the Oa that his sons were in the habit of slipping out during family worship to attend to the "chores" about the stable, returning to appear decorously upon their knees when their father arose.

At Callum Fiach's suggestion the "Lauchie boys" even arranged a competition in which the five sons strove to see who could make the longest excursion during prayer-time. The palm was yielded to Hughie, the third son, who crossed the swamp on skis one evening, and saw Kirsty John chase the Weaver from her door with the porridge stick, arriving home, breathless but triumphant, just before the amen was pronounced. No one quite believed Hughie's story, until it was ruefully corroborated by Jimmie himself; whereupon the limit was declared to be reached, and the boys turned their attention to new fields.

But on this first prayer-meeting night, spurred on by the enthusiasm of the company, Long Lauchie bade fair to give his sons ample opportunity to journey through the length and breadth of the township of Oro and return before he was finished. The pious old man had a fine poetic temperament, and to-night he soared beyond anything his family had ever heard. The petition ramified and expanded to an alarming length, and still showed no signs of stopping. Even Mrs. Lauchie, whose chief pride was her husband's devotional fluency, was somewhat concerned.

There was a restless movement among the young men about the stove. Scotty twisted and squirmed and tried in vain to be still. It was very wicked to open one's eyes during prayer, he knew. Roarin' Sandy's Johnny had told him that if he did he might see the Deil standing behind him. And since then Scotty had been divided between dread of the awful apparition and a natural desire to see what his Santanic Majesty looked like. He was ashamed of his restlessness, for Callum was kneeling beside him motionless. Callum would think him a baby if he moved. He peeped cautiously through his fingers at his uncle. Callum was kneeling at the bench, absolutely still, indeed, but with his eyes wide open and staring

straight at the black, curly head of Tom Caldwell's daughter.

Scotty felt that if it were not very wicked, he would like to straighten up like that and stare at somebody, too. It looked so big and manly. Mastering his fears, he turned cautiously in the direction of Betty, but Betty had slipped to the floor with her tousled yellow head on the bench, and was sound asleep. Scotty closed his eyes again, the droning voice of Long Lauchie floated farther and farther away, he felt himself going, too, somewhere, into immeasurable space, until at last he dropped into the gulf of oblivion. He half woke to find Granny tying a muffler round his neck. He made an ineffectual effort to stop her, for she was saying, "Eh, eh, Granny's poor, wee, sleepy lamb," and he dreaded lest Peter should hear her; only Peter, like all the other people, seemed an immeasurable distance away. Someone else was bending over him, too, and saying, "And you'll be sure to let him come, then?"

"But I'm afraid he would jist be a trouble to yer mother, Kirsty," Granny answered.

"Tuts, not a bit!" was the reply. "Mother'll jist be glad o' him, an' the wee Isabel would be lonely. Ah'm glad she's comin', for mother's jist wearin' to see her again, an' Miss Herbert's sick, poor lady."

"Oh, well, indeed he can go, Kirsty, an' I hope he will not be rough with the little lady."

"Not him." Scotty felt a strong, rough hand pass gently over his curls. "When she comes Ah'll send ye word by yon loon o' a weaver. It'll give him somethin' to do, an' the buddie's jist fair in want for a job."

"Ah, Kirsty, Kirsty!" whispered Granny, "it's too hard ye'll be on poor Jimmie. Take my advice an' marry him, he'll be a good man to you, indeed! There's the sleigh. Come, Hamish, lad, take the lamb out, he will be jist dead asleep, whatever."

As Scotty passed out like a sack of potatoes on Hamish's shoulder, the rush of clear, cold air partly revived him. He cuddled under the blanket close to Granny, and dimly heard the good-nights as each sleigh-load moved down the long lane, not gaily spoken as when the neighbours came in for an evening, but low and subdued, for all were under the spell of the season of prayer. He heard Granny say, "Where's Callum? Don't be leaving the lad," and a voice answered, "He's yonder helpin' Tom Caldwell to hitch," and then Callum sprang in, and the sleigh creaked slowly forward, and Scotty slid away once more down the dim road of dreamland.

VI

AN IGNOMINIOUS TASK

Into the dim woods full of the tombs
Of the dead trees soft in their sepulchres,
Where the pensive throats of the shy birds hidden
Pipe to us strangely entering unbidden,
And tenderly still in the tremulous glooms
The trilliums scatter their white-winged stars.

—Archibald Lampman.

WINTER passed, and then came the spring, with its fresh, warm winds coming up from Lake Simcoe and sweeping away the ice and snow in a mad, joyous rush of water.

Scotty went barefoot just as soon as there was enough bare ground to step upon. He seemed for a time to cast aside all restraint with his shoes and stockings, and when not in school lived a freebooter's life in the forest.

He and Bruce spent much time wandering, plundering and exploring from the edge of the corduroy road where the musk and marigolds and fleur-de-lis grew in glorious profusion all through the green

and golden depths to where the River Oro slipped from its sweet enthralment of reeds and water lilies to go bounding away down the valley to Lake Simcoe. The whole place was a plantation of treasures and teemed with sounds of life: the blue-jay, the song-sparrow, the robin, the noisy, red-winged blackbird, the plaintive pee-wee, the far-off, clear-ringing whitethroat, the jolly woodpecker, the noisy squirrel, and the shy raccoon—Scotty knew them all intimately, learned their ways and lived their life.

He was given to much idle roaming through the swamp, on the way to and from school, too, and when he went to bring home the cows he remained longer than even Granny could excuse. For that simple task should have been performed in a very short time. He could trace the cattle through the woods with the sure instinct of a sleuth-hound, could distinguish Spotty's tracks from Cherry's, and might have found his own little heifer's in the midst of the public highway. But his skill did not help to make him any more expeditious, for he often forgot his errand and would lie full length upon the ground, gazing up into the restless, swishing, green sea above, and dreaming wonderful dreams. Callum declared he was a lazy little beggar and ought to be cowhided to make him move, though where one could be found

to perform that necessary operation the MacDonald family were not prepared to say.

That he did not altogether develop into a little savage was entirely due to Granny's tender care. Nowhere was the influence of her beautiful character felt so strongly as by the little grandson. She, who could command her grown-up sons by her mere presence, and who was slowly but surely transforming Big Malcolm's wild nature, was quietly moulding the boy's character. Scotty early learned the great lessons of life, the lessons of truth and right, and was well grounded in the knowledge of the things that are eternal. He could read the Bible before he ever entered school, and could repeat the Shorter Catechism with a rapidity that sometimes alarmed Granny, as savouring of irreverence. He learned a verse of Scripture by heart every evening of his life, and the Sabbath was a grand review day.

Sunday was always a red-letter day in Scotty's life, for he generally had Granny to himself. Not that the others were away; for Big Malcolm, who generally ruled his household rather laxly, sternly forbade Sabbath visiting. But the boys wandered off to the barn or the woods after morning prayers, and Big Malcolm dozed, or smoked, or read his Bible. And then Granny and her boy would climb the little hil-

lock beside the house and sit under the Silver Maple. This was a fine position, for one could see Lake Oro, stretched out there blue and sparkling in its ring of forest, and far away to the south, a glittering string of diamonds and turquoise where Lake Simcoe lay smiling in the sun, and now and then, where a clearing opened the view, the blue flash of the river. And there, with the soft rustle of the green and silver canopy above, and around the scent of the clover and the basswood blossoms, Scotty lay with his head in Granny's lap and heard wonderful stories of One who sat on a hill and spoke to the multitude as never man yet spake. And never afterwards, though he sometimes wandered from Granny's teachings, did those Sabbath days lose their hold upon his life.

And so the spring slipped into summer, and one evening a new element came into his life. He was lying on the doorstone, his feet in the cool, dewy grass, dreamily watching the fireflies sparkling away down in the pasture by the woods, and listening to the hoarse cry of the night hawks as they swooped overhead. It was a warm evening, and the leaves of the Silver Maple, still touched by the hot glow of the sunset, hung motionless in the still air.

Rory came out with his fiddle, and, sitting with

his chair tilted against the house, droned out a low, sweet, yearning song for Bonny Prince Charlie who would return no more, no more. Grandaddy sat near on a bench smoking contentedly. Since the day of the first prayer meeting at Long Lauchie's, Big Malcolm had lived a life of peace, and had once more regained his attitude of happy, kind complacency. Old Farquhar was gone; he had disappeared when the Silver Maple was putting forth its buds, and had gone "a kiltin' owre the brae," as he musically expressed it to Scotty; but everyone knew that he would come back in the autumn as surely as the wild ducks went south. Indoors, close to the candle, sat Hamish poring over "Waverley," and Callum could be heard tramping about in the loft, preparing to go off for the evening. Callum took great pains with his toilette these evenings, Scotty noticed, though the boys did not tease him any more about going to see Mary Lauchie; indeed, there were no more good-natured allusions to his courtship. Instead, Scotty had overheard Rory tell Callum, in the barn one day, that "he'd go sparkin' old Teenie McCuaig, though she was seventy and hadn't a tooth in her head, before he'd be seen going down to the Flats to see an Irish girl." And Callum had seized him by the shoulders and flattened him up against the wall until

he roared for mercy. There was always something in the home atmosphere when Callum started off of an evening now that vaguely reminded Scotty of those terrible days following Grandaddy's fight in the Glen. He felt anxiously that his hero was doing something of which his family disapproved, and wondered fearfully what it might be.

His mind was turned from the contemplation of these difficulties by a sudden change in Rory's tune. He stopped in the midst of his low, wailing dirge and struck up loudly the lively air that told again and again of the mirth produced when "Jinny banged the Weaver." Scotty raised his head and looked across the pasture-field. That tune always ushered Weaver Jimmy upon the stage, and there he was, coming over the field, easily recognisable by his huge feet. Before he reached them, the MacDonalds could see that his face was shining with unusual joy.

"Come away, Jimmie, man," called Big Malcolm, "it will be a warm night, whatever."

But the Weaver was too happy to notice anything wrong with the weather. "Hoots, it will be a fine night for all that, a fine night; and how will you be yourself, Mrs. MacDonald?"

"Perhaps you'll find it chilly enough if you go round by Kirsty's, Jimmie," suggested Rory.

"Hooch!" Jimmie flung one leg over the other with more than usual vigour. "And that is jist where you will be mistaken, Rory Malcolm, I will jist be coming from there," he admitted with an embarrassed quiver.

"That's what you're generally doin'; how fast did you come?"

"Whisht, whisht, Rory," cried his mother. "It's the foolish lad he is, Jimmie, don't be listening to him. And indeed it's Kirsty John will be the fine girl, so good and so kind to her poor mother. And how would the mother be to-night, Jimmie?"

"Oh, jist about the same, jist about the same; but," he lowered his voice confidentially, "what do you suppose she would be doin' the night?" "She" was understood to mean Kirsty; for Jimmie never dared take her name upon his tongue.

"Giving you a clout on the head, most like," ventured Rory.

The Weaver did not deign to notice him. "She would be sending me over here on a message!" he cried, and his face shone as if illuminated from within.

"Hech! yon's good news, Jimmie!" cried Big Malcolm. "You're comin' on!"

"She'll be sendin' you on a message to another

world some o' these days," said Callum coming to the door, looking very handsome, ready for departure.

"Oh, indeed it's yourself had better be lookin' after your own sparkin', Callum Fiach!" cried Weaver Jimmie jovially. "You'll not be likely to find it as easy as I will, whatever."

Callum turned away with an embarrassed laugh, Rory following him. He did not answer Weaver Jimmie's raillery, as he would have done under other circumstances, for he had caught a look on his father's face that betokened trouble. Big Malcolm's eyes flashed angrily and he took his pipe from his mouth as though to call after his son; but his wife's gentle voice interposed. She had, so far, by her quiet tact, kept the father and son from an open rupture.

"And what would Kirsty be doing?" she asked, striving to keep her anxiety from showing in her voice. A spasm of joy jerked one of the Weaver's legs over the other.

"She would be sending me over here on a message. A good sign, I will be thinkin'," he added, lowering his voice, for the young men were scarcely out of earshot. "Yes, indeed, a good sign, I will be thinkin'. The wee lady from the Captain's came the other day

and she would be sending me to get Scotty to come and play with her."

Scotty raised his head. "Hoh!" he scoffed, "play with a girl!"

Big Malcolm laughed indulgently. "See yon, Jimmie!" he said, "he'll not be so anxious to go to Kirsty's as some people, indeed."

Jimmie grinned delightedly. Nothing pleased him more than to be twitted about his devotion to his lady.

"Oh, but he must be going," said Granny. "The little girl would be lonely and I would be promising Kirsty last winter that he would go."

"Grandaddy don't like her uncle, anyhow," said Scotty. Big Malcolm took his pipe from his mouth. The boy had mentioned a fact for which his grandfather had excellent reasons, but he did not choose that it should be made so apparent to the general public.

"That will be none o' your business, lad," he said sternly, "an' when Kirsty wants ye, ye'll go." Scotty made no reply; he was not quite so chagrined as he would have others think. He really wanted to see the little girl with the yellow curls and the big, blue eyes, and demonstrate to her that he was not English, no not one whit.

So the next morning he set off across the swamp towards Kirsty John's clearing. It was a relief that Grandaddy and the boys had gone for a day's work to the north clearing. This was a tract of timber on the shore of Lake Oro which was partially cleared, and upon which Callum hoped some day to settle. The distance to it was some miles, and they had taken their dinner and supper; so Scotty felt his disgraceful secret was safe.

He was a long time on the way, of course, for Bruce had gone to the north clearing too and his master had to do double work in racing after chipmunks. Then he loitered purposely, for he was going for the first time in his life to pay a formal visit, and that to a girl. The situation was such as no discreet person would plunge into without due deliberation.

So the sun was high in the heavens when at last he saw ahead of him the golden light that betokened a clearing, and heard the sound of farm life echoing down the forest avenues.

Kirsty John's farm was a small, rough clearing near the Scotch line. There were two or three fields, and in the centre of them a log shanty and a small stable. Everything about the place was very neat; for Kirsty's mother was a Lowlander and one of the

most particular of that great race of housekeepers. The little barnyard, ingeniously fenced off with rough poles, the small patch of grass around the doorway, the neat little flower garden, all showed signs of a woman's tasteful hand. But Kirsty could do the man's part as well. Black John MacDonald had died some years before, leaving his invalid wife to the care of their only child. And Kirsty's care had been of the tenderest; and if in the rough battle of life she became a little rough and masculine, the poor crippled mother felt none of it. Kirsty managed everything with a strong, capable hand, from felling trees to spinning yarn and making butter. She received plenty of help, of course; Big Malcolm and Long Lauchie were her nearest neighbours, and their families vied with each other in seeing who could do the most for her. Weaver Jimmie, too, would have been willing to let the weaving industry go to ruin if Kirsty would but let him so much as carry in a stick of firewood on a winter evening; but Kirsty kept her despised suitor so busy saving himself from violent bodily injury, when in her presence, that his assistance was not material.

Scotty could see her now as he came down the forest path. She was working in the little rough hayfield, pitching up the forkfuls of hay on to a

little oxcart with masculine energy. Her skirt was turned up, showing a striped, homespun petticoat, and beneath it her strong bare ankles. Her pink calico sunbonnet made a dash of colour against the cool green of the woods.

Scotty took a leap at the low brush fence that surrounded the clearing and went over it in one bound. Then he stood stock still with sudden surprise; for there, right in front of him, seated on a low stump with an air of patient expectancy, was a small figure almost enveloped in a big, blue sunbonnet.

"Oh!" cried Scotty in amazement.

"Oh!" echoed the Blue Sunbonnet. It came suddenly to life, leaped from the stump and pitched itself upon him. "Oh, oh! I've been watching for you just hours and hours, and I thought you weren't never, *never* coming!"

The visitor did not know what to say. He was scarcely prepared for such an effusive welcome, and was suddenly seized with a fit of shyness.

"You're Scotty, aren't you?" she asked. He nodded and the vision laughed aloud and clapped its small hands. The blue sunbonnet toppled off, showing a shower of riotous golden curls, tumbled about in delightful confusion; her eyes, big and blue, danced with joy. "Oh, oh, I'm so glad!" she cried. "I

'membered you ever since I saw you in that funny little shop!"

Scotty stared still harder. To hear Store Thompson's establishment designated by such terms was beyond belief.

"I 'membered your eyes!" she added, nodding confidentially. Her baby way of saying "'member" restored Scotty's confidence in himself.

"Well, I will remember you, too," he admitted sedately.

She laughed again and capered about him, while he stood and looked at her rather puzzled. He did not see anything to laugh at, and did not yet comprehend that here was a creature so joyous by nature that she must laugh and dance about from sheer spontaneous delight.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" she reiterated for the tenth time. "I'll race you to the house!"

She darted down the hill like a swallow, her golden hair blown back, her little white bare feet twinkling over the grass. But Scotty was a very greyhound for speed. He leaped after her and in a moment forged ahead. When he had gone sufficiently far to show her how fast he could run, he looked back to find her limping slowly after him. The boy's tender heart, always quick to respond to the sight of pain,

suddenly smote him. He ran swiftly back. "What's the matter?" he asked.

"A fisel," she said plaintively, dropping upon the grass and showing him the sole of her tender little foot. Running barefoot was not even to be mentioned at home, and she had not yet grown accustomed to the "freedom of the sod." Scotty, whose sturdy little brown feet were shod with leather of their own making, stared contemptuously; she must certainly be a baby to be hurt so easily. Nevertheless, he bent down and extracted the tormentor with the skill acquired in many summers' apprenticeship. Then he regarded her with half-disdainful amusement, his shyness all vanished.

"Can't you say thistle?" he inquired.

The big blue eyes regarded him innocently. "I did say fisel," she declared wonderingly.

"No, you didn't, you would jist be saying 'fisel.'"

She stared a moment, then laughed aloud, a clear little bubbling irresistible laugh, and this time Scotty laughed with her.

He seated himself cross-legged upon the grass and proceeded to catechise her.

"Your name will be Isabel, won't it?"

"Imph—n—n," the blue bonnet nodded emphatically, "Isabel Douglas Herbert, an' my mamma

was Scotch, an' my Uncle Walter says I'm his Scotch lassie."

Scotty nodded approval. He could not quite understand, however, how she could be Scotch and live with the English gentry on the shores of Lake Oro instead of in the Oa.

"Where does your mother live?" he inquired dubiously.

"In heaven," said the little one simply, "an' my papa lives there too."

"Oh," said Scotty, "an' my father and mother will be living there too, whatever." He was not to be outdone by her in the matter of ancestry.

"Do they? Oh, isn't that nice? I guess they visit each other every day. An' you live with your granma, don't you?"

Scotty nodded. "Have you got a Granny too?"

"No, only Granma MacDonald here, but I've got an auntie an' an uncle, an' a cousin. His name's Harold. Have you got a cousin?"

"No." Scotty's face fell. "No, I don't think I will be having any, unless mebby Callum an' Rory an' Hamish would be my cousins, whatever."

"Who's Callum?" Scotty sat up straight, his eyes shining. Callum! Why, he was the most wonderful man in all the township of Oro; and thereupon

he proceeded to give her a detailed account of the wonderful achievements of "the boys"; how Callum was so big and so strong and could run the logs down the river better than anyone else; how Rory could play the fiddle and dance; and, oh, the stories Hamish could tell!

The blue eyes opposite him grew bigger. "Oh," their owner exclaimed delightedly, "I'm going over to your place to see you some day, an' we'll get Hamish to tell us 'bout fairies an' things, won't we? You'll let me come, won't you?"

Scotty hesitated. A girl at home might be a great inconvenience and at best would certainly be an embarrassment; but his whole life's training had taught him that one's home must ever be at the disposal of all who would enter, and anyone who would not must be urged, even though that person were the niece of Captain Herbert. So he answered cordially, "Oh, yes, 'course, if you want to come."

Miss Isabel sighed happily. "Oh, I think you're awful nice!" she exclaimed. "And is your name just Scotty?"

"Yes!" cried Scotty, very emphatically, "Scotty MacDonald."

"But that isn't all, is it? There's sumpfin' more?"

"No!" exploded Scotty, "there ain't! Some bad folks would be saying that would be my name; but it will be jist Scotty, whatever. And," he looked threatening, "I don't ever be playing with anybody that would be calling me that nasty English name."

His listener seemed properly impressed. "I won't never call you anything but just Scotty!" she promised solemnly.

A call from the house summoned them; Kirsty had hurried in and was searching the milk-house for bannocks and maple syrup. The children ran through the little barnyard, causing a terrible commotion among the fowl, and up the flower-bordered path to the shanty door. Scotty had not been at Kirsty's since the summer before, when Granny took him to see the poor sick woman who lay in bed weary month after weary month, and now he drew shyly behind his little hostess.

"Come away, Scotty man!" called Kirsty heartily. "Come away, mother's wantin' to see ye!"

The door of the little log shanty stood open, revealing a bare, spotless room with whitewashed walls. There were a couple of old chairs and a rough bench scrubbed a beautiful white like the floor; a curtain of coarse muslin, white and glistening, draped the little window, and a picture of Bobby Burns in a frame

made from the shells of Lake Oro, and another of the youthful Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort in a frame ingeniously wrought from pine cones hung on the wall. A tall cupboard and an old clock with its long hanging weights looked quite familiar and home-like to Scotty. But over in the corner by the window was a sight that struck him painfully and made him draw back. An old four-post bed stood against the log wall and in it lay the shrivelled little figure of Kirsty's mother propped up with pillows. She was bent and twisted with rheumatism, like a little old tree that had been battered by storms. But her face was brave and bright, and from it shone a pair of brown eyes with a pathetic inquiry in them as of a dumb, uncomprehending creature in pain. She wore a stiff white cap on her thin grey hair, a snowy mutch covered her poor crooked shoulders, and everything about her was beautifully neat and clean, showing her daughter's loving care.

"Heh, mother!" cried Kirsty cheerfully, "here's Marget Malcolm's boy at last. Come, Scotty, and mother will be seeing how big you are."

The old woman took the boy's sturdy brown hand in her own poor crooked ones as well as she was able, and peered eagerly into his face.

"Eh, eh!" she cried musingly. "He will be some

like Marget's lass, but he's his faether's bairn; eh, he's got the set an' the look o' yon fine English callant, forbye the MacDonald eyes."

The aforementioned MacDonald eyes drooped and the rosy MacDonald lips pouted at the word English.

"He's awful nice, isn't he, Granma MacDonald?" whispered the little girl.

The old woman gazed at the little fair face, and then back at the boy.

"Strange, strange," she murmured, half audibly. "It's a queer warld, a queer warld, the twa here thegither, an' ane has a', an' the ither has naething. Mebby the good Lord will be settin' it right. Och, aye, He'll set it richt some way."

The children gazed uncomprehendingly at her, but just then Kirsty came forward with a plate of bannocks soaked in maple syrup, and for a time they gave it their absorbed attention.

Then Kirsty soon had to leave them for her work, and after giving the children the freedom of the clearing, provided they did not go near the well, she rearranged her mother's pillows very gently and returned to the field.

The two sat silent by the bedside. Now that their feast was over, the little girl looked with longing eyes through the doorway; but Scotty felt constrained to

wait a few minutes, for Granny had said that Kirsty's mother was sick and lonely and needed comforting.

The old woman looked up with sudden brightness in her eyes. "Can ye read?" she asked eagerly. Oh, yes, Scotty could read, had been able to do so for a very long time.

"I can read too, can't I, Granma MacDonald?" cried the little girl. "I read to you sometimes, don't I?"

"Yes, yes, lassie, ye're jist a wee bit o' sunshine. Eh, what would yer puir auld Granny do if ye didna come to see her in the simmer? But Ah want the laddie to read me the wee bit that Kirsty reads me; ye ken it, bairnie?"

She pointed to the old worn Bible lying on the window sill, with a drowsy blue-bottle fly droning about it. The little girl tripped over and brought it to Scotty.

"I know the place, Granma, don't I?" she chattered; "it's got the blue mark in it. There!" Her rosy finger pointed to a well-worn page, marked by a piece of woven scented grass.

"Aye!" said the old woman, with a satisfied look, "that's the bright bit, lassie; Kirsty leaves a mark for Ah canna read. Eh, Ah wish Ah could jist read yon bit, Ah wouldna mind ony ither, but jist yon.

Ah'd like to see hoo it looks." Her wrinkled face quivered pitifully, but she made a brave attempt to smile. "Read it, laddie," she whispered.

Scotty took the book and read where his little friend indicated. He read the Bible every day, and this extract was quite familiar; one wonderful story among the many of the Master's love and tenderness towards all the suffering; Luke's beautiful tale of the poor woman who was bent nearly double and was made whole by the potency of a Divine word. The boy droned laboriously on, and as he came to the words, "And Jesus called her to Him," the old woman put out her feeble hand and caught his arm, her bright brown eyes shining, her withered face flushed. "Aye!" she whispered eagerly, "d'ye hear yon? D'ye hear yon? *He called her!* Aye!" she continued with an air of triumph, "that's it! Sometimes Ah canna quite believe it, but ilka buddy reads it jist the same; that's it! *He called her Himself.* Aye, an' a' the ither buddies fleein' aefter Him, an' botherin' Him, but no her, no her! Eh, wasna yon graund! Go on, laddie, go on!" She made a feeble attempt to wipe away the tear that coursed down her wrinkled cheek.

"Eh, isna it bonny!" she cried as the boy finished. "Isna it bonny! Ah suppose Ah'm too auld to learn

to read, but Ah'd jist like to read yon bit," she said wistfully.

Little Isabel went softly to her, and tenderly wiped away the tears from the poor old face. "There now, Granma MacDonald," she said in the tender tones she had heard Kirsty use, "you mustn't cry. Maybe Jesus'll come and make you straight too, won't He?"

"Eh, lassie," she whispered, "Ah'm jist waitin' for it. Ah'm houpin' He will. Ah'm jist a burden to puir Kirsty, an' whiles the pain's that bad. Eh, but Ah wish He would. Surely He'd think as much o' me as o' yon auld buddy. Don't ye think He micht, lassie?"

"Course!" cried the little one with the hopefulness of childhood, "course He will, won't He, Scotty?"

Scotty hung his head shyly.

"If Granny was here, she would be tellin' you, whatever," he whispered.

"Aye, that's true, mannie," said the old woman brightening, "Marget McNeil kens aboot Him, aye, she kens fine. Eh, but mebby He will," she whispered. She lay back and gazed through the little window, away over the forest-clad hills and dales to where Lake Oro's shining expanse sparkled through the jagged outline of the treetops. Her lips moved, "*He called her to Him,*" she whispered, "an' He said

unto her, 'Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.'" She lay very still, a happy light shining in her eyes; the children waited a moment, and then slipped softly out of doors.

When he found himself alone once more with his new acquaintance, Scotty suddenly became shy again. But his diffidence was put to flight in a summary manner. The young lady gave him a smart slap in the face and darted away. "Last tag!" she screamed back over her shoulder. Scotty stood for an instant petrified with indignation, and then he was after her like the wind. As they tore through the little barnyard Kirsty called to them not to go near the well, but neither of them heard. Into the woods they dashed, over mossy logs and stones, tearing through the undergrowth and crashing among fallen boughs. In spite of her fleetness Scotty caught his tormentor as she dodged round a tree; he held her in a sturdy grip and shook her for her impudence until her sunbonnet fell off. He was somewhat disconcerted to find her accept this treatment with the utmost good humour. Betty would have wailed dismally, but this girl wrenched herself free and laughed derisively.

"You can't hurt like Hal," she said rather disdainfully, "he pulls my hair."

"Well, I'll be doing that too if you slap me again," said Scotty, grateful for the suggestion.

"No, you won't," she declared triumphantly, "'cause then I wouldn't play with you. I'd just go right back to Granma MacDonald and leave you all alone in the bush. An' I wouldn't show you all the places here. There's a king's castle an' a hole where the goblins comes out of, an' a tree where a bad, bad dwarf lives, an'—an'," she was whispering now, "an' heaps of dreadfuller things than that 'way down there." She pointed into the green depths with an air of proprietorship. Scotty felt a deep respect rising in his heart.

He had thought he knew the forest as the chipmunks know it, but here it was in a new and romantic aspect.

"Where are they?" he inquired quite humbly; and, satisfied with his demeanour, his mentor led the way. Though the royal castle proved to be only a rock and the other enchanted places equally familiar to Scotty, she clothed them with such an air of mystery and related such amazing tales concerning each, vouched for by no less an authority than Weaver Jimmie, that her listener regarded them and their exponent with something like awe.

They journeyed on, every new turn revealing un-

told wonders and giving an added stimulus to the leader's lively imagination. And indeed the forest was a place in which anyone might expect to meet a fairy or a goblin behind every tree. The happy sense of unreality lent by the uncertainty of distances, the airy unsubstantial appearance of the leaf-grown earth; the dazzling splashes of golden light on the green, the sudden appearance of open glades choked with blossoms; and through all the ringing harmony of a hundred songsters combined to make the woods a veritable fairyland.

And Scotty soon found to his joy that he was to have his part in interpreting its beauties too, for Isabel came to the end of her tales at last and was full of questions. What was that sad little "tee-ee-ee," somebody was always saying away far off. It must be a fairy too. But Scotty had come down to realities now, and felt more at home. That? Why, that was only a whitethroat. Didn't she hear how it said, "Hard-times-in-Canady!" She laughed aloud and imitated the song, setting all the woods a-ring with her clear notes. And what made those bells ring up in the tree? Those weren't bells, they were just veerys, and they said, "Ting-a-ling-a-lee!" But the bobolinks had bells; they would go back to the clearing and hear them ring in the hayfield, and

there was a meadow-lark's nest there, and lots of plovers; yes, and if she would come down to the creek that ran across the Scotch line he would show her a mud turtle, and they could catch some fish, and there was a boiling spring there, where the water was so cold you couldn't put your feet into it, and it bubbled all the time, even in the winter.

And then they found flowers, oh, so many flowers, big, pink, bobbing ladies' slippers, and delicate orchids and great flaming swamp lilies; and there were wonderful pitcher-plants, too, with their tall crimson blossoms. Scotty explained the workings of the perfidious little vessels, and they sat down and watched with absorbed interest the poor foolish insects slip happily down the silken stairway to certain death. And under Isabel's magic touch the little green pitchers became dungeons, presided over by a wicked giant, and filled with helpless prisoners.

And so they might have rambled in this enchanted land all day had not the woman nature asserted itself. Isabel had had enough of fairies and goblins. They must give up this wandering life and settle down, she declared. They would build a house in the fence corner and carpet it with moss and have clam shells from the creek for dishes. Scotty had fallen quite meekly into the unaccustomed rôle of follower and

was willing that they should go housekeeping, provided he was allowed to play the man's part. He would be Big Wind, the Indian who lived down by Lake Simcoe, and he would go off shooting bears and Lowlanders all day, and she would stay at home and be his squaw and make baskets. But Miss Isabel would be nothing of the kind. She did not like "scraws"; they were very dirty, and came to the back door and sold their baskets. But Scotty might be a great hunter if he wanted, and she would be the lady who lived in the house, and she would cook the dinner and go to the door and call "hoo-hoo" when it was ready, the way Kirsty did when Long Lauchie's boys worked in her fields.

"I see Kirsty now!" she called, seating herself upon a log which formed one side of their mansion. "I see her 'way over yonder!" Scotty seated himself beside her, flushed and heated with the unwonted exertions of house-building.

"Oh, don't you love Kirsty," she cried, giving him an ecstatic shake. "I do; an' I love you, too, Scotty, you're a dear!" Scotty looked slightly uncomfortable, but not wholly displeased.

"Don't you love to run away off in the bush like this, and have nobody to bother you?" she inquired next.

"Yes." Scotty could cordially assent to that. "When I get a man," he said, in a sudden burst of confidence, "I'm goin' to live in a wigwam like Big Wind an' shoot bears!"

"Oh, my!" she cried in delight. "I wish I could live with you, only I don't want to be an ugly scraw, I want to be like Kirsty when I grow big, an' live up here in the Oa, an' pile hay; but I'll have to be like Auntie Eleanor an' wear a black silk dress, oh, dear!"

"Wouldn't you be liking a silk dress?" asked Scotty in surprise.

"No!" she cried disdainfully. "You've always got to take care of it. I want a red petticoat like Kirsty wears, and I want to go in my bare feet all the time, and live in the bush."

"Don't you go in your bare feet at home?" inquired Scotty in amazement.

"No," she admitted mournfully. "Auntie Eleanor says 'tisn't nice for little girls, an' I have to play the piano every morning, an' not make any noise round the house, 'cause you know my poor auntie has headaches all the time. Do you know what's the matter with my auntie?"

"No."

"Well, don't you tell, it's a big secret; she's got the *heartbreak!*"

"The what?" cried Scotty in alarm.

"The heartbreak. Brian told me. Brian's our coachman, an' I heard him tell Mary Morrison, the cook, and he told me not to never, *never* tell; but I'll just tell you, and you won't tell, will you, Scotty?"

"No, never. Will it be like the rheumatics Granny has?"

"No-o, I 'spect not; it's when you have headaches an' don't smile nor eat much; not even pie!" She gazed triumphantly into Scotty's interested countenance. "That's what my auntie's got."

"Would she be catching it at school?" he inquired feelingly, moved by recollections of an epidemic of measles that had raged in Number Nine the winter preceding.

"No, she just got it all by herself. She was going to be married in the church, 'way over in England, and she had a beautiful satin dress and a veil and everything, and he didn't come!"

"Who?" demanded Scotty.

"Why, the gempleman; he was a soldier-man with a grea' big sword, an' he got bad an' went away, an' my auntie got the heartbreak. An' that's why she's sick an' doesn't want me to make a noise or jump."

Scotty looked at her in deep sympathy. "Won't she be letting you jump?" he asked in awe.

"Not much," she said with a fine martyr-like air. "She says 'tisn't lady-like, an' she's going to send me to a school in Toronto when I get big, where it's all girls, and not one of them ever, *ever* jumps once!"

They stared at each other in mutual amazement at the conception of a whole jumpless school.

"I wouldn't be going!" cried Scotty firmly. "*I'd* jump—I'd jump out of the window an' run away, whatever!"

Her eyes sparkled. "Oh, p'raps I could do that too! I'd run away an' come to Kirsty. She doesn't mind if I jump an' make a noise, an' Kirsty never makes me sew. Oh, Scotty, you don't ever have to sew, do you?"

"Noh!" cried Scotty in disdain, "that's girls' work."

She sighed deeply. "I wish I was a boy! Harold never has to sew, but Harold goes to school 'way in Toronto all the time an' maybe they don't let him jump there. *I'd* jump!" she cried, springing from the log and laughing joyously, "oh, wouldn't I! Last tag, Scotty!" and she was once more off into the woods and Scotty after her.

Such a happy day as it was, but it was over at last, and after they had eaten their supper, where Kirsty served it to them in their playhouse, Scotty went to

the house to bid the old woman good-bye, and started for home.

The little girl followed him sadly and slowly to the edge of the clearing.

"When'll you come back again?" she asked pleadingly.

"I'll not know," said Scotty patronisingly, "I don't often play with girls."

The blue sunbonnet drooped; its owner's assurance and independence had all vanished. "You might come next Saturday," she suggested humbly.

"Well," said Scotty handsomely, "mebby I'll be coming."

"I'm going to ask Kirsty if I can't go to school with you some day!" she cried audaciously.

Scotty looked alarmed. In reality he was most eager to return and resume housekeeping in the fence-corner, but to have this stranger go to school with him would never do. The boys would laugh at him, and already he had sufficient trials with Betty Lauchie since Peter stopped going to school.

"Oh, it's too far!" he cried hastily, "an' there will be an awful cross master there!"

"I don't care, you wouldn't let him touch me, would you?"

"If you don't ask Kirsty, I'll come over all next

Saturday, an' mebby she'll be letting you come to my place; it's nicer than school."

So thus comforted, Isabel climbed the stump and swung her sunbonnet as long as the slanting sunlight showed the little figure running down the fast darkening forest-pathway; and just before the shadows swallowed him up, he turned and waved his cap in farewell.

VII

THE AVENGING OF GLENCOE

Now the dewy sounds begin to dwindle,
Dimmer grow the burnished rills,
Breezes creep and halt,
Soon the guardian night shall kindle
In the violet vault,
All the twinkling tapers
Touched with steady gold
Burning through the lawny vapours
Where they float and fold.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT.

THE sound of a tinkling bell, crossing the pasture in tuneful harmony with the music of the summer evening, had come to a pause in the barnyard, and the boys had gone out with their pails to the milking.

Scotty came capering up the path from the barn, making mischievous snatches at Granny's rosebushes, which surrounded the house all abloom in their June dresses. He seldom returned from his evening task of bringing home the cows in such good time. Generally he lingered in the woods until he had almost

worn out even Granny's patience, and caused Callum to threaten all kinds of dire punishments, which were never inflicted. But to-night he had been very expeditious, and with good reason; for hadn't Granny warned him that Isabel might arrive at any moment? She had come to Kirsty's a few days before, and Weaver Jimmie had promised that, if the lady who ruled his heart was in a sufficiently propitious mood to admit of his leaving her door intact, he would, without fail, bring the little visitor over that evening.

She and Scotty had become quite intimate since the first summer of their acquaintance. Miss Isabel was possessed of a vitality and high spirits that sometimes became unbearable to her invalid aunt; so every summer, to her own delight and Miss Herbert's relief, she was packed off to the home of her old nurse. For Kirsty John's mother had been a servant in the Herbert family in her youth; and when the little Isabel had been left an orphan in the Captain's family, Kirsty herself had been nurse-maid to both her and Captain Herbert's little son. Sometimes, too, during the winter, when her cousin was away at school, the child came for a lengthy visit to her Highland home, for Miss Herbert had often to go to the city for medical attendance, and her brother always accompanied her, glad of an opportunity to be with his

son. Indeed, the family at Lake Oro had what Kirsty called a bad habit of "stravogin'." She declared they were always "jist here-away there-away," and never settled down like decent folk in one place. But then there was no accounting for the ways of the gentry, and these people were half English and half Irish, anyway, and what could a body expect? She was thankful herself that the wee bit lassock had some good Scotch blood in her, anyway. Kirsty often shook her head over her little charge, declaring that if the father or mother had lived, or even the Captain's wife, who was a smart, tidy body, even if she was a lady, the wee one would have had better care. Not but that the Captain's folk were fond of the lamb; Kirsty declared it was clean impossible not to love her; but what with a poor girnin', sick body for an aunt, and an uncle who was such a gentleman he didn't know whether the roof was falling in on him or not, was it any wonder the bit thing was wild?

Whatever neglect Miss Isabel may have suffered troubled her not a whit. For neglect spelled liberty and always contributed to the general joyousness of her existence. Her poor aunt's illnesses, even, were associated in her childish mind with the keenest delight, for they brought her what she enjoyed most in the world, many days spent in the Oa. Nominally

her home was with her old nurse, but she really spent the greater part of her time at Scotty's home. And here Weaver Jimmie became indirectly a partaker in the joy of the little one's presence; for Kirsty entrusted her girl to him in her journeys between the clearings; an honour of which Jimmie boasted from one end of the Oa to the other, and fulfilled his commission with a vigilance that kept his lively young charge in a state of indignant rebellion.

In the meantime Scotty had grown to like this new comrade and to respect her. Of course she was only a girl, but she was immeasurably superior to Betty, for she rarely cried, was always merry, had a marvellous inventive genius and never failed of some new and wonderful scheme for enjoying life and escaping work. His big, generous heart experienced no jealousy, but only a great pride in her, when she usurped his place and became the centre of interest and admiration in his home. One visit had been sufficient to establish her as the ruler of Big Malcolm's household. Everyone came at her beck and call; Rory fiddled, Callum danced, Old Farquhar sang, and Hamish spun impossible yarns at her command. And Granny, who was the most abject subject of all, would fondle her golden curls, calling her Margaret, the name of her own little girl whom she had lost, and would let

her help make the johnnycake for supper, apparently not a whit disturbed by the fact that everything in the room was strewn with flour. Big Malcolm himself seemed to forget that she belonged to the man against whom he had sworn lifelong enmity, and like the rest, opened his heart to her unreservedly. And she returned his affection with all the might of her warm happy nature. She called him "Grandaddy," as Scotty did, and would climb upon his knee and coax and tease him into doing things that even his grandson would not have dared to ask.

The little visitor always came at a time that Scotty found very convenient, just when the closing of school had deprived him of Danny Murphy's companionship; and to-night he looked forward to her coming with more than usual pleasure, for he needed her help and advice. Of late the boy's tender heart had been worried by signs of discord at home. Something he could not fathom was wrong with Callum. That old trouble that had arisen between him and Grandaddy the first winter of the prayer meetings had been suddenly aggravated. Scotty had heard rumours at school, and was vaguely conscious of the cause of the dissension. Isabel was so quick, perhaps she could help him to find out just what was wrong and suggest a remedy.

"Yon's a queer-lookin' thing comin' over the bars, Scotty," said his grandfather, smilingly, from his place at the doorway.

Scotty turned eagerly; yes, there was a little blue figure scrambling hastily over the fence into the pasture-field, followed by Weaver Jimmie, as anxious and flustered as a hen with a wayward duckling. A joyous scream announced that she had really come.

"It's her!" shouted the boy. "It's wee Isabel!"

He darted down the hill to meet her, but Callum was there first. Callum was on his way up from the barn, and the little blue figure flew to him and made the rest of the journey to the house perched triumphantly upon his broad shoulder, screaming with delight, and calling upon Scotty, her own dear Scotty, to come and meet her.

But for all his joy, as she approached Scotty drew back shyly behind the rosebushes. The first meeting with Isabel was something of an embarrassment, for she always pitched herself upon him and insisted upon kissing him, more than once sometimes, if he wasn't watchful, and it was certainly an unseemly thing for a boy of his size to be kissed by anybody. But the ordeal was soon over, and when they had all rejoiced over her and measured her height against

the door-frame, where two niches showed how she and Scotty had stood last summer, and admired her growth, and warned Scotty to take care or she would soon be as tall as he was, the elder folk gave their attention to Weaver Jimmie and left the children to their own devices.

As usual the Weaver was the bearer of important tidings.

"It's a fine job Tom Caldwell thinks he's got this time!" he declared with an embarrassed hitch of one big foot over the other, and a rather nervous glance towards Callum.

"What's that?" inquired Rory, coming up to the door with his two pails of foaming milk. "We always like to know what our relations will be doing," he added with a sly chuckle.

Weaver Jimmie looked more embarrassed than ever. He attacked his whiskers and became so absorbed in their subduing that his audience grew impatient.

"Out with it, man!" cried Callum, and thus adjured, the Weaver told his story. When he had finished, it appeared that a much graver danger than a Fenian raid threatened the Glen, for what should Tom Caldwell and all those Irish louts from the Flats be up to now but an Orangemen's raid!

Big Malcolm removed his pipe and glared at the speaker.

"What is it ye will be saying, man?" he demanded harshly. Weaver Jimmie looked encouraged, and avoiding Callum's eye, he gave further details. Tom Caldwell had lately been the means of organising an Orange lodge in the Flats, and at their last meeting the brethren had decreed that, upon the coming 12th of July, they must have a celebration. It was to be no ordinary affair either, Pete Nash himself told him; but such a magnificent spectacle as the pioneers had never yet witnessed. Pete had received orders to prepare dinner for fifty guests and whiskey for twice as many. There was to be a grand rally early in the morning at the home of Tom Caldwell, who was to personate the great Protestant monarch, and at high noon a triumphal march up over the hills and down into the Glen to the feast,—with fifes and drums and a greater display in crossing the Oro than King William himself had had in crossing the historic Boyne.

Big Malcolm sat silent, his fists clenched. He was a Glencoe MacDonald, and, like all his clan, had an abhorrence of the name of Orange running fiercely in his veins. But he was saying to himself over and over that he who had repented of all his strife, who had set

his face firmly against the evils of the day and become a leader of the new movement that was bringing the community into a higher and better life, he certainly must not be the one to stir up dissension. And yet, to have a celebration in their own glen in honour of the MacDonalds' betrayer!

"It will be a low, scandalous, Irish trick!" he vehemently burst forth.

Weaver Jimmie's eyes brightened. "They would be needing to learn a lesson, whatever," he suggested tentatively.

"Malcolm," Mrs. MacDonald's voice came in gently, "we will surely not be forgetting that Tom Caldwell would be joining us at the meetings these last winters, and indeed we would jist all be praying together that the Father would be putting away all strife from our hearts."

Callum cast his mother a look of gratitude; for, though generally the first to scent the battle from afar and hasten its approach, for very good reasons of his own he was on this occasion strongly inclined for peace. Big Malcolm looked at the gentle face of his wife and the fire died out of his eyes.

"Hoh!" he exclaimed disdainfully, "I will not be caring; let them have their childish foolishness if it will be doing them any good, whatever!"

Weaver Jimmie looked disappointed, but, seeing no encouragement in the faces about him, he reluctantly dropped the subject. The conversation soon turned from war to a topic even nearer Jimmie's heart, for Rory had brought out his fiddle and now struck up gaily the song of the cruel Jinny and the hapless weaver.

Before the departure of the guests Scotty found an opportunity to confide his troubles to Isabel. He could not tell her exactly what was wrong, for that meant confessing that Callum and Grandaddy were capable of mistakes. But he vaguely hinted that he was worried over their hero. Callum was going to do something, something strange and new, but just what he could not discover. Isabel was equally perturbed. Why not ask Granny? she suggested. She would tell them. But no, Scotty explained, that was just what they must not do, for it was something that made Granny sad. But Peter Lauchie knew; Peter had told him that the shanty at the north clearing was to be fixed up for Callum to live there, after harvest; and then he laughed and would tell him no more.

As usual Isabel was quick to suggest a way out of the difficulty. Why should they not go over to Peter's place some day and *make* him tell all about it? She wanted to see Betty again, anyway, and perhaps

Hughie would put up a swing for them in the barn again.

This was a fine plan, and the next week they proceeded to put it into execution, and with Kirsty's permission set off early one morning for a day's visit at Long Lauchie's. Isabel was almost as well known there as Scotty himself, so he soon managed to leave her in Betty's company and go off to the fields to seek Peter.

By judicious and persistent questioning he learned the confirmation of his fears. Yes, Peter and all the boys knew what the trouble was. Callum was to be married, and to an Irish girl at that, and of course all the MacDonalds were highly disgusted.

Scotty listened in dismay. Callum to be married! That itself was bad enough, people were always laughed at and chaffed when they got married, and he writhed at the thought of his hero being in such an ignominious position. But to be married to an Irish girl! Surely the MacDonalds would be disgraced forever.

And yet Scotty's heart forbade his taking sides against Nancy. She was Irish, certainly a deplorable fact, but still she was Nancy; and though she had not been at school for some time, the boy had not forgotten her. He sighed deeply over the complex-

ity of human affairs. This, then, was the cause of their unhappiness at home, of Grandaddy's muttered threats and Granny's distressed looks.

He did not understand that there were stronger objections to Nancy in Granny's mind than the girl's nationality. Big Malcolm's wife was growing old, and the work of the farmhouse weighed heavily upon her. Ever since Callum had grown up she had cherished the hope that one day she would have sweet, trim Mary Lauchie, the finest girl in the Oa, and a MacDonald at that, to take the reins of government in her household. The loss of Mary would have been disappointment enough, but Callum's new choice was a great trial to his patient, gentle mother. The thought of Nancy Caldwell as a daughter-in-law, even though she was to live at the north clearing, instead of with her, filled her with fear. For Nancy had a reputation that had spread beyond the Flats. Since the day she left school, where she had defied McAllister at his best, she had ruled supreme in her own home from sheer dauntlessness of spirit. Many were the tales told in the Oa of her wild outlandish doings; how she would dress up in her brother's clothes and drive madly all over the country; how she could ride an unbroken colt bareback, and shoot like a man, things which everyone in the Oa knew no

right-minded young woman could ever learn. And hadn't Store Thompson's wife been, as she declared, clean scandalised by seeing the hussy cross the Oro at the spring floods, standing erect in a canoe and spreading out her skirts to the gale, "Makin' a sail o' mesilf!" as she had laughingly declared when she leaped ashore.

Scotty could not force himself to tell Isabel the disgraceful truth; he was very quiet and gloomy as they walked homeward through the golden-lighted forest. But Isabel had had a grand day with Betty and had forgotten all about the original purport of their visit. She danced along at his side full of busy chatter. Didn't he love all Long Lauchie's folks? She did; for Betty was a dear and Mrs. Lauchie was 'most as nice as Scotty's Granny. But she loved Mary most of all, because she was so kind and so good. And did Mary have the heartbreak too, like her auntie? No; Scotty did not see how that was possible; for Mary had never had a dress ready for a wedding; nor a fine soldier man who did not come. But Isabel was sure he was mistaken. Yes, that was certainly what Mary had, for her face was so pale, and she had the same look in her eyes that her auntie had when her wedding day came round, only Mary's eyes were kinder. But Scotty was not interested in Mary.

Callum absorbed all his thoughts, and he left Isabel at Kirsty's and hurried home.

He found the boys all gone and his grandfather sitting alone by the door. Big Malcolm was not smoking, which was a bad sign, and his grandson saw by the look in his eye that he was not at peace. In his perturbation over Callum's difficult case the boy had not noticed that a new undercurrent of excitement was running through life's everyday affairs.

For, though Big Malcolm had, with wonderful self-control, put aside his indignation at the Orangemen, all the MacDonalds had not done so. Weaver Jimmie had gone up over the hills of the Oa like a bearer of the fiery cross, and wherever he appeared the beacon-fire of anger had blazed forth. The Orangemen celebrating! The MacDonalds arose as one man, and in all the inherited fury of generations, combined with as much more produced for the occasion, banded together and swore that before the soil of this, their new home, should be polluted by a celebration in honour of the MacDonalds' betrayer, it should first be soaked with the MacDonalds' blood!

To do Tom Caldwell justice, he did not at all comprehend the enormity of the offence he was about to commit. Of course the Orangemen anticipated some trouble among their Catholic brethren, but rather

looked forward to it as part of their entertainment. For though Pat Murphy and his friends prophesied death and destruction to the procession and all that had part or lot in it, what matter? The country had been growing far too quiet since the fighting MacDonalds had taken to praying instead of pugilism, and a little row at the corner would just stir things up a bit and make it seem like old times. But while they gleefully looked for tempests in the Flats, they were innocently oblivious to the fact that the formerly peaceful hills of the Oa had been converted into raging volcanoes. Occasionally vague rumours of an eruption in the MacDonald settlement did float down to King William and his men, drilling in the long June evenings, but they drowned them in the tooting of fifes and the banging of drums and went gaily on to their doom.

But while the MacDonalds raged, Big Malcolm remained at home alone or in company with Long Lauchie, and fought with himself the fiercest battle in which he had ever engaged. Not since the day he had seen Rory go down under Pat Murphy's feet had he been so sorely tried. And the MacDonalds would say he had failed them because his son was about to unite with one of the Caldwell crew. That was the sting of it! Callum had always been the first in any

aggressive enterprise of the Oa, and Callum was now conspicuous by his absence. Sometimes Big Malcolm was fiercely resolved to plunge headlong into the commotion and compel his son to join him. And then calmer moments ensued; he could not forget those winter prayer meetings and the wonderful leavening effect they had had upon the community; nor could he forget Praying Donald's prophetic warnings that all strife and enmity must certainly bring retribution. No; he had forever put all feuds behind him, he finally decided, and if the MacDonalds were about to engage in strife with the Orangemen they must learn that he, Big Malcolm, was far above and beyond any such unseemly brawlings.

But upon this evening when Scotty found him alone at the doorway, his grandfather was experiencing none of the settled calm that might be expected to follow such a laudable decision. For to-night the MacDonalds were holding another mass-meeting at the house of Roarin' Sandy to decide finally what punishment should be meted out to the reckless Orangemen, and his very soul was crying out to be with them.

Scotty could elicit no answer to his remarks, and sat upon the doorstep, a small, disconsolate heap, wondering sadly how his hero could have made such a mis-

take, and finding in his own forlorn heart an echo of the sweet, melancholy evening music. Around him the mosquitoes wailed out their dreary little song; away down by the edge of the wet, low pastures, where the fireflies wandered, each with his weird little torch, the frogs were piping mournfully. The whitethroat was sending out his "silver arrows of song" clearly and pensively from the depths of the velvet dusk. The discordant twang of the swooping night-hawks came down from the pale clear sky where one silver star had come out above the black jagged line of forest.

Granny was moving about indoors; the boy could smell the sweet fragrance of the new warm milk she was straining into the pans. The air was heavy with the scent of clover, the world was very peaceful, but very sad.

And then, out of the soft murmurs of the summer night, there grew a strange new sound. At first it seemed merely a movement of the air, a peculiar thrilling vibration. But gradually it grew into a note, a high, weird musical note, alluring, electrifying. Scotty raised his head from the grass. "What's that, Grandaddy?" he asked sharply. Big Malcolm did not answer; he was sitting bolt upright, alert, tense, listening as if for his life. For a moment

the sound faded away, there was a wondering silence. And then, suddenly, a little pine-scented breeze came sweeping up from Lake Oro; and on it, high, clear, entrancing, commanding, came again that wild penetrating call—the bagpipes! playing up gloriously the MacDonalds' pibroch!

Big Malcolm leaped to his feet. It was the first time he had heard that sound since it came ringing to him over the heather moors of his native land. The pipes! The pipes on the hills of Oro! There was neither prophecy nor precept, no, nor iron bands that could have held him at that moment. With a wild outpouring of Gaelic, he sprang forward, overturning the bench and the water-bucket by the doorstep; and, coatless and hatless, went tearing across the fields and down the road in obedience to that imperative call.

"Granny, Granny!" cried Scotty, running indoors in alarm, "what's gone wrong with Grandaddy, will he be gone daft?"

Granny raised her hands in amazement and stood listening.

"Eh, eh!" she cried, "it will be the pipes! Och, och, lad, things will be going wrong with Grandaddy now!"

The great day, the 12th of July, dawned radiant

in sunshine like any other Canadian summer day. Mr. Nash had made tremendous preparations for his guests. He had his family up long before dawn and by dint of much fluency of language, for which he was famous, managed by eleven o'clock to have the banquet in readiness. Tables were set in the dining-room and barroom, which two chambers constituted the ground floor of the hotel proper. The lean-to kitchen at the back was steaming with all the good things Mrs. Nash and her daughters and the assisting neighbours had prepared; and by half-past eleven the host, in a clean shirt and his Sunday trousers, stood on the front step ready to receive with due ceremony the expected company.

Store Thompson's place across the way was surrounded by a crowd of eager spectators, for such a spectacle as a procession had not been witnessed in the Glen within the memory of the earliest settler. Then there were rumours of trouble too; Pat Murphy and his friends were there ready to produce it; and besides, everyone suspected that the MacDonalds had some scheme afoot. Store Thompson himself was excited. He had not seen Big Malcolm for more than a fortnight, and he was anxious about his warlike friend. Surely, he told himself a dozen times, Malcolm would never break forth into strife again

after the stand he had been taking during the past few winters for the bettering of the community. And yet, as the kindly old gentleman confided to Sandy Hamilton, who had stopped the mill and come up to see what was transpiring, he could not help feeling "a wee thing apprehensive-like."

A few minutes before twelve, the appointed hour for the procession to appear, the patience of the crowd was rewarded. Pat Murphy had just assembled his satellites in the middle of the road and was haranguing them and, incidentally, all the township of Oro upon their duties, when a loud, shrill yell from the hilltops rent the air; there was a dull thud, thud of marching feet. The procession was coming! For a moment nationalities and creeds were both forgotten in a common desire to witness the spectacle. English, Irish, and Scotch crowded eagerly into the road; every eye was turned towards the south hill. Yes, the procession was certainly coming, but what was this unearthly noise it was making? And where were the fifes and the drums? And why, in the name of all the cardinal points, was it coming down the north hill from the Oa, instead of from the Flats?

And then there were no more questions, but just a sea of silent faces held upwards in gaping amaze-

ment, for out from the pine grove of the northern river-bank, with a shriek of pipes and a flutter of plaids, whirled Fiddlin' Archie MacDonald in full Highland costume; and behind him, armed and menacing, tramped every available male of the clan MacDonald, from Long Lauchie's seventeen-year-old Peter, up to—yes, alas for the new era and its reforms!—Big Malcolm himself, all in perfect time to the wild yell of the MacDonald pibroch!

Down they swept like a Highland charge, the pipes screaming out a fierce challenge to anyone reckless enough to stand in their path, and awakening such warlike echoes in the Oro hills as they had not given back since the days when they rang to the war-whoop of Huron and Iroquois braves.

And, indeed, had an army of redskins in war paint and feathers appeared upon the hill, it is doubtful if it would have created any more excitement. For, though the Oa was a Highland settlement, the bagpipes had hitherto been an unknown instrument in the township of Oro. Hard work and hard times had precluded the indulgence in any such luxury, so the startled population of the valley witnessed for the first time that magnificent combination of sight and sound known as a Highland Piper.

Upon Pete Nash the effect was almost disastrous.

The expectant host had been fortifying himself rather copiously against the duties and trials of the day, and his brain was in no condition to bear any such strain as the appearance of Fiddlin' Archie put upon it.

At the first sound he rushed into the road, his eyes bulging with horror, his hands held up as if to ward off a blow. For Peter had once been a good Catholic and knew he was committing a deadly sin in harbouring these Orange heretics; and here, surely, were the hosts of the Evil One, coming with shrieks of wrath to snatch away his guilty soul in the midst of his iniquity. His distracted wife bounded after him, a half-washed frying pan in one hand, a dishcloth in the other; and seeing what was descending upon them she dropped both utensils and wailed, "Och, the Powers come down, Pater! is it Gabriel's trump, then?"

No one noticed the stricken pair, for all eyes were fixed upon the advancing column. Right up to the tavern door it marched, and when the pipes ceased with a final defiant yelp, Big Malcolm, his eyes blazing, his head erect, stepped forward and addressed the still trembling, but much relieved, proprietor.

"We will be needing our dinner, Peter," he said very mildly, "for we would be having a long walk,

and mebby some work ahead of us, whatever, so I hope you will jist be bringin' it on queek."

There was something in the intense politeness of Big Malcolm's tone that aroused Mr. Nash's worst fears; a MacDonald was never so dangerous as when he was courteous.

"And is it dinner for all this raft ye'll be after wantin', Malcolm MacDonald?" he cried in alarm. "Sure, ye know I can't give ye a bite nor sup the day, man; the byes from the Flats——"

"Whisht yer tongue, Pete Nash!" Big Malcolm's suavity vanished like a wisp of straw in a flame. "Bring on yer grub, man, or"—he brought down his big fist upon the nearest table with a crash that made both the crockery and its owner leap—"we'll be eating your old carcass on the doorstep!"

Mr. Nash gave a prompt and obsequious obedience. The Fighting MacDonalds individually must ever be treated with respect, but the Fighting MacDonalds in a body! Surely not the most vivid Orangeman could blame him in his extremity. Perhaps the distracted landlord felt that, after all, here was a providential means of escape from the crime he had been about to commit, for very soon he had all Glencoe seated about the well-spread tables, devouring the banquet prepared for William of Orange.

The MacDonalds attacked the unholy viands with a zest that not even a long tramp and a pioneer appetite could quite explain. Mrs. Nash flew back and forth hospitably, explaining to her satellites, to cover up any apparent irregularity in her husband's sudden change of patronage, that indeed they were always pleased to have the MacDonalds with them, and that she, for one, was very glad to see a Scotchman dressed the right way.

"Sure Oi've got a sister in the owld country, married to a Scotchman, thin," she explained quite proudly to Judy Connors. "He's in a Kiltie rig'ment, an' his name's Pat O'Nale, an' aw now, it was him that had the foine way o' swishin' his kilt whin he walked, indade!"

Meantime the feast was progressing; the great roasts of pork, the pies, the cakes, and the puddings were vanishing like the snow on a March noonday, when once more the assembly outside the tavern was electrified, this time from the proper source. For from the summit of the north hill there arose such a mighty banging and tooting as might have been heard had the new sawmill, lately built on the shore of Lake Simcoe, taken legs and gone on a mad excursion up over the Oro hills.

Down the slope with waving banners and thump-

ing drums rode King William himself in brave array, mounted on a white steed which bore a strong resemblance to Tom Caldwell's old grey mare, and followed by a troop of loyal subjects, all to the stirring squeak of "The Protestant Boys."

At the sight of this magnificent army marching straight into the jaws of disaster, Pat Murphy uttered a yell of triumph that put the fifes and drums to shame. Reckless with joy, he flew into the middle of the road, and standing there facing the oncoming multitude, his wild eyes blazing, his red beard and hair flaring out in all directions, he shook his huge fist at the unoffending skies and called upon the sun and the moon and all things created to witness the downfall of his enemies.

Fortunately for the usurpers, the steed of state which King William bestrode, though old and decrepit, still adhered to a youthful habit of shying, or the procession might never have reached the MacDonalds. But, as the old grey mare approached the raving obstacle in her path, she swerved coquettishly and King William curvetted round his enemy with royal indifference. His subjects wisely followed his example; the procession divided and streamed noisily on both sides of the profane wedge which had cloven it, and which gallantly held its position waving its

arms and howling forth derision until the last Orangemen had swept past.

But as the revellers tooted their victorious way down the street towards the tavern, a strange sensation of impending disaster made itself felt. The unwelcome fact began to dawn upon the Orangemen that the clamour about them was neither composed of acclamation, nor yet of the expected tumult of the outraged Murphys.

The suspicion grew to a horrible certainty by the time their destination was reached, and the instant the procession halted, King William, forgetting his royal dignity, scrambled from his horse and led a hasty charge against the doors and windows of the tavern. Their apprehension had been too correct. There, sitting at the Orangemen's feast, were forty-nine armed MacDonalds, while the fiftieth swept round the tables, his plaid flying, his kilt waving, his ribbons streaming, and his pipes shrieking as if they would fain split the roof!

It was a crucial moment for the Glen; and, looking from his vantage point on the verandah, Store Thompson held his breath. That the Orangemen even hesitated to pitch themselves headlong upon the usurpers showed that in the past two years the forces that make for law and order had been steadily work-

ing. However it might be, they hesitated. Perhaps they were assisted to a pacific decision by the sight before them. There is nothing so disastrous to a man's fighting qualities as an empty stomach. King William and his followers looked at their dinner rapidly disappearing into the capacious interiors of Glencoe; they looked at the stout clubs beneath the table; they glanced over their shoulders at Pat Murphy and his men, waiting eagerly for the MacDonalds to strike; they gazed at the terrible spectacle of Fiddlin' Archie, whirling round the room in an eddy of defiant yells; and the sights counselled discretion, rather than valour.

Slowly and sullenly they began to fall back from the doors and windows. Even King William was about to join the retreat when, in glaring fiercely round the tables, his eye chanced to fall upon the man whose family was so soon to be connected with his own. At the sight, the royal rage, already at boiling point, burst all bounds. Sticking his crowned head far in through the window, and forgetting that he had made a league with the MacDonalds to bring about a season of peace and good-will in the community, Mr. Caldwell burst into wild and profane vituperation. Commencing with Big Malcolm at the head of the table, and, taking each in turn, he

roundly and lengthily denounced the MacDonalds and all their generation; and ended his mad tirade by vowing by all things in heaven and on earth that before a daughter of his should unite with any such scum of savagery as was produced in the Oa, her father would strike her dead!

Such snatches of the royal ultimatum as managed to penetrate the scream of the pipes the MacDonalds heard in silence. Occasionally a pair of fierce eyes would dart a look of inquiry towards the leader, and once or twice Weaver Jimmie half rose from the table; but, with wonderful endurance, Big Malcolm held his men and himself down. He had broken his great resolution, but even in his abandonment he could not quite get away from the strong influence at home. No, he would not fight, not unless Tom Caldwell pressed him too hard, and this refusal to accept Callum into his family was nothing short of a blessing.

At last, through sheer dearth of remaining epithets, the royal address came to a termination. With much brandishing of fists and shouting of threats, the chagrined and hungry would-be revellers melted away before the sound of the MacDonalds' jig and the Murphys' jeers.

And when the last atom of the banquet had been

demolished and the landlord paid to the utmost farthing the MacDonalds arose, and, headed by their piper, went roaring up to their native hills, fired with the triumphant assurance that they had that day performed a great and glorious deed, and that at last Glencoe had been avenged.

VIII

THE END OF THE FEUD

There was a time I learned to hate,
As weaker mortals learn to love;
The passion held me fixed as fate,
Burned in my veins early and late,
But now a wind falls from above—
The wind of death, that silently
Enshroudeth friend and enemy.

—Ethelwyn Wetherald.

TO Scotty the days following upon the Orangemen's defeat were filled with misery. Even when he spent the time at Kirsty's, fishing in the streams or racing in the woods with Isabel, he could never quite forget that there was trouble in the lately happy home beneath the Silver Maple. For Granny's face was full of pain and anxiety, though she was so brave and patient; and Grandaddy walked the floor at nights or tramped up and down beneath the stars, and Callum was silent and gloomy.

Scotty did not understand just how much reason Callum had for gloom. That young man had to con-

tend with foes both at home and abroad. Tom Caldwell had lost no time, upon his return home the never-to-be-forgotten night of the Orangemen's downfall, in making very clear to his daughter his views upon the burning MacDonald question. Nancy had responded, with her usual spirit, by declaring that, when the day arrived, she would marry Callum Fiach if the heavens fell. The father understood his daughter's spirit and took no risk; the Caldwell homestead was guarded by armed men in quite a mediæval fashion; Nancy was kept in strict seclusion and a cordial invitation was sent to Callum to come on the wedding day with all the MacDonalds he could muster and take his bride.

Callum would have gladly accepted the challenge had there been any hope of assistance. But when Big Malcolm returned from the glorious defeat of the Orangemen, his spirit still aflame, the sight of his son, who had taken no part in their triumph, stirred him to fierce resentment.

"Callum!" he cried sternly, "I will be hearing no more about you and any o' yon low Eerish crew. It is not for my son to be disgracing the MacDonalds after this day's work!"

Callum's face went suddenly white and he rose from the table. "If you mean Nancy Caldwell," he

cried, "let me be telling you that I'll marry her if she was the daughter o' the Deil, himself!"

Big Malcolm rose to his feet also, and the two men faced each other fiercely. "The day ye marry any kin to that son o' Belial, Callum MacDonald," he roared, shaking his fist in his son's face, "you will be no more a son of mine!"

Callum laughed harshly, and flung out of doors. Scotty's big heart swelled to bursting. Grandaddy and Callum quarrelling! It was too awful to be believed. He dared not look at Granny's face, for he dreaded what he would see there, but he crept up close to where she sat by the bare table, her face in her hands, her breath coming in long sobs. Granny's heart was breaking, he was sure, and his own heart was breaking, too, for her, and for Callum, and for everyone.

The days that followed did not lighten the misery. Big Malcolm's repentance came over him like a flood of many waters. He left the farm to the care of the boys, and sat in the house, or wandered in the fields, plunged in the deepest humiliation and despair. One look at his wife's sad face would drive him to the barn or the woods, where he would sit, Job-like, and curse the day he was born. Like Job, too, he had three comforters who, though well-meaning and kind,

served only to deepen his spiritual gloom. Neither Store Thompson's solemn admonitions nor Praying Donald's hints of stern retribution were calculated to relieve his mind; and when Long Lauchie came across the fields on a Sabbath afternoon to mourn over him and see dire fulfilment of prophecy in his woeful case, he was driven to the verge of desperation.

There was no pleasure at home, and whenever Scotty had an opportunity he went visiting in the direction of Kirsty's. Isabel's companionship afforded him much solace, and through her wonderful ingenuity came at last a way out of his despair.

At first he had been reluctant to confide his troubles even to her; he knew that Granny would speak of them to no one except the one great Comforter, no, not even to Kirsty's mother; so he nursed his mournful secret through one long miserable day. But Isabel's eyes were very bright and soon spied the trouble in Scotty's face. So one day, as they sat on the edge of the old log bridge and swung their feet in the cool, brown water, he opened his heart fully.

To the boy's relief she seemed to think none the less of Callum for wanting to marry an Irish girl. Some Irish people weren't bad, she declared. For her Uncle Walter and Aunt Eleanor were half Irish.

Maybe she was some Irish herself, she generously conceded, but, at Scotty's look of incredulous dismay, she hastily concluded that she must be entirely and exclusively Scotch. But there was Danny Murphy, that nice boy who brought her the maple sugar and the butternuts, he was Irish; yes, and old Brian, their coachman, was Irish and said "begorra," and Brian was a dear. And very likely Nancy must be one of the nice Irish, or Callum would not want to marry her. And if they did not let him marry her, then that would be an awful thing, for if Callum failed to appear on the wedding day Nancy would certainly take the heartbreak, like Aunt Eleanor, and be sick forever and ever, and have to lie for days in a dark room and have headaches and nasty medicine.

Scotty's heart was wrung at the awful prospect. Was Isabel sure? Why, of course, she knew all about heartbreak and disappointments and such things. Scotty declared desperately that something must be done. And without an instant's meditation Isabel burst forth with the brilliant suggestion—why could they not take their pirate ship, sail down the Oro to the Flats and carry Nancy off bodily?

Scotty was dazzled. This was a thrilling project, entailing, as it did, an adventure in their wonderful

vessel. For some time before the close of school he and Danny Murphy had been copartners in a tremendous secret enterprise. Down in the green tunnel made by the "Birch Crick," where it foamed along through a tangle of timber and underbrush, until it found its way into the Oro, they had discovered, early that spring, a derelict punt. This craft had come like an answer to prayer; they had patched it up, launched it, and, before the holidays, had spent aboard its rotten timbers days of perfectly abandoned joy. Several times, indeed, they had made adventurous voyages out upon the Oro itself, and had had hairbreadth escapes, for the vessel leaked and accidents were frequent. But every boy of Number Nine school was an amphibious animal, and such small things as shipwrecks mattered little. With the close of school these happy excursions had to be given up. Only once had the boys been on a voyage since, and then Isabel had accompanied them, and they had not gone far. But here was a chance to go on a wonderful tour. They would sail down to the Flats and steal Nancy; perhaps they would even take a voyage down to Lake Simcoe and away out upon the Atlantic Ocean and have fights with pirates and Fenians. Scotty's ambition was fired to be away at once, but there was one trouble—Isabel

herself. She was all right at home, but her habit of hanging on to his coat with both hands when danger threatened would be embarrassing in public, and he did not even dare to think what Danny would say if he saw him in such a disgraceful plight. And then he conceived the rest of the brilliant plan himself. They would not steal Nancy away this time, but they would go to the Birch Crick, and if Danny was there they would send a message by him to Nancy, asking her if she would not like to be kidnapped, and he mentally resolved that Isabel could be put off while he and Danny performed the glorious deed.

Isabel, quite innocent of his traitorous plot, agreed to this modification of her plan; and the next morning, having obtained Kirsty's reluctant permission to go on an indefinite fishing expedition, they set off down the Scotch Line, bursting with excitement.

The Birch Creek crossed the road, flowing cool and brown beneath the old log bridge; a fine place for paddling with bare feet, but the two adventurers had no time for any such trivial pastime. They plunged into the undergrowth and followed the stream through a riotous confusion of long grasses and shrubs, where the yellow touch-me-not, the pink willow weed, the tall white turtle-head, and the blaz-

ing golden-rod grew in a tangle of wild beauty. They scrambled along with joyous shouts, sometimes on land, more often in the water. Frequently they had to stoop and crawl beneath the green canopy of birch and elm and willow that covered the stream and through which the golden sunbeams scarcely struggled to the cool, brown surface. Out in the open spaces the dragon fly darted here and there like a little blue spear. The shy trout fled dismayed before the two noisy intruders; the waxen blossoms of the arrowhead, the broad shining leaves and golden-hearted blossoms of the water lily and the stately blue spikes of the pickerel weed bent before their ruthless tramping. A kingfisher, startled from his day's work by the uproarious pair, shot down the stream, his derisive laugh echoing far through the leafy avenue. The two almost forgot the great import of their journey in its delight. Scotty splashed ahead, capering from fallen log to sunken stump; and after him came his faithful follower, bespattered with mud, dripping wet, even to the crown of her golden curls, and filling the air with her joyous shrieks of laughter over Scotty's wild antics.

And to crown their happy excursion, as they came round a sudden bend in the stream, there came a splashing sound ahead; a welcoming shout greeted

them, and here was Danny sailing down upon them, his red head shining like a beacon in the stern of the pirate ship! They wasted very little time in making known the grave reason for their visit, and to their surprise they found that Danny knew much more about the Caldwell-MacDonald trouble than they did.

Sure, wasn't his brother Mike telling them only last night that Nancy wasn't allowed to go outside the gate, though she fought like a tiger about it; and Tom Caldwell had said he'd kill Callum Fiach if he came near the place; and Nancy had said she'd murder anybody that laid a finger on him. Nancy was good stuff, and if there was any scheme for outwitting the Caldwells, Danny was their man.

But this was grave news, and somewhat dampening to the ardour of the adventurous spirits.

So they pulled the old punt up under the birches and sat in it with their three heads, black, gold and red, very close together, and concocted a new plan. The line of procedure finally settled upon was not quite so romantic as Scotty had intended, but it answered. Danny had access to the Caldwell home; no one would suspect him; he must see Nancy, and offer their services as well as those of their vessel, and meanwhile Scotty was to interview Callum, and

if he had any message to send to Nancy, then Danny would carry it.

They all went home bursting with their prodigious secret; and Scotty, whose forest breeding had made reticence easy, never ceased all the way home to warn Isabel of the fearful consequences of disclosure.

He could scarcely wait for an opportunity to speak to Callum alone, but at last supper was over and the chores all done; and he crept out to the barn where he had seen the young man disappear. He found him in the loft, lying gloomily upon the hay; and, hesitating and fearful lest Callum would ridicule or blame him for his interference, he made his confession. Callum suddenly sat up and gazed into the bright eager face with its big sparkling eyes. He sprang to his feet.

"Horo!" he shouted, and catching the boy up flung him over his head into the hay; and when Scotty came laughing and breathless to his feet he was filled with amazement and concern to see that there were tears in Callum's eyes.

And so a letter was carried, but not without difficulties encountered. Kirsty proved the first obstacle. She declared she was just going to put a stop to such stravogin', and would not let the lass go near that dirty crick again, for she always came

home wringing wet. Isabel swept away this barrier in a flood of tears, and all other difficulties were met and dealt with in an equally summary manner. Danny's dangerous part of the task was executed with wonderful skill and an answer was piloted safely back.

They were all three somewhat disappointed when Callum announced that the proceedings must stop there. Danny was inclined to rebel, and Isabel failed to explain such conduct. But Scotty found ample compensation for their restriction in the happy change in Callum. His old gaiety came back, his eyes sparkled, and he would snatch up Isabel and go leaping about the house with her perched shrieking upon his shoulder, just as he used to do in the happy days before the Orangemen came to blight their home.

Matters were improving in other places too. Big Malcolm's second stage of repentance, a period of prayer and fasting, had passed; he had come once more into his old contented state, sure of the forgiveness of his Heavenly Father for the wrong done, and determined by His grace never again to fall. News reached the Oa, too, that Nancy Caldwell had suddenly given up her rebellious outbursts and had settled down meekly to her fate, and Tom Caldwell boasted all over the Flats that she wouldn't take

Callum Fiach if all the MacDonalds in the Oa came to back him up.

And so Scotty found life happy again, and he and Isabel once more settled down contentedly to housekeeping beneath the Silver Maple. But the summer passed and old Brian came and took his comrade away, and Scotty wept secretly in the haymow all the evening after her departure.

The next morning he arose with a distinct consciousness of loss sustained. Isabel was not the only one who had left apparently. When they sat down to breakfast Callum had not yet appeared. No one marked his absence until Big Malcolm came in from the barn.

"Where will Callum be?" he inquired as he helped himself to his porridge. Rory kept his eyes upon his plate, but Hamish answered in a troubled tone, "I'll not know, father. Mebby he would be at the north clearing, whatever. He would not be coming home last night."

Big Malcolm continued his meal with knitted brows. Suddenly he looked up and caught a startled expression in his wife's eyes.

"What is it?" he asked anxiously.

Mrs. MacDonald's fingers were working tremulously with the hem of her apron. "I would be think-

ing," she faltered, "it will be the day—the day that was set!"

"Hoots!" cried Big Malcolm, "that will be nothing, whatever."

But a sudden ominous silence fell over the breakfast table; this was to have been Callum's wedding day, and Callum had not appeared. The stillness was broken by Bruce, who rose up from underneath the table with the short bark that announced a well-known visitor. A shadow fell over the threshold, still pink in the glow of the rising sun. Big Malcolm looked up in surprise.

"You will be early, Jimmie!" he called heartily as the Weaver stood in the doorway, "come away, man, and be having a bite!"

But Weaver Jimmie shook his head; he stood at the door struggling with feet and whiskers, and apparently more than usually overcome by embarrassment.

"I would like to be speakin' to you, Malcolm," he said. There was a look in his face that brought the three men instantly to the doorway. Scotty, straining his ears to catch their low remarks, could hear only, "Run-away—Lake Simcoe." Granny arose, her face white.

"Malcolm," she whispered, "Malcolm, what is this about our son Callum?"

Big Malcolm turned. There was a look in his eyes that had not been there since the day the Orangemen were defeated; but it suddenly faded at the sight of her white, pained face.

"It will jist be nothing, whatever," he said gently. "They would be saying the girl was off this morning, but Jimmie will not be sure. Come, lads."

The four men went away without another word, passing quickly through the barnyard and up the path that led into the woods. The mother arose and knelt by the bedside in the corner so long that Scotty could bear his burden of guilt no longer. He crept up to her, and when she put her arms about him he sobbed out his dreadful secret; how he and Isabel and Danny had carried a letter to Nancy, and another one back to Callum; and perhaps that was what made Callum run away. And oh, oh, he didn't know it was wicked or he wouldn't have done it; only she must not blame Isabel; it wasn't her fault.

But Granny blamed no one. She listened gravely to his story, and to Scotty's supreme relief seemed a little comforted by it. And she comforted him, too, patting his head lovingly and declaring that he was Granny's own boy with the big heart, indeed, and together they watched and waited through the long dreary day for the men's return.

But Scotty was tired out and gone to bed long before they came. He was half-awakened in the night by the sound of voices; strange voices, too; not angry or clamorous, but hushed and solemn. Once he distinguished Grandaddy's voice, broken as though with weeping, and Granny's, too, speaking as though she were comforting him, but with a sound in it that made the child's tender heart contract with pain. There seemed an awesomeness about the strange, soft movements below that sent a chill over him. None of the boys had come to bed yet; the light from below shone up through the cracks in the floor, and he crept to the hatchway and listened. And then he distinguished Praying Donald's low, deep voice raised in supplication; then Grandaddy had been fighting again and they had come to pray for him. The boy crept miserably back to his bed and, childlike, soon fell asleep.

He awoke in the rosy dawn, when the shadows of the forest still stretched up to the doorstep, and found to his surprise that Hamish was sitting by his bedside. He remembered with a chill the anxiety of the day and the awesomeness of the night before, and asked suddenly, "Where's Callum?"

But Hamish did not answer directly; only said that he must be good and quiet and not ask Granny any

questions, and added after a second question that Callum was gone away. And when would he be back? He would not be back, Hamish whispered, with his eyes upon the floor. Would not be back? Scotty stared uncomprehending. And where was Nancy? Nancy was with him. Had they gone to the old country? he asked in a whisper, but Hamish shook his head and turned away. The boy's heart seemed held by an awful dread. He wanted to ask another question, and yet he dared not. But as the young man turned to go down the stairs something in his white face opened a flood of awful intelligence upon the boy's mind.

"Hamish," he cried in a sharp whisper, "is—is—Callum—*dead?*"

But Hamish made no reply, only gave him a glance as though he had been smitten with a mortal wound, and went hurriedly down the stairs.

But Weaver Jimmie told him all about it as soon as he descended. For, to his surprise, Scotty found not only Jimmie there, but many others of the neighbours. Store Thompson's wife sat by the bed in the corner, and Granny lay upon it white and silent. Something lay in another corner, stretched upon boards, a figure so muffled and still that, without knowing why, Scotty glanced at it with a feeling of terror. Grandaddy

was nowhere to be seen; but Praying Donald was there, reading by the window. His deep voice, hushed to a solemn, low rumble, filled the room; "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses," he was saying, but Scotty did not listen; he followed Weaver Jimmie out to the barn full of awe-stricken questionings. And Jimmie, his kindly face quivering with sympathy, told him all. Yes, that still, dark form he had seen in the corner was Callum; they had brought him home last night, and had taken Nancy to her home. But Hamish had said Callum was gone, Scotty argued, and Nancy with him; had they come back then? No, they had not come back. They had run away and tried to cross Lake Simcoe in a canoe. A storm had come up suddenly, and though the Caldwells and the MacDonalds, who had tracked them to the shore, tried to rescue them, they were too late. And Callum was gone, gone never to come back, and Nancy was with him; and if Store Thompson could get the great preacher who had lately come to Barbay, they would bury them both in the Glen to-morrow. Scotty did not hear any more; Callum to be buried, and Nancy, too, to be put away in the ground as they had put Kirsty's father! He crept off into a corner of the haymow as soon as Jimmie had left him, and lay there,

his curly head hidden deep in the hay, his small body shaken with long convulsive sobs. Callum, his Callum, Granny's hero, as well as his own, gone never to come back!

Voices reached him once, and lest he should be discovered, he pressed his small hands over his quivering face and manfully strove to hold down his grief. Praying Donald and Long Lauchie were walking slowly with bent heads past the open barn door.

"It will be the will of the Almighty to be visiting us through this calamity," Praying Donald was saying, "but the Father will never be leaving His children comfortless, for the man of God himself will be coming to the funeral."

"McAlpine?" asked Long Lauchie in an eager whisper.

"Aye, John McAlpine himself; the Lord will be very merciful to us. But, eh, eh, that the man that poor Malcolm would be praying for all these years should be coming to us over his dead! Eh, it will be a mystery, a mystery!"

IX

RALPH STANWELL AGAIN

Johnnie Courteau of de mountain,
Johnnie Courteau of de hill;
Dat was de boy can shoot de gun,
Dat was de boy can jomp an' run,
An' it's not very offen you ketch heem still,
Johnnie Courteau!

—William Henry Drummond.

SCOTTY was setting out for what he hoped was his last winter at school. It was a performance he considered quite too juvenile, and a single glance at him would convince anyone that it was high time he had put away childish things. His great, strong frame, over six feet in his "shoe-packs," his brawny arms and hands, well developed under the toil of the axe and the plough, all spoke of his having reached man's estate. But his growth had somewhat outrun his years, and he had not yet reached the age when he might with propriety remain away from school during the winter. Besides, he had held a conference with Dan Murphy and "Hash" Tucker

during the Christmas holidays to consider the matter of further education. Should they abjure the whole trivial business, was the question discussed, or should they attend school this winter just to see what the new master would be like, and, if possible, make things lively for him?

The latter course, being the more uncertain, offered the more entertainment and was unanimously adopted; so here was the young man, on this dazzling January morning, swinging along the silent white forest path, ready for any kind of adventure.

For Scotty had arrived at a period when the unknown and the forbidden were the alluring, and the lawful and the restraining were the irksome. Indeed Rory was wont to grumble that that young Scot was just going to ruin; he had never been made to mind anybody when he was little, and now he was just growing up clean wild. For since Rory had given up fiddling and dancing and had settled down with Roarin' Sandy's Maggie in the north clearing he had become a very staid householder and frowned upon all youthful frivolity. And though his prophecies were perhaps overpessimistic, there was undoubtedly some cause for disapproval in the matter of Scotty's conduct. Even Big Malcolm and his wife, who, as old age advanced, were more and more inclined to make an

idol of their grandson, could not quite shut their eyes to his imperfections. He was the same big-hearted Scotty he had been in his childhood, lavishly generous and swift to respond to the call of suffering; but his high spirits were sometimes too much for the narrow confines of his life, and he was wont to break out into wild, mischievous pranks.

During the last winter of poor old McAllister's feeble misrule, Scotty and his two leal followers, Dan Murphy and "Hash" Tucker, had contrived to make the hard name of Number Nine notorious. So long as the three confined their misdemeanours to the school the public had winked at them. Disorder and ill-behaviour always seemed associated with old McAllister, everyone felt; and indeed Mr. Cameron, the minister, was suspected by most of the section to have had reference to the old broken-down school-teacher when he preached that solemn discourse upon the blind leaders of the blind. As the sermon was delivered on the Sabbath after Scotty and Dan had knocked over the stovepipes and almost burned down the school-house, Store Thompson declared he was "convinced of the certainty of the application-like."

But when the boys perpetrated acts of lawlessness beyond the precincts of school life people began to look upon them askance. Scotty had distinguished

himself rather unpleasantly on the last Hallowe'en; for besides the usual small depredations which everyone expected on that historic night, someone had gone to the extremity of elevating Gabby Johnny Thompson's wagon, heavily loaded with grain, to the top of the barn; and everyone in the Oa knew that nobody would have conceived of such a daring thing except Big Malcolm's Scot.

Of course, the neighbours could not fail to see some poetic justice in the affair, for Gabby Johnny, who was famed for his astute bargaining, had been voicing a wailing desire for high wheat ever since that grain had begun to grow along the banks of the Oro. Nevertheless, though the neighbours might secretly approve of such retributive acts of Providence, the medium through which they descended was liable to be regarded with disfavour.

For while Scotty was growing up the social life of the Oro valley had been undergoing a great transformation. John McAlpine, that great preacher whose words always awoke his hearers to a terrible realisation of the solemnity of life and the certainty of death, had come to the Glen with his imperative call to higher things. And at his coming the Sun of Righteousness had arisen over the Oro hills and the whole countryside had awakened to a new day.

Other influences had been at work, too; the spirit of the pioneer days was passing with the forests, the little isolated circles of cleared land had widened out and merged into each other like the rings on the surface of the Oro pools, and with the broader outlook came gentler manners and more tolerant views. Then this young land was slowly but surely absorbing into her own personality all the discordant elements and making of them a great nation; for within the last few years a new race had sprung up in the Oro valley, a race that was neither English, Irish, nor Scotch, Highland nor Lowland, but a strange mixture of all, known as Canadian. The community in the Glen had grown to quite a respectable village, the post office adding a touch of dignity and necessitating the new name, the name of Glenoro. And best of all, there was the church just at the bend in the river, with the manse beside it where the minister lived; and such had been its influence that a fight at the corner now would have brought a shock to the whole township.

So Scotty and his followers did not properly belong to these improved times; they were mediæval. The boy had been too young when Mr. McAlpine came to be deeply affected by his great sermons; but he had not outlived the stirring memory of the old fighting days when Callum kept the Oa lively. Callum was

still his hero, the dear old handsome Callum, of whom he could never think even yet without a pang of regret. Hamish and Rory had grown beyond him with the years, but Callum was always young and bright and dashing; and Scotty was determined to be like him and to do the great deeds Callum would certainly have done had it not been for his untimely end.

The bell was ringing when the three conspirators met at the school pump. Number Nine had a bell now, and there was even some agitation for a new building. Poor old McAllister's wasted life had gone out the autumn before like the quenching of a smouldering fire, and now that a new man was to take his place the section was beginning to pick up courage and look for a hopeful future.

The young men lounged in at the end of the procession and flopped into their seats with the proper air of insupportable boredom. Scotty's first task was to take the measure of his new instructor. At the first glance he was conscious of a distinct sensation of disappointment. He had expected the stranger to be young and callow, but this man had grey hair and was apparently nearing middle age. His face, which was pale and showed signs of ill-health, was clearly cut and refined. His frame was well-built and wiry, and he had a pair of steady grey eyes and a

quiet, dignified manner which seemed strangely incongruous in the position old McAllister had so long made ridiculous.

Nevertheless Scotty regarded him with strong disfavour. His white collar, his smooth hair and his English way of sharply clipping off his words stamped him as hopelessly "stuck-up"; and Dan Murphy reported with derisive joy that he had worn gloves to school, a weakness of which no one who called himself a man would be guilty. Besides all this, he had obtained his position through Captain Herbert; indeed, he had been a close friend of the Captain when they lived in Toronto, it was rumoured, and he probably belonged to the aristocracy, who were hated of Scotty's soul. On the other hand, he wasn't an Englishman, for his name was Archibald Monteith, that was one thing in his favour; but he stood for order and good behaviour, and the young man was arrayed against all such.

The new master himself was quietly taking note of his surroundings. He had been thoroughly informed of the bad character of Number Nine, both by Captain Herbert and the trustees, not to speak of the unsolicited advice and information that had been pouring in upon him ever since his arrival. Upon the first night of his stay at Store Thompson's, a

burly man with a great bushy head and beard had come suddenly upon him; and after a warm handshake and welcome had given him absolute power in the matter of dealing with his family.

"You lay it onto my Danny," was the generous admonition. "Sure, the young spalpeen's mad wid the foolish goin's on, an' it's a latherin' he needs ivery day. You mind an' lay it onto Danny!"

Quite as cordial but more ominous had been the advice proffered by Gabby Johnny Thompson. In his capacity of Secretary-Treasurer of the School Board that gentleman felt it incumbent upon him to inform the novice of the unsounded depths of iniquity he had to deal with in Number Nine. His darkest hints related to "yon ill piece o' Big Malcolm MacDonald's." A scandalous young deil he was, and Mr. Monteith would have to keep an eye on him, for him and yon young Papish of a Murphy were a bad pair. It was young Scot Malcolm who had nearly burned the school down, over McAllister's head; yes, and would have burned up old McAllister, too, without a thought, he was that thrawn and ill.

Monteith was regarding with deep interest the owner of this evil reputation. He was a rare reader of character, and understood at once the nature of Scotty's malady. His man's frame and boy's face,

his keen, bright, inquiring eyes, and the signs of abounding life, all fully explained the cause of the trouble. The schoolmaster found something irresistibly attractive about the boy too; there were signs of intellect in every line of his face, and he dearly loved brains.

As the school passed out for their morning intermission he beckoned the youth to him. Dan Murphy made a covert grimace expressive of his whole being's revolt against any such degrading task, and Scotty went forward reluctantly. He wanted to disobey, but the man's courtesy held him.

An old school register in which were written some seventy names lay open on the desk.

"I am hopelessly entangled in all these MacDonalds," said the new master, in a tone one man would use in addressing another. "Here are four Betseys and six Johnnies, and Donalds without number. Would you be so good as to assist me?"

Scotty's inbred Highland courtesy and the generous desire to help which was part of his nature, impelled him to answer politely. Striving to ignore the violent pantomime being enacted by Dan in the porch, he gave the man the key to the situation. His big finger ran awkwardly down the page as he gave the name by which each pupil was known. The stranger

listened in some amusement and not a little bewilderment to the list: Roarin' Sandy's Donald, Crooked Duncan's Donald, Peter Archie Red's Donald. They were rather unwieldy, but he planted them down heroically, and then proceeded to disentangle the Murphys and the Tuckers after the same fashion.

"I am very much obliged to you," he said with the same quiet seriousness when the work was finished, and Scotty took his seat wondering if the new master ever smiled. Most likely that grave, unbending manner was just the natural outcome of his inevitably stuck-up nature, he reflected.

Affairs went harmoniously enough until school was dismissed for the noon recess. As soon as the word was given dinner-pails were seized, bread-and-butter, meat, pie, and cake began to appear and disappear again with equal rapidity; a crowd of the bigger girls made preparations for brewing tea on the stove; and before the new master could get on his overcoat and gloves preparatory to leaving, dinner was well under way, and the room was filled with a strong aroma of tea and pork.

Scotty had gone to the door to administer a farewell snowball to the unclassified aliens who went home to the village for dinner. A prompt answer came hurtling back, and as he dodged into the porch with

a derisive yell of laughter, he barely escaped knocking over the new master. He hastily stepped aside to let him pass, but the man paused.

"I forgot to ask you your own name, among all the others," he said, more for the sake of engaging the youth in conversation than to gain information. "You are a MacDonald, too, I believe?"

Scotty had long passed the time when he felt his English name a disgrace. Of course he would have preferred one of another sort, but he scarcely thought of it now, and most of his schoolmates had forgotten that he possessed one. And, in the face of this grave man's courtesy, he felt it would be childish to pretend, so he answered, not without some dignity, "No, my name will not be MacDonald, it will be Stanwell, Ralph Stanwell."

The new master's grey eyes grew suddenly narrow; he was well acquainted with all the small tricks to be played upon a newcomer, and had many a time seen this one of a fictitious name successfully practiced. He had been prepared to find this boy hard to manage, but he was disgusted that he should descend to such a small, childish prank. He knew Scotty's name only too well, and, in any case, for a youth with a marked Highland accent, dressed in the grey homespun which seemed the uniform of clan MacDon-

ald, to stand before him and give himself such a name as this was as stupid as it was insulting.

"That is a very clumsy lie," he remarked quietly.

Scotty dropped his snowball and stared; for a moment he did not quite comprehend.

"What?" he cried artlessly. His look of innocent amazement doubled his listener's indignation.

"I said," returned the man very distinctly, "that you have told me a lie, and a very stupid one, for I know your name to be Scot MacDonald, and a rather notorious one you have made it, too."

And turning his back in disgust, the new master walked quietly down the snowy road. For an instant Scotty stood glaring after him, every drop of his rebellious blood tingling. He snatched up his snowball again and took aim. If he could only smash that conceited looking hat, or better still, the insufferable white collar! But there was something in the commanding air of the figure that went so steadily onward, not deigning to look back, that held the boy's arm.

Instead, he sent the missile crashing into the last remaining pane in the porch window, and went leaping into the school, determined to find Dan and relieve his feelings by working some irreparable damage.

The schoolhouse was in a condition to invite depre-

dations. Late in the previous autumn, as soon as the news of the new master's expected advent had come, the matrons of Number Nine had organised a housecleaning campaign in the school. Store Thompson's wife, that queen of housekeepers, headed the expedition against dirt, and even the minister's wife took part. The former lady had long declared that the condition of the schoolhouse was clean ridic'l'us, and now demanded that something be done to better it, for as the new master was coming from the Captain's he was sure to be a gentleman, and most like would be terrible tidy.

So the army of housekeepers had charged down upon the schoolhouse, and such a washing and cleansing and renovating as took place had certainly never been paralleled except when the spring winds and waters came swirling down the Oro hills. The poor little building was scarcely recognisable when it emerged from its baptism of soapy water and whitewash. The big girls added an artistic touch by decorating the spotless walls with cedar boughs, until the place smelled as sweet as the swamps of the Oro; and to crown all, the minister presented it with a fine picture of Queen Victoria to be hung above the master's desk.

And this was the immaculate condition of the place

where, when his dinner was finished, Scotty's roving eye sought something upon which to work off his burning indignation.

It had always been the custom heretofore in Number Nine to employ the noon recess tearing round the room in a cloud of dust, yelling, throwing ink and breaking furniture. But to-day the awe of the new master had had a restraining influence, and most of the wilder spirits had betaken themselves to an outdoor campaign. So there were only a few of the smaller pupils and the larger girls grouped round the stove when Scotty started his new enterprise. The cedar wreath above the door was quite dry and rather dusty and offered a fine field for a unique exploit. Lighting a splinter at the stove, he set fire to the garland, allowed the flames to mount up, and just as they threatened to get beyond his control, beat them out with his cap. The girls shrieked in horror; Betty Lauchie screamed that he was a wretch, and the minister himself would be after him, and Biddy Murphy vowed she'd pull every hair of his worthless head out for him if he tried it again. But Scotty was joyously reckless and quite beyond fear of even Miss Murphy.

When Dan returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, who lived over on the Tenth, he found

his chum the centre of a wildly excited group, and engaged in beating out his third conflagration. Dan was immediately fired to emulation. He would be disgraced forever in the eyes of the Flats if he allowed Scotty to get ahead of him, and already the room was filling with admiring MacDonalds and envious Murphys. So, in spite of the imploring shrieks and commands of the girls, he struck a match and soon had the festoons along the wall crackling merrily. When this rival blaze was extinguished Hash Tucker stepped into public notice. Considering his blood and breeding, this son of the house of Tucker should have been a phlegmatic Saxon. But no one can say what Canadian air will do with the blood; and under its influence Hash had long ago commenced a reversion to type, the aboriginal wild Indian. Whatever Scotty or Dan did therefore, that he could outdo. Seizing a burning brand from the stove, he scrambled up on the teacher's rickety old desk, and the next moment the triumphal arch, reared in honour of the new master's coming, was in a blaze. But just as he reached up to beat out the flames he was gripped violently round the knees, and down he came to the floor, Scotty on the top of him. Hash roared lustily for his followers; the Tenth responded gallantly, Scotty was engulfed in their on-rush, and, to help on

the good work, Dan Murphy headed a rescue party from the Oa to extricate his friend from the yelling heap.

What the outcome of this affray might have been is doubtful, but just at its inception a terrified cry of "fire," from the remainder of the school parted the combatants. They came to their feet to find the flames leaping up the walls, and clouds of smoke rolling through the room.

It was no joke this time and the boys wasted not an instant. Scotty leaped from the floor to head an impromptu fire brigade, and for a few moments they worked desperately. They dragged down the burning branches and flung them out of doors; they flew to and from the pump, they flung snow and water among the flames, and after a short but desperate struggle the fire was conquered.

It was all over in a few moments, and the victors stood, begrimed and breathless, and rather ruefully surveyed the havoc they had unwittingly wrought. The lately spotless walls were scorched and blackened, the decorations depended from the fastenings, charred and ugly, and the floor was swimming in inky water.

"Horo!" cried Scotty, with a long, dismayed whistle.

"It'll be bad for the gent's white collar if he comes in here," said Dan solemnly. "Murderin' blazes, who's that?"

Now, it happened that by an evil chance Gabby Johnny, the Secretary-Treasurer, had been driving past the school on his way to the woods, and seeing smoke issuing from the windows of the building over which he considered himself the especial guardian, he stopped his team and rushed upon the scene, and there he stood now, in the silent crowd of frightened girls and sobered boys, gazing at the devastation with such an expression of aghast horror, that at the sight of him all Scotty's compunction vanished and he laughed aloud.

Gabby Johnny peered through the smoke and discerned his enemy, evidently rejoicing over his evil work.

"Ah, ye ill piece!" he shouted, stepping up to the boy and shaking his fist in his face, "Ah kenned it was you! Aye, Ah kenned! If there's ony scandal'us goin's on ye'll be in it! It's an evil end ye're comin' til, wi' yer goin's on; aye, that's what ye are! Ye neither fear God, nor regard man! Sik a like onceevilised——"

Now Gabby Johnny was prepared upon all occasions to prove his right to his sobriquet, and Dan

Murphy well knew he would not stop until he had driven Scotty to extreme measures, so here he mercifully interfered in his friend's behalf. He had no mind to defy a trustee, so, being of a diplomatic turn, determined to divert the tide of wrath by the simple expedient of producing a counter-irritant. He slipped out quietly from the line of culprits, and snatching up a well-packed snowball hurled it straight and true at the team standing in the road. The missile was a hard one, and the nervous young colts, their heads erect, their nostrils indignant, went jingling off down the road, their heels sending a fine snowstorm over the old bobsleigh, leaping in their wake.

Gabby Johnny heard his bells and his eloquence suddenly ceased. At the same instant Dan burst in upon him, his eyes starting from his head, his breath coming in gasps.

"Sure, your team's runnin' away!" he bawled. "They're runnin' away! I can't stop them; they're gone clane wild!"

Gabby Johnny waited neither to hear nor deliver more. He darted out and down the road, followed by a hailstorm of snowballs and the joyful cheers of Number Nine. And as he went he howled breathless anathemas, alternately at his wayward horses and back at the yelling mob behind him, both couched in

language little calculated to raise the moral status of the already besmirched school.

But the boys' trouble was not over; they returned from the rout of the trustee only to find the new master entering the scene of destruction. He stood and looked about him with a manner just as quiet, but no graver, than usual.

"How did the fire start?" he asked calmly.

The dauntless three stepped forward, headed by Scotty. In the old days confession to McAllister did not appear in the code of schoolboy honour; but there was something about this man, even though Scotty cordially hated him, which demanded fair dealing. The new master looked them over in a manner that was hardly complimentary. His eyebrows rose.

"Children!" was all he said, but the word made Scotty writhe. Then he did not scold or rave as the boys half-wished he would. He quietly dismissed all but the three culprits, and saying he would give them that afternoon and the next day to bring the school back to the condition in which they had found it, and that done, he would prefer that they remain at home under their parents' control for a month or so, he turned on his heel and walked away with an air that said plainly that this was no affair of his and was regarded by him with calm indifference.

The boys were completely taken aback. Hitherto school discipline had consisted exclusively of thrashings, which though uncomfortable had some honour attached. But here was a new departure; to have to undo all one's mischief, and then be contemptuously dismissed was a serious affair. The new master acted as though he were the King of England too, and certainly, with Gabby Johnny at his back, he was not to be trifled with.

When the three arrived the next morning, armed with whitewash and brushes, Dan and Hash were rather inclined to feel subdued, but not so Scotty. In his home discipline was not so rigid as in that of the other two, and his grandparents had not even heard of his escapade. And his heart was still raging hot against the new master. The man had dared to tell him he lied! The remembrance of it and Monteith's air of calm superiority maddened him. How he longed to knock him down and hear him take back his statement. Well, he could not do that, it seemed, but he would wreak his vengeance in some other way.

So with Scotty in this mood the work of reparation did not go on very steadily. His two companions tried to attend to business, but soon found it impossible. They were alone in the forest with unlimited whitewash; and with Scotty inciting them to deeds of

daring, how could they resist? They started by enduring their leader's pranks, and ended by embracing them, and when their morning's task was completed not even McAllister's ghost, could it have appeared, would have recognised its old haunts.

Yet no one could say the boys had not done their work, for they had whitewashed the school with a thoroughness even Store Thompson's wife would never have attempted. The only fault was the lack of discrimination shown by the decorators. Some critics might have considered the coating of the floor and the desks a work of supererogation. But the boys were not stingy; they whitewashed everything with an impartial and lavish generosity; the walls, the ceiling, the blackboard, the furniture. Yes, even the stove and stovepipes were rubbed until they fairly radiated whiteness, and stood out spectrally in their pallid surroundings, like the ghost of some departed heater. Scotty gave the new master's desk an extra coat, and even polished up a stray book and dinner pail, unluckily left behind the day before, just to have them in harmony with their environment.

When at last the work was finished and the three bespattered workmen prepared to depart, Dan declared in an oratorical address delivered from the top of the master's snowy desk, that they had nobly done

their duty, for had they not carried out the new master's instructions and whitewashed the school?

And when they turned the white key in the white door and stole off in three directions through the forest, bursting with mirth, they vowed they had not experienced such a season of pure joy since the night Gabby Johnny's waggon had arisen, like Charles's Wain, in the heavens!

X

IN THE REALMS OF GOLD

Not to be conquered by these headlong days,
But to stand free: to keep the mind at brood
On life's deep meaning, nature's altitude
Of loveliness, and time's mysterious ways;
At every thought and deed to clear the haze
Out of our eyes, considering only this,
What man, what life, what love, what beauty is,
This is to live and win the final praise.

—Archibald Lampman.

UPON his return home, Scotty went out behind the house to work off some of his superfluous mirth upon the woodpile. He had flung aside his coat and was swinging his axe vigorously, when, with the quickness of the rural eye which always spies an approaching figure, he noticed a man turn in from the highway and walk briskly up the snowy lane. The boy gave a low whistle; his face grew dark with anger. It was the new master! He had found out the condition of the school then, and had come to report to his grandparents. McAllister at his worst was better than this fellow, for McAllister was no sneak. But even in his anger, he chuckled

mischievously when he considered what an exhibition Monteith would surely make of himself if he attempted to lodge complaints with Big Malcolm against his grandson.

But instead of turning up the path to the door, the new master followed the track that led round the house under the Silver Maple.

At first Scotty was of a mind to dodge round the woodpile and escape; but he was too late; Monteith had already caught sight of him; so he waited, sullen and defiant.

The new master lost no time in making his errand known.

"I came to offer an apology, Ralph Stanwell," he said gravely, "for what I said concerning your name. I found out my mistake only this afternoon."

Scotty's defiant air changed to one of amazement; his eyes fell, he felt suddenly ashamed.

"I hope you will accept an explanation, though it does not at all atone for what I said," continued the schoolmaster earnestly. "I am truly ashamed of myself for making such a stupid blunder."

Scotty squirmed in embarrassment. He had never in his life witnessed any such dignified reparation of a wrong, and in contrast, his own late conduct looked childish and almost barbarous.

"Oh, it will not matter, whatever," he stammered abruptly, and in a manner much more ungracious than his feelings warranted.

"But it does matter very much. It was no way for one man to speak to another."

Scotty experienced a glow of mingled pride and shame; the new master considered him a man then, and he had not played the man's part! "But, you see," continued Monteith, "I felt so sure. It was your Highland accent, and your—your general MacDonald appearance that to my ignorance made your statement unbelievable."

The schoolmaster had unwittingly struck the right chord.

Scotty smiled shyly but amicably. "Oh, it will be jist nothing," he said generously.

"Won't you shake hands, then, and let me feel I am quite forgiven?"

But Scotty did not put out his hand; he stood shifting from one foot to the other, looking down at the heap of chips.

"But—I—would you not be knowing?" he faltered.

"Knowing what?"

"That we—that I would be making the schoolhouse worse than ever?"

There was a sudden light in Monteith's eyes that would have surely convinced Scotty, had he seen it, of the new master's ability to smile.

"Well, perhaps that will help to even things up a little," he said brightly. "Come, are you willing to call it quits?"

Scotty put out his big hand swiftly, and felt it caught in a strong bony grip. And as their hands met Monteith's stern face suddenly broke out into an unexpected smile, a smile so brilliant and kindly that the boy felt it illuminate his whole being, and from that moment he was the new master's friend.

"And now," said the man, suddenly becoming grave again, "will you tell me how you come to have two names? How does a Highland Scot like you happen to have such a name as Stanwell?"

Scotty gasped; was he going to ignore the white-washing altogether?

"It would be my father's," he answered simply, "but I would always be living here with my grandfather, and I was always called MacDonald."

"Ralph Stanwell, Ralph Stanwell," repeated the schoolmaster ruminatingly, "I've heard that name before. Why, yes; I wonder if you are any relation to the Captain Ralph Stanwell I once met in Toronto. The name is not common."

"My father died there, and my mother, too," was the answer.

The new master stared. "Surely, surely," he was saying, half to himself, "it couldn't be possible; but his wife's name was MacDonald too! And Herbert always said the child died!"

Under the man's steady gaze Scotty fidgeted with his axe in combined amazement and embarrassment.

"Was your father's second name Everett?"

"Yes, and that will be mine, too."

The new master stared harder.

"Well, well, well," he muttered, "I wonder if he knows!"

The boy stood lost in a wild speculation. By some queer trick of memory he was back once more in Store Thompson's shop, a little curly-headed fellow, and felt a man's kind, playful hand upon his curls; and at the sound of his name saw a smiling face grow suddenly grave with amazement, fear and defiance chasing one another across it. How was it that, all through his life, his English name seemed always to produce consternation?

Monteith shook himself as though awakening from a dream.

"I beg your pardon," he said hastily, "your name called up some old memories. And now, I

must be going." He held out his hand again. "Good-bye, and I thank you for your generosity."

"But—but you will not be leaving without your supper!" cried Scotty aghast.

"Thank you, but your grandparents are not expecting me, and——"

Scotty stared. "But what difference would that be making?" he asked artlessly. "It will be all the better." The new master smiled again at the unconscious hospitality of the remark, and this time accepted the invitation. Scotty instantly flung aside his axe, and led the way around to the door.

Monteith had already learned to expect a warm greeting from the inhabitants of the Oro Highlands, but he had yet to experience a true Scottish-Canadian welcome, and was almost overwhelmed by the one he received in the old house under the Silver Maple.

Big Malcolm met him at the door and made him welcome in a manner that somehow made the guest feel that the old man owned the whole township of Oro and was laying it at his feet. Mrs. MacDonald drew him up to the fire, bewailing the long cold walk he had had, and pulling off his overcoat, calling all the while for Scotty to run and put more wood in the stove that she might make a fresh cup of tea. Hamish came hurrying up from the barn to shake the

guest's hand and make him welcome yet again, and even Sport, Bruce's successor, leaped round him, barking joyously, as though he understood that the arrival of a visitor was the best possible thing that could happen.

Then, there was Old Farquhar, still cackling incoherent Gaelic from the chimney corner. Before the visitor had got the snow swept from his feet the old man inquired if he had read Ossian's poems, and finding him in the depths of ignorance regarding that great bard, turned his back upon him in disgust, and for the remainder of the afternoon snored grumpily.

The hostess explained apologetically, as she brought the new master a steaming cup of tea, that indeed poor Farquhar was the nice, kind body, but he had had the toothache all last night and would be terrible set on Ossian.

Mrs. MacDonald was growing too old for the household cares devolving upon her, and Scotty being her chief help, the housekeeping did not at all compare with what Monteith was accustomed to in his boarding place at Store Thompson's. But he was conscious of no lack in the dingy old house. He recognised the inherent refinement of Mrs. MacDonald's nature, and bowed to it; he knew Big Malcolm for a gentleman the moment he spoke; and he saw,

too, something of the mystic in Hamish. For in later years there had grown an expression in Hamish's kind brown eyes which the schoolmaster understood—the look of a soul that has longed to soar, but has been kept down by narrow limitations.

Then the supper was spread upon the table, and it was all the visitor could desire; porridge in brown bowls, smoking and fragrant, sweet white bread, and bannocks with plenty of maple syrup. And afterwards, when the supper was cleared away, and Scotty and Hamish had finished the milking, they all gathered about the stove, which now stood in front of the old discarded fireplace. First the schoolmaster had to tell of his life and lineage, during which recital he proved his Scottish blood to everyone's satisfaction. There did not seem to be much to tell of his past doings, though in response to the simple, kindly questionings, he gave it all. He had been born in Scotland and was quite alone in Canada, except for Captain Herbert, who was an old friend, and whose wife had been a distant relative. He had studied law for some years, but his health had failed before his course was completed. Then he had knocked about the world a good deal, and had come north at Captain Herbert's advice to see if the Oro air would not do him good.

"Indeed, and it will that!" Big Malcolm declared heartily. "Jist you eat plenty o' pork and oatmeal porridge and you'll be a new man in no time. Hoots, when we would be coming here first folk would never be sick like now-a-days; and indeed it wasn't often a man died except a tree would be falling on him, whatever."

"Those must have been fine times," said the schoolmaster smilingly; and thereupon his host and hostess launched into long tales of the old days, when the forest came up to the door, and of those older and happier days in the homeland across the sea.

Big Malcolm and his wife lived much in the past now, and, when the guest displayed a kindly interest in their history, they opened their hearts even to speak of Callum, their light-hearted, bright Callum, whose end had been so untimely. The schoolmaster heard also the manner of his death; how it had brought the great preacher, and how in the double grave in the Glen by the river one of the Fighting MacDonalds, at least, had buried all his feuds. And they told him, too, of their only daughter, the beautiful little Margaret, who had been Scotty's mother. Monteith asked many questions concerning her, and Scotty listened eagerly, but his new friend offered no explanation of his interest.

When it was time to depart, Big Malcolm was for insisting that he should spend the night with them; but when he declared that he must return to the Glen, or Mrs. Thompson would be worried, his hostess seized the teapot again, and another supper was spread out, of which the guest had perforce to partake before leaving.

That finished, Big Malcolm reverently laid aside his bonnet, and Scotty brought him the old yellow-leaved Bible. The old man read the 103d Psalm in a triumphant tone that showed he had passed all his temptations and trials, and now in a serene old age his soul blessed the Lord for His guidance.

And then they sang a Psalm, Old Farquhar coming out from his corner to join them. They sang it in English, in deference to the guest's lack of Gaelic, and the brown rafters rang to the solemn old Scottish tune in harmony with the beautiful words:

> "Oh, taste and see that God is good:
> Who trusts in Him is bless'd!"

And listening, the man of the world experienced a vague sensation of something like regretful envy. Had he not, in his broader life, missed some uplifting joy, some great blessing in which these old people rejoiced?

While Monteith was taking a lingering farewell and promising a speedy return, Scotty went to a corner and lit the lantern, and in spite of the schoolmaster's protests, insisted upon accompanying him for a mile to show him the short road across the swamp.

The two walked side by side along the snowy path, the lantern flashing fitfully amongst the bare branches and dark boles of the trees. Monteith chatted away pleasantly, but Scotty answered only in monosyllables. He was employed in making desperate efforts to bring about some allusion to the condition of the schoolhouse. But the new master seemed to have totally forgotten school affairs, and when they came to the end of the forest path and stood upon the Glenoro road, saying good-night, this strange man had not in the smallest way recurred to the shameful subject. Scotty was in despair. "It would be a fool's trick we were doing!" he burst forth, as Monteith held out his hand in farewell, "if we could jist be having another day——" He stopped overcome.

The new master did not seem to need an explanation of this apparently irrelevant speech. "Could you fix it all up in one day?" he inquired in a business-like manner.

"Oh, yes!" Scotty gasped eagerly, "easy."

"All right, we'll take to-morrow; I'll come over and help you. Good-night!"

And he turned away, leaving his pupil standing in the middle of the road amazed and humbled.

Number Nine learned during the following week that for some inexplicable reason the MacDonalds, whose hand had hitherto been against every other man's hand, were on the side of the new master, and that anyone who gave him trouble was courting dire calamities at the hands of Big Malcolm's Scot. As a direct result the fiat went forth that Dan Murphy, and consequently all his generation, also approved of the new rule. Subsequently the Tenth announced its neutrality; and from that time the new era, which had arisen at the building of the church in the social world of the Oro valley, dawned in the schoolhouse too, and the land had rest from war.

To no one did the new dispensation bring greater things than to Scotty. Ever since the days when all knowledge and wisdom could be extracted, by persistent questionings, from Hamish, he had experienced an unslakable thirst for books. He had been much more fortunate in finding reading material than his uncle had been, for Captain Herbert's library was always at Scotty's disposal. Every summer and win-

ter Isabel came to Kirsty's laden with books, and what feasts she and Scotty had reading under the boughs of the Silver Maple or before Kirsty's fire! Dickens, Scott, Thackeray, Macaulay—they devoured them all; and once, by mistake, she had brought some books by a wonderful man named Carlyle, which she declared were dreadfully stupid, but which Scotty found strangely fascinating, though somewhat beyond his understanding.

But Isabel had been away at school for more than a year now, and though she wrote Scotty voluminous letters, which he answered at shamefully long intervals, and only when Kirsty's reproaches goaded him to the effort, she had almost entirely passed out of his life.

So when there had been no more books to read he had turned his restless energies into less profitable channels. But now, here were not only books of all kinds, but a man ready and willing to interpret them. Scotty heard no more of the sentence of expulsion, and with the energy that characterised everything he did, he plunged headlong into a course of study far beyond any public school curriculum. Monteith was first amazed, then delighted, and lastly found he had to set himself severe tasks to keep sufficiently ahead of his pupil.

And in return for his pains Scotty gave an allegiance to his master that had in it something of homage. Not the gay, reckless Callum was his hero now, but this quiet, self-controlled gentleman. Unconsciously the boy copied him in every particular, and unquestioningly adopted his opinions. Monteith had seen the world, had lived in cities, and even in that magic land, "the old country," and surely he should be an authority. Scotty early learned that the new master despised the tavern, not quite in the way Store Thompson and the minister and his grandfather did, as a force of evil, but in lofty scorn of its lowness.

In consequence the boy was never found hanging about its doors any more. And though the teacher said nothing about his religious views, the pupil soon learned and adopted them too. Monteith treated all creeds with a good-natured tolerance. The Bible, he declared, was a grand piece of literature, and he liked to go to church because Mr. Cameron's sermons gave him some intellectual stimulus. Religion he characterised chiefly as an emotion. A man needed only common sense to show him how to live, he declared. Scotty felt that this was the creed for him; he had come under Monteith's control at a period when he was in revolt against all earlier re-

straint and rejoiced in the feeling of independence which the new belief brought.

The two soon became fast friends in their common pursuit of learning. When the second winter came, and Scotty had become too old for school, he and Monteith studied together in the long evenings, and each month of companionship served to deepen their friendship. But in spite of their intimacy the boy never elicited any explanation of his friend's strange behaviour when he first realised that Scotty's name was Stanwell. Monteith was always careful to call him Ralph, but he forebore from any allusion to the subject; and as the days went happily on the matter dropped from the boy's thoughts.

XI

THE WEAVER'S REWARD

Love came at dawn when all the world was fair,
When crimson glories, bloom and song were rife;
Love came at dawn when hope's wings fanned the air,
And murmured, "I am life."

Love came at even when the day was done,
When heart and brain were tired and slumber pressed;
Love came at eve, shut out the sinking sun,
And whispered, "I am rest."

—William Wilfred Campbell.

AND just as Scotty entered manhood a wonderful thing happened in the Highlands, something that amazed the neighbours and convinced them of the instability of all things, particularly of a woman's resolution, for Kirsty John promised to marry the Weaver. All these weary years, as faithful as the sun and as untiring, Jimmie had been climbing the hills to the Oa to shed the beams of his devotion unheeded at Kirsty's doorstep; but now the long period of Jacob-like service was over, for he had at last won his Rachel.

Some declared that this was only a new method

Kirsty had found for tormenting her hapless lover, and that after they were tied up she would lead him a dog's life. But Long Lauchie's girls—there were still girls at Long Lauchie's, though a goodly number of matrons looked back to the place as their old home—declared that Jimmie no longer dodged when Kirsty passed him, and that he even entered her house without knocking. And Big Malcolm's wife would shake her head smilingly at all the dark predictions and declare in her quiet, firm way that indeed they need never fear for Jimmie.

And she was right; the Weaver was not undertaking any such hazardous enterprise as the neighbours supposed. For a change had come over Kirsty the winter she lost the frail little mother, and only Big Malcolm's wife knew its depth. All Kirsty's bold courage, all her fearless fight with poverty, had had for its inspiration the poor sufferer on the bed in the corner of the little shanty, and when the spring of action was removed there went also the daughter's dauntless spirit, and nowhere was the change so strongly evinced as in this promise to marry the Weaver.

Kirsty's grief had no bitterness in it. It had softened her greatly, for the little mother's death had been as beautiful as her patient, pain-filled life. And

wonderful it seemed that, like that other woman who had suffered so long before, just eighteen years of pain had been completed when the Master called her to Him and said in His infinite love, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity."

"But you will surely not be leaving me," pleaded Kirsty brokenly when her mother told her the end could not be far off. "Ah 've nobody but you."

"Eh, ma lassie, ye'll be better wi'oot such a puir auld buddie, jist a burden to ye a' these years."

"Oh, mother, mother, ye'll surely not be talkin' that way to me," sobbed her daughter.

"Eh, eh, lass! There, there! It's naething but the best Ah could say to ye, Kirsty." The weak old hand was fumbling feebly for Kirsty's bowed head. "For, eh, ye've jist been that guid to yer mither, the Lord'll reward ye; Ah've nae fear o' ye, Kirsty, He'll reward ye." There was a long silence in the little room. The fire flared up in the old chimney, the clock's noisy pendulum went tap, tap, tap, loud and clear in the stillness. "Read it tae me jist once mair, Kirsty," she whispered. Kirsty arose and fetched the old yellow-leaved Bible from the dresser. She did not need to be told what she was to read.

"Aye," whispered the old woman with a gleam of triumph in her eyes, "aye, *He called her;* an' it's jist

eighteen year. Aye, eighteen! Eh, it's been a long time, Kirsty," she continued as her daughter seated herself at the bedside again, "eh, a weary time, an' the pain's been that bad, whiles, Ah wished He would tak' it awa, but Ah didna ask Him. No, no! She didna ask Him, an' Ah jist waited like her, an' it's eighteen year, and Ah think He'll be callin' me. . . . Read it, Kirsty."

Kirsty opened the Book; her eyes were blinded with tears, but she had so often read that passage that she knew it by heart. She was faltering through it when a timid step sounded, a crunch, crunch on the snow outside the door, and a low tap, scarcely audible above the noise of the clock, announced Weaver Jimmie. Old Collie, lying before the fire, so accustomed to Jimmie's approach, merely uttered a gruff snort, as though to apprise all that he was well aware that someone had arrived, but did not consider the visitor worthy of his notice. But as Kirsty opened the door he thumped his tail upon the hearthstone.

For the first time in his life Weaver Jimmie realised that Kirsty was glad to see him, and his heart leaped. But he choked at the sight of her grief-stricken face, and could only stand and look down at his great "shoepacks" in the snow.

"Will ye bring Big Malcolm's Marget," whispered

Kirsty, "mother's——" She stopped, unable to say more, but more was unnecessary, for, eager to do her bidding, Jimmie was already off across the white clearing and was lost to view before she could shut the door.

Kirsty went softly back to the bed.

"Was it Jimmie?" whispered her mother.

"Yes."

"He's a kind chiel, Kirsty. Ye must marry puir Jimmie, ma lassock, he's got a guid hert, an' he'll mak' ye a kind man, an' Ah'll no be fearin' for ye." She paused, and then came the whisper, "Read it." So Kirsty read it to her for the last time, the sweet old story that had comforted the poor, pain-racked woman and upheld her in patience and fortitude for eighteen weary years of suffering. And when at the end of the story came those gracious words bearing a world of love and divine compassion, "And Jesus called her to Him and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity," Kirsty paused. Her mother always interrupted there, always broke in with a word of triumph, a renewal of the firm faith that for eighteen years had forbidden her to ask for relief. But as she waited now there came no sound, and, looking up, she saw that the Divine Healer had loosed this other woman from her infirmity and

made her straight and beautiful in His kingdom of happiness.

And so Kirsty, always kind and true-hearted, had been made better and more womanly by her trial; and although she kept her faithful suitor waiting for a couple of years more, she yielded at last and the Weaver received his reward.

As if to be in keeping with the time of life at which the bride and groom had arrived, the wedding day was set in the autumn; the soft vaporous October days when the Oro forests were all aflame.

Kirsty had refused to leave her little farm; so Jimmie, well content, had a fine new frame house built close to her old home; and as soon as the wedding was over he was to bring his loom from the Glen and they would begin their new life together.

Kirsty declared that he might bring the loom any day, for there was to be no nonsense at her wedding; they would drive to the minister's in the Glen by themselves, and she would be home in time to milk the cows in the evening.

But when she saw the bitter disappointment a quiet wedding would be to the prospective groom, she had not the heart to insist. For years Jimmie had buoyed up his sorely-tried courage by the ecstatic picture of

himself and Kirsty dancing on their wedding night, he the envy of all the MacDonald boys, she the pattern for all the girls; and though neither he nor his bride were any longer young, he still cherished his youthful dream. And then Long Lauchie's girls came over in a body and demanded a wedding and a fine big dance, and even Big Malcolm's wife declared it would hardly be right not to have some public recognition of the fact that there was a wedding among the MacDonalds.

And so, laughing at what she called their foolishness, Kirsty yielded, and the girls came over and sewed and scrubbed and baked, and Scotty and Peter Lauchie gathered in the apples and turnips and potatoes and raked away all the dead leaves and made everything neat and tidy for the great event.

And the day actually dawned, in spite of Weaver Jimmie's anticipation that some dire catastrophe would befall to prevent it. A radiant autumn day it was, a Canadian autumn day, when all the best days of the year seem combined to crown its close. The dazzling skies belonged to June, the air was of balmiest May, and the earth was clothed in hues of the richest August blooms. The forest was a blaze of colour. The sumachs and the woodbine made flaming patches on the hills and in the fence-corners. The

glossy oaks, with their polished bronze leaves, and the pale, yellow elms softened the glow and blended with the distant purple haze. But Canada's own maple made all the rest of the forest look pale, where it lined the road to the bride's house, in rainbows of colour, rose and gold and passionate crimson.

Early in the afternoon high double buggies, waggons, and buckboards began clattering up the lane to Kirsty's dwelling. And such a crowd as they brought! In the exuberance of his joy Weaver Jimmie had bidden all and sundry between the two lakes. And besides, everyone in the Oa went to a MacDonald wedding, anyway. Invitations were always issued in a rather haphazard fashion, and if one did not get a direct call, it mattered little in this land of prodigal hospitality, for one always bestowed a compliment upon one's host by attending.

Long Lauchie's girls took the whole affair out of Kirsty's hands and arranged everything to their hearts' desire. The cooking and washing of dishes was to be done in the old house, while the double ceremony of the marriage and the wedding dinner was to be performed in the new establishment.

This place was gaily decorated with the aromatic boughs of the cedar, dressed with scarlet berries and crimson maple leaves. A table at one end held the

wedding presents. This was the work of the Lauchie girls, too, for Kirsty felt it was nothing short of ostentation to put up to the public gaze all the fine quilts and blankets and hooked mats the neighbours had given her towards the furnishing of the new home. But the girls had their way in this as in all other arrangements, and most conspicuous in the fine array were a Bible from the minister and a set of fine gilt-edged china dishes from Captain Herbert's family.

And amidst all this splendour sat the bride, sedate and happy, arrayed in a bright blue poplin dress and the regulation white cap.

Beside her sat Jimmie, his arm about her in proper bridegroom fashion, but loosely, for Kirsty was not to be trifled with, even on her wedding day. He sat up, erect and stiff, strangling ecstatically in a flaring white collar, and striving manfully to keep his broad smiles from overflowing into loud laughter, for poor Jimmie's belated joy bordered on the hysterical. His magnificent appearance almost eclipsed the bride. He wore a coat of black, such as the minister himself might have envied, a saffron waistcoat, and a pair of black and white trousers of a startlingly large check. His hair was oiled and combed up fiercely, his red whiskers waged a doubtful warfare for first place with the white collar, his big feet were doubly con-

spicuous in a pair of red-topped, high-heeled boots which, unfortunately, met the trousers halfway and swallowed up much of their glory. But as both could not be exposed, Jimmie, evidently believing in the survival of the fittest, had allowed the boots the place of honour.

Scotty drove his grandmother over to Kirsty's early in the morning, for the bride said she must have her mother's old friend with her all day; and when he returned in company with Hamish, his grandfather, and Old Farquhar, it was almost the hour set for the ceremony.

The wedding guests had already gathered in large numbers, many of them standing about the door or in the garden—matrons in gay plaid shawls, with here and there a fantastic "Paisley" brought out, for this festive occasion, from the seclusion of some deep sea-chest; men, weather-beaten and stooped, in grey flannel shirtsleeves, showing an occasional genteel Sabbath coat from the Glen; bright-eyed lasses, with gay touches of finery to brighten their young beauty; youths in heavy boots and homespun clothing, gathered in laughing groups as far from the house as possible; and everywhere babies of all sizes.

Scotty left a crowd of his friends at the barn and went up to the house to look for Monteith. The

schoolmaster had spent the preceding Saturday and Sunday with his friends at Lake Oro, but had promised Jimmie faithfully that he would not miss the wedding. As the young man swung open the little garden gate and came up the pathway between rows of Kirsty's asters he caught sight of his friend standing in the doorway of the new house, and gave a gay whistle. Monteith looked up quickly, but instead of answering he turned to someone inside the house.

"Here he is at last," he called, "come and see if you think he's grown any."

And the same instant a vision flashed into the little doorway, a vision that nearly took away Scotty's breath—a tall young lady in a blue velvet gown with a sweet, laughing face and a crown of golden hair overshadowed by a big plumed hat, a lady who looked as if she had just stepped out of a book of romance; a high-born princess, very remote and unapproachable, and yet, somehow, strangely, enchantingly familiar.

The vision apparently did not want to be remote, for it came down the steps in a little, headlong rush, casting a pair of gloves to one side and a cape to the other, and caught hold of both Scotty's hands.

"*Scotty!* Oh, oh, Scotty, *dear!*" it cried; and then it was no longer an unapproachable heroine from

a story-book, but just Isabel; Isabel, his old chum, and something more, something strangely wonderfully new.

Scotty did not return her welcome with the warmth he would have shown a few years earlier. He stood gazing down at her as if in a dream, and then the red came up under the dark tan of his cheek and overspread his face. He dropped her hands and looked around hastily, as if he wanted to escape. But Isabel dragged him up the garden path in her old way, deluging him with questions for which she never waited an answer. She had seen Granny Malcolm and Betty and Peter, and she had been afraid he wasn't coming. And, oh, wasn't it an awfully long time since she had seen any of them? And didn't he think he was very unkind not to have answered her last two letters? And she had been away at school all this endless time, not home to the Grange even in the summer! And, oh, how glad she was to get back! And how he had grown! Why, he was a giant! And had he missed her? She had missed him just awfully, for Harold was away all the time now. And wasn't it just too perfectly lovely for anything that Kirsty and Jimmie were getting married, and that he and she were together at the wedding?

Scotty stood and listened to these ecstatic outpour-

ings, his head swimming. He was enveloped in a rose-coloured mist, a mist in which blue velvet and golden hair and dancing eyes surrounded and dazzled him. One moment he was a child again, and his little playmate had come back, and the next he was a man and Isabel was the lady of romance. And while he stood in this delightful daze someone came and took the vision away; he thought it was Mary Lauchie, but was not sure. When she had disappeared into the new house he awoke sufficiently to notice that Monteith was standing at the door regarding him with twinkling eyes, and for the second time that afternoon he blushed.

The crowd was beginning to gravitate towards the new house, and Scotty soon found an excuse to enter also. It hadn't been a dream after all, for she was there, sitting close by Kirsty, holding her hand, and surrounded by the people who made up the more genteel portion of society in the Oa and the Glen. A little space seemed to divide them from the common crowd, and she sat, the recognised centre of the group. Scotty noticed, too, that even Mrs. Cameron, the minister's wife, treated the young lady with bland deference, quite unlike her manner of kind condescension towards the MacDonald girls. As he watched the graceful gestures and easy well-bred air of his

late comrade, Scotty was suddenly smitten with a sense of his own shortcomings; he was rough, uncouth, awkward. Isabel belonged to a different sphere: she was far removed from him and his people. It was the first time he had realised the difference, and he felt it just at the moment that it first had power to hurt him. He experienced a sudden return of the old wild ambition that used to shake him in his childhood when Rory played a warlike air. And then he wanted to slip out and go away from the wedding feast and never see Isabel again. He glanced at her again, and felt resentfully that she must surely be guilty of the sin of "pride," which so characterised the class to which she belonged.

But he had soon to change his mind. The blue eyes had been glancing eagerly about the room, and as soon as they spied him their owner arose and came crushing through the throng towards him. For though Scotty was distrustful, Isabel's frank simplicity of nature had not changed in her years of absence. Her happiest days had been spent in the Oa, and her return to her old home with its sense of welcome and freedom meant more to the lonely girl than he could realise. Practically she had been brought up among the MacDonalds, and at heart she was one of them.

Scotty saw her approach in combined joy and embarrassment, and just as he was trying to efface himself in a corner he found her at his side. She wanted to talk about the good old times, she whispered, as she pulled him down beside her on the low window sill. "They were just the loveliest old times, weren't they, Scotty? And don't you hate to be grown up?" she asked.

Hate it? Scotty gloried in it. It was a new birth. He tried to say so, but Isabel shook her head emphatically.

"Well, I don't, and you wouldn't in my place, for I can't run in the bush any more. Aunt Eleanor bewails me; she says I've been spoiled by Kirsty, for I can't settle down to a proper life in the city. The backwoods is the best place, isn't it, Scotty?"

He drew a long breath. "Do you mean you'd really like to come here and live with—with Kirsty again?" he asked.

"Oh, wouldn't I?" she cried, her eyes sparkling so that Scotty had to look away. "It was never dull here. Don't you wish I'd come back, too?"

Scotty felt his head reeling. "I—don't know," he faltered ungallantly.

"You don't know?" she echoed indignantly.

"Scotty MacDonald, how can you say such a mean thing?"

Scotty looked up with a sudden desperate boldness.

"Because I wouldn't be doing any work if you were here," he exclaimed with a recklessness that appalled even himself.

Isabel laughed delightedly. "That's lovely," she cried. "Do you know, I was beginning to be afraid, *almost*, that you weren't just very glad to see me, and —and you always used to be. You *are* glad I came, aren't you, Scotty?"

Like a timid swimmer, who, having once plunged in, discovers his own strength and gains courage, Scotty struck out boldly into the conversational sea.

"It was the best thing that ever happened in all my life," he answered deliberately.

She was prevented from receiving this important declaration with the consideration it deserved by a sudden silence falling over the room. The minister was standing up in the centre of the room, clearing his throat and looking around portentously. The ceremony was about to commence, and all conversation was instantly hushed. Mothers quieted their babies, and the men came clumsily tiptoeing indoors. Whenever possible the more ceremonious precincts of the house were left to the more adaptable sex, the

masculine portion of such assemblies always retiring to the greater freedom of the barn and outbuildings. Now they came crowding in, however, obviously embarrassed, but when the minister stood up, book in hand, and a hush fell over the room, the affair took on a religious aspect and everyone felt more at home.

Mr. Cameron moved to a little open space in the centre of the room, and bade Kirsty and Weaver Jimmie stand before him. Mary Lauchie, pale and drooping as she always was now, stood at Kirsty's side, and Jimmie had the much needed support of Roarin' Sandy's Archie, now the most fashionable young man in the Oa, who was resplendent in aromatic hair oil and a flaming tie. Jimmie was white and trembling, but Kirsty was calm. Only once did she show any emotion, when she had to search for her neatly-folded handkerchief in the pocket of her ample skirt to wipe away a tear—a tear that, all the sympathetic onlookers knew, was for the little mother who had said so confidently she had no fears for Kirsty's future.

At last the minister pronounced them one, and the friends gathered about them with their congratulations, and, to the delight of all, what should Miss Herbert do, after hugging the bride, but fling her arms about the bridegroom's neck also and give him

a sounding kiss! If anything could have added to Jimmie's pride and joy at that moment, this treatment by Kirsty's little girl would certainly have done so.

And then came the wedding supper, the tables set out with the precious new china dishes and weighed down and piled up with everything good the MacDonald matrons knew how to cook. The bride and groom sat close together at the head of the long table, Jimmie's affectionate demonstrations partially hidden by the huge wedding cake. The minister sat at the foot, and after a long and fervent grace had been said everyone drew a deep breath and proceeded to enjoy himself.

There was a deal of clatter and noise and laughter and running to and fro of waiters. In the old house where the work was going on, and where there was no minister to put a damper on the proceedings, there were high times indeed; for Dan Murphy was there, and wherever Dan was there was sure to be an uproar. Scotty was responsible for the young man's presence; he had invited Mr. Murphy on the strength of his own relationship to both contracting parties, knowing a warm welcome was assured. So, with an apron tied round his waist, Dan was making a fine pretence of helping Betty Lauchie wash dishes, his

chief efforts, however, being directed towards balancing pots of boiling water in impossible positions, twirling precious plates in the air, and other outlandish feats that added a great deal to the enjoyment, but very little to the competence, of the assembled cooks.

Scotty joined the army of workers in the shanty, but he had left the blue vision seated at the table between his grandparents, and his culinary efforts were not much more successful than Dan's. His chum tried to rally him on his absent looks, and made a sly allusion to the effusive greeting of the young lady from Lake Oro. But Scotty met his well-meant raillery with such unwonted ferocity that he very promptly subsided.

In the new house, where the elder guests were gathered about the table, affairs were much more ceremonious, for all the genteel folk the neighbourhood could boast were there, and Jimmie's face shone with pride as he glanced down the splendid array.

The bridegroom's joy seemed to permeate the whole feast. There was much talk and laughter, and, among the elder women, a wonderful clatter of Gaelic. For only on such rare occasions as this had they a chance to meet, and there were many lengthy recountings of sicknesses, deaths, and burials.

Long Lauchie, as usual, was full of vague and ominous prophecies. His remarks were chiefly concerning the wedding feast to which those who were bidden refused to come, with dark reference to the man who had not on the wedding garment; neither of which allusions, surely, pointed to either Weaver Jimmie or his marriage festivities. Near him, in a little circle where English was spoken, Praying Donald and the minister were leading a discussion on the evidences of Christianity. There was only one quarter in which there were signs of anything but perfect amity, and that was where a heated argument had arisen between Old Farquhar and Peter Sandy Johnstone upon the respective merits of Ossian and Burns; a discussion which, in spite of the age of the disputants, would certainly have ended in blows, had it been in the old days when a marriage was scarcely considered binding without a liberal supply of whiskey.

But Kirsty's wedding, happily, belonged to the new era, and the minister, glancing round the well conducted assemblage and recalling the days, not so far past, when most of the Highlanders enlivened any and every social function, from a barn-raising to a burial, with spirits, heaved a great sigh of gratitude. And Store Thompson unconsciously voiced his senti-

ments when he declared, in a neatly turned little speech, that the occasion was "jist an auspicious consummation-like."

There were several other speakers besides the minister and Store Thompson, and each made the kindliest allusions to both bride and groom; but, like the true Scots they were, carefully refrained from paying compliments. There were songs and stories, too, stirring Scottish choruses, and tales of the early days and of the great doings in the homeland. Then Big Malcolm's Farquhar, who had long ago come to regard himself in the light of the old itinerant bards, sang, like Chibiabos, to make the wedding guests more contented. He had but a single English song in his repertoire, one which he rendered with much pride, and only on state occasions. This was a flowery love-lyric, entitled "The Grave of Highland Mary," and was Farquhar's one tribute to the despised Burns. It consisted of a half-dozen lengthy stanzas, each followed by a still lengthier refrain, and was sung to an ancient and erratic air that rose and fell like the wail of the winter winds in the bare treetops. The venerable minstrel sang with much fervour, and only in the last stanza did the swelling notes subside in any noticeable degree. This was not because the melancholy words demanded, but because the singer

was rather out of breath. So he sang with some breathless hesitation:

"Yet the green simmer saw but a few sunny mornings
Till she, in the bloom of her beauty and pride,
Was laid in her grave like a bonnie young flower
In Greenock kirkyard on the banks of the Clyde."

But, when he found himself launched once more upon the familiar refrain, he rallied his powers and sang out loudly and joyfully:

"Then bring me the lilies and bring me the roses,
And bring me the daisies that grow in the dale,
And bring me the dew of the mild summer evening,
And bring me the breath of the sweet-scented gale;
And bring me the sigh of a fond lover's bosom,
And bring me the tear of a fond lover's e'e,
And I'll pour them a' doon on thy grave, Highland Mary,
For the sake o' thy Burns who sae dearly loved thee!"

It did not seem the kind of song exactly suited to a hymeneal feast, but everyone listened respectfully until the old man had wavered through to the end and called, for the last time, for the lilies, the roses and the daisies; and before he had time to start another Fiddlin' Archie struck up "Scots Wha Hae," and the whole company joined.

When everyone, even to the last waiter in the old

shanty, had been fed and the tables were all cleared away, Scotty deserted Monteith, and once more took up his station on the window sill where he could catch glimpses of Isabel's golden head through the crowd. He could see she was the object of many admiring glances; the MacDonald girls stood apart whispering wondering remarks concerning the beauty of her velvet gown, and even Betty Lauchie seemed shy of her old playmate. Nevertheless, when, upon spying him in his corner, Isabel came again and seated herself beside him, Scotty forgot all differences between them and blossomed out into friendliness under the light of her eyes. For she had clear, honest eyes that looked beneath the rough exterior of her country friends and recognised the true, leal hearts beneath. Yes, she was the same old Isabel, Scotty declared to himself, and something more, something he hardly dared think of yet.

He sat and chatted freely with her of all that had happened since they had last met, her life in a ladies' boarding school and his progress under Monteith's instruction, and he found that with all her schooling he was far ahead of her in book knowledge. Then there were past experiences to recall; the playhouse they had built beneath the Silver Maple, the mud pies they had made down by the edge of the

swamp, the excursions down the Birch Creek, and the part they had played in poor Callum's sad romance.

"And what are you going to be, Scotty?" she asked. "Don't you remember it was always either an Indian or a soldier, a 'Black Watcher' you used to call it? You ought to go to college, you must be more than prepared for it since you've learned so much from Mr. Monteith."

Scotty's eyes glowed. A college course was the dream of his life, sleeping or waking. But he shook his head.

"I'd like it," he said, trying to keep the gloom out of his voice, "but there's not much chance."

"Oh, dear," sighed the girl, "things seem to be all wrong in this world. There's Harold now; Uncle Walter fairly begged him to go to college, but he went only one year."

"Where is your cousin now?"

"He's in the English navy, and poor Uncle frets for him. He's an officer too. I can't imagine Hal making anybody mind him. I always used to be the 'party in power,' as Uncle Walter used to say when Hal was home."

Scotty laughed. "I expect he'd have a hard time if he didn't let you have your own way," he said slyly.

"Now, Scotty, you know you didn't let me have my own way, now, did you? But somehow, I think I was always in a better humour at Kirsty's here, I didn't have anyone to bother me."

"I know what I'd like most to be," said Scotty, with a sudden burst of feeling.

"What?"

"A Prince!"

"A Prince! Why, in all the world?"

"Because you are just like all the Princesses I have ever read about." Scotty was making headlong progress in a subject to which he had never been even introduced by Monteith.

The girl looked up at him with an expression of half-amused wonder in her eyes.

"Why, Scotty," she declared, "you're as bad as any society man for paying compliments. But you will be something great some day, I know. Mr. Monteith says so."

Scotty's face lit up. "If I'm ever worth anything I'll owe it all to him," he exclaimed enthusiastically. "Isn't he fine?"

"He's just a dear. If it hadn't been for his help I should never have been able to come for this visit. But he told Aunt Eleanor that we would elope if I wasn't allowed to come. Isn't he funny? And just

think, Scotty, I'm going to stay a whole month, perhaps two!"

Scotty was speechless.

"Now, I'm sure you're glad! Yes, I'm to stay at the manse for about two weeks, until poor Jimmie and Kirsty have a little honeymoon by themselves, and then I'm coming here. Auntie and Uncle have been invited to spend a month with friends in Toronto, and I didn't want to go because"—she hesitated and then laughed softly—"well, because I have to be so horribly proper all the time, so I begged to come here instead, and as Mrs. Cameron had invited me and Mr. Monteith coaxed too, Uncle Walter consented. And there's a possibility they might not be back till Christmas. Oh, I wish they wouldn't! Am I not wicked?"

"I've got a colt of my own," Scotty burst forth with apparent irrelevance, "he's a fine driver."

Isabel seemed to understand.

"I hope Mrs. Cameron will let me go," she said, though there had been no invitation. She glanced around the room and found that lady making rather anxious motions in her direction.

The minister's wife had been taking note of the fact that Miss Herbert and one of the young MacDonald men had been renewing their acquaintance

in a rather headlong fashion. Mrs. Cameron was a lady who had an eye for the fitness of things, and, being responsible for young Miss Herbert, she decided it was high time to take her home. So, when the girl looked up her hostess beckoned her, and announced rather sedately that they must be going, as the minister had already begun his round of handshaking.

"And when will I see you again?" Scotty asked forlornly, as the girl came downstairs dressed for her drive.

Isabel was intent on buttoning her glove. "I—I suppose you sometimes come to the Glen?" she suggested, without looking up.

Scotty hastened to asseverate that he spent almost all his waking hours there, and that he was a daily visitor at the Manse; and before Mrs. Cameron could get through bidding the neighbours good-bye, he had secured permission to come with his black colt the next day, and with Mrs. Cameron's consent they would drive up to the Oa to see how the Silver Maple looked in its autumn dress.

No sooner had the minister and the elder guests turned their backs, than the young folk who remained made a joyous rush for the furniture. Chairs and benches were piled helter-skelter in the corners and

a unanimous demand arose for Fiddlin' Archie's Sandy to bestir his lazy bones and tune up!

Thus importuned, the musician, who had fearfully concealed his unholy instrument from the minister's eyes all afternoon, mounted upon a table, and after much screwing up and letting down and strumming of notes, now high and squeaky, now low and buzzing, banged his bow down upon all the strings at once, and in stentorian tones gave forth the electrifying command: "Take—yer—partners!"

This was the signal for a general stampede, not out upon the floor, but back to the walls, leaving a clear space down the middle of the room; for dancing before company was a serious business not to be entered upon lightly, and it required no small courage to be the first to step out into the range of the public eye.

Balls were generally opened by a couple of agile young men dashing madly into the middle of the floor to execute a clattering step dance opposite each other, and under cover of this sortie the whole army would sweep simultaneously into the field.

Dan Murphy and Roarin' Sandy's Archie were the two who this night first ventured into the jaws of public opinion. Jimmie's best man, as became the dandy of the countryside, could disport himself with

marvellous skill on the terpsichorean floor, and Dan Murphy was at least warranted to make plenty of noise. The two young men flung aside their coats and went at their task, heel and toe, with a right good will and a tremendous clatter. They pranced before each other, stepping high, like thoroughbred horses, they slapped the floor with first one foot, then the other, they reeled, they twirled, they shuffled and double-shuffled, and pounded the floor, as though they would fain tramp their way through to Kirsty's new cellar; while, in his efforts to keep pace with them, the fiddler nearly sawed his instrument asunder.

But just when they were in the midst of the most intricate part of the gyrations, the spirit of the dance seized the spectators, and the next moment the performers were engulfed in the whirl of the oncoming flood.

But Roarin' Sandy's Archie was not the sort to lose his identity in the vulgar throng. He was the most famous "caller-off" in the township of Oro, as everyone knew; and staggering out of the maelstrom, he seized Betty Lauchie and was soon in the midst of his double task, his face set and tense, for it was no easy matter to manage one's own feet and at the same time guide the reckless movements of some

twenty heedless and bouncing couples who acted as though a dance was an affair of no moment whatever.

Scotty did not remain for the dance, but accompanied his uncle home. He wanted to be alone to think over the wonderful events of the day and of the joys of the morrow. There were not many youths who followed his example. When the dance broke up the majority of them merely retired to the edge of the clearing to return half an hour later armed with guns, horns, tin pans, old saws from the mill, and all other implements warranted to produce an uproar and annihilate peace. With these they proceeded to make the night hideous by serenading the bridal pair until the late autumn dawn chased them to the cover of the woods. This last festivity gave no offence, however, being quite in accordance with the custom of the country and the expectations of the bride and groom.

And so Weaver Jimmie's wedding passed off just as, through the long years of waiting, he had dreamed it would; and one young man, who had been a guest at their marriage feast, entered that day upon a new life, as surely as did the bride and groom.

XII

A WELL-MEANT PLOT

O, Love will build his lily walls,
And Love his pearly roof will rear,—
On cloud or land, or mist or sea—
Love's solid land is everywhere!

—Isabelle Valancy Crawford.

THE minister and his wife had been on a pastoral visitation to the Oa, and, having had an early tea at Long Lauchie's, were driving homeward.

The first snow had fallen a few days before and had been succeeded by rain, which, freezing as it fell, formed a hard, glassy "crust" on the top of the snow. This glimmering surface reflected the radiant evening skies like a polished mirror. The surrounding fields were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and the whole earth had become an exact copy of heaven. Away ahead stretched the road like two polished, golden bars that gradually melted into the violet and mauve tints of the dusky pines. Through the frequent openings in the purple forest they could see, far over hill and valley, a marvellous

vista, all enveloped in the wondrous glow, the patches of woodland looking like fairy islands floating in a sea of gold. Overhead, the delicately green heavens shone through the marvellous tracery of the bare branches. The horse's bells echoed far into the woods, the only sound in the winter stillness, for the whole world seemed silent and wondering before the beauty of the dying day.

The two travellers had not spoken for some time; the minister was lost in contemplation of the glorious night, and the minister's wife, alas, was absorbed in a subject that had been worrying her for more than a month, the subject of Miss Isabel Herbert.

Before her visit at the manse had terminated, Mrs. Cameron had come to consider her invitation to that young lady as the great mistake of her hitherto well-ordered life. For no sooner had the guest been settled than that young MacDonald, who was such a friend of Mr. Monteith, began to appear with alarming frequency. Now, though there might have been no harm in Captain Herbert's niece playing in the backwoods with Big Malcolm's grandson when they were children, Mrs. Cameron mentally declared that, now they were grown up, such a thing as intimacy between them was absolutely out of the question. Miss Herbert, she well knew, would be horrified at

the thought, and she set herself sternly to discourage the young man's attentions.

But she found this no easy task. One of her greatest obstacles was the minister himself. The good man had long yearned to bring Monteith and his friend into the church and now hailed Scotty's visits as special opportunities sent him by Providence. To his wife's dismay he warmly welcomed the young man, pressed him to come again speedily, and was, in his innocent goodness of heart, as much a trial to his wife as Isabel herself.

And Isabel certainly was a handful. In Captain Herbert's niece one surely might have looked for a model, but the young lady did not conduct herself with the exact propriety her hostess expected. Mrs. Cameron was quietly proud of the fact that she had been very well brought up herself and knew what was due one's station in life. But Miss Isabel was an anomaly. She belonged to one of the best families in the County of Simcoe and had been educated in a select school for young ladies; but, in spite of these advantages, she would much rather tear around the house with the dog, her hair flying in the wind, than sit in the parlour with her crocheting, as a young lady should. Moreover, if she could be persuaded to settle for a moment with a piece of

sewing, at the sound of a horse's hoofs at the gate, or the whirl of a buggy up the driveway, she would jump from her seat, scattering spools, scissors and thimble in every direction and go dancing out to the door, joyfully announcing to everyone within the house that here was "dear old Scotty!"

And yet, she was so charmingly deferential, and, in spite of her high spirits, so anxious to please, that her hostess had not the heart to chide her. Her whole-hearted innocence had begun to disarm the lady's suspicions when, at the end of a week, the watchful eye noted signs of an alarming change in her troublesome charge. Isabel ceased entirely to mention Scotty's name. She did not talk, either, as had been her wont, of the delightful times they had had together in their childhood. Neither did she run to meet him any more when he came, but would sit demurely at her sewing until he entered, or even fly upstairs when his horse appeared at the gate.

These were the worst possible symptoms, and Mrs. Cameron appealed to the minister. But he, good man, was not at all perturbed. He saw nothing to worry about, he declared. Probably the young lady had discovered that she did not care for her old comrade as much as when they were children and was taking this tactful way of showing him the fact.

Mrs. Cameron was in a state of mingled indignation and despair over such masculine obtuseness, and vowed that if young MacDonald were not politely requested to discontinue his attentions to Captain Herbert's niece, she would feel it her duty to send the aforesaid niece home.

But the minister would consider neither project. When he had a man's soul in view everything else must be made subordinate. The young man was showing signs of an awakening conscience, he affirmed; he had displayed wonderful interest in the sermons lately and had asked some very hopeful questions during their last conversation. And beside all this the young lady was having a good influence on him, for the lad had missed neither church nor prayer meeting since she came. Indeed, she was a fine lassie, and wonderfully clear on the essentials; though, of course, she had a few unsound Anglican doctrines. But Kirsty John's mother had trained her well in her childhood and she was not far astray. No, it would be interfering with the inscrutable ways of Providence to separate these two now, they must just let them be.

So Scotty and Isabel had things all their own way; and, when, at last, Weaver Jimmie and his wife came and carried the young lady off to the Oa, her late

hostess declared she washed her hands of the whole affair.

But her guest's departure did not bring her entire relief from responsibility. She could not get away from the suspicion that Miss Herbert would blame her, and the rumours that came from the Oa were not calculated to allay her fears. Kirsty John's little lady from the Grange and Big Malcolm's Scot were always together, the gossips said, and indeed it was a great wonder the black colt wasn't driven to death.

So to-night Mrs. Cameron was too much worried to notice the beauty of the landscape. Nearly a month had slipped past since Isabel had left her; the Herberts had returned to the Grange, and still the young lady showed no signs of departing. The minister's wife looked out sharply as they approached Weaver Jimmie's place. If she could catch sight of her late guest she would delicately hint that propriety demanded that she go home.

As they entered a little evergreen wood that bordered Weaver Jimmie's farm, there arose the sound of singing from the road ahead.

A turn around a cedar clump brought into view a solitary figure a few yards before them—the figure of a little old man, wearing a Scotch bonnet

and wrapped in a gay tartan plaid. It was a bent, homely figure, but one containing a soul apparently lifted far above earthly things, for he was pouring forth a psalm, expressive of his joy in the glory of the evening, and with an ecstasy that might have befitted Orpheus greeting the dawn.

His voice was high, loud, and cracked; but the words he had chosen showed that Old Farquhar discerned the divine in nature, a revelation that comes only to the true artist:

> "Ye gates, lift up your heads on high;
> Ye doors that last for aye,
> Be lifted up that so the King
> Of Glory enter may.
> But who is He that is the King
> Of Glory? Who is this?
> The Lord of Hosts, and none but He
> The King of Glory is!"

The minister smiled tenderly, there was a mist before his eyes when he paused to shake the old man's withered hand.

"Yes, it is a wonderful night, Farquhar," he said. "Truly the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork."

The old man smiled ecstatically, and after a halting greeting in English to the minister's wife, dropped into Gaelic. Mrs. Cameron did not under-

stand the language of her husband's people, and while the two men conversed she looked about her. Kirsty's house was just beyond the grove, Isabel might be near. A narrow, dim pathway led from the road across the woods to the house, an alluring pathway bordered thickly with firs, and now all in purple shadows, except when occasionally the golden light sifted through the velvety branches and touched the snow. Something was moving away down the shadowy aisle. She looked sharply, it moved out into a lighter space and resolved itself into two figures going slowly, so very slowly, down the path in the direction of the Weaver's house. There was no mistaking Isabel's long, grey coat, or young MacDonald's stalwart figure. They paused at the bars that led into the yard, they were evidently saying goodnight. . . .

Mrs. Cameron did not wait even to take off her bonnet, upon her return home, before sitting down to write Miss Herbert, of the Grange, a letter, a letter which evidently alarmed the recipient, for before many days Miss Isabel packed her trunk with a very sober face and took her leave.

It was partly this sudden manner of her departure that made Monteith resolve to visit his friends at Lake Oro. He wanted to see Captain Herbert on

important business—business which, he felt, had been too long delayed, and besides he was anxious to discover, if possible, what the people of the Grange had done to offend Ralph on the day he had taken Isabel home.

That he had been mortally offended by someone Monteith could not help seeing; but whether by Isabel herself, or another, Scotty's reticence prevented his discovering.

"I'm going up to the Captain's to-morrow," he remarked casually, as he sat and smoked by Big Malcolm's fire one evening. He glanced at Scotty, and that young man arose and began to cram the red-hot stove with wood, until his grandfather shouted to him that he must be gone daft, for was he wanting to roast them all out?

"Oh, indeed," said Mrs. MacDonald, suspending her knitting with a look of pleased interest. "And you will be seeing the little lady. Eh, it is herself will be the fine girl, not a bit o' pride, with all her beautiful manners and her learning, indeed."

"She will be jist the same as when she used to run round this house in her bare feet with Scotty," declared Big Malcolm enthusiastically. "It is a great peety indeed that she will belong to that English upstart!"

Scotty had settled down in deep absorption to whittle a stick and was apparently taking no notice of the conversation.

Monteith regarded Big Malcolm curiously. He had been long enough in the settlement to understand that the ordinary pioneer had no love for the more privileged class that had settled along the waterfronts. Socially the latter belonged to a different sphere from the farmers; and having often been able, in the early days, to secure from the Government concessions not granted to all, they were regarded by the common folk with some resentment. But the difference between the two classes, like all other differences, was fast dying out, and the schoolmaster well knew that Big Malcolm had other and deeper reasons for his dislike of a man so popular as Captain Herbert. He longed to know, before he visited the Grange, just how much his friend had sinned against the old man.

"Oh, I suppose he's no worse than many of his kind," he said tentatively.

"Aye, but that is jist where you will be mistaken," said Big Malcolm, a dangerous light beginning to leap up in his eye. "If this place would be knowing the kind of a man he is, indeed it would not be Parliament he would be thinking about next fall, but——" He stopped suddenly. "Och, hoch, the

Lord forgive me, and he will be your friend, too, Mr. Monteith," he added hastily, with a return of his natural courtesy. "Indeed I would be forgetting myself."

"Why does your grandfather hate the Captain so?" inquired Monteith, as Scotty walked with him to the gate.

"I'll not know," said Scotty morosely. "I think they had some quarrel long ago, about land or something, when they came here first."

"And did he never give any hint of what the trouble was?"

"Not to us boys. It was one of those things he would always be fighting against, and Granny kept him back, too. He would be often going to speak of the Captain, when she would stop him." Scotty's tone was gloomy. This last surviving feud of his warlike grandfather weighed heavily upon his soul. For, indeed, matters had gone sadly wrong in Scotty's world lately, and life was proving a very hard and sordid business.

Monteith said no more, but the next morning he set off for his friend's house, determined to settle once for all those questions which had been troubling him ever since he had learned that young Ralph Stanwell lived. Something must be done with Ralph,

and that right away. He had taught him as far as he could, and the boy must not be allowed to waste his talents in the backwoods.

The Grange, Captain Herbert's residence on the shore of Lake Oro, was a different building from the homes of the people among whom the schoolmaster lived; for its owner belonged to the fortunate class for whom life during the early settlement of the country had been made easy by money and political influence.

The house, a long, low, white stone building with plenty of broad verandahs, stood close to the water's edge, sheltered by a stately oak grove. It was surrounded by wide lawns and a garden, all now covered with their winter blanket.

As Monteith went up the broad, well-shovelled path, a crowd of dogs of all sizes came tearing round the house from the rear with a tumult of barking. He stooped to fondle a little terrier, and when he looked up the master of the house was coming down the steps with outstretched hands.

"By Jove, Archie!" he cried, his face shining with pleasure, "I'd almost come to the conclusion that the Fighting MacDonalds had eaten you alive! Why, we haven't seen you since October, and I've been blue-moulding for somebody to talk to. Well, I *am* glad

to see you. Get down, you confounded brute! Come in. Come in. Why, you certainly are a stranger. And just at the right moment, too! I'm all alone. Brian drove Eleanor and Belle to Barbay this morning. Get out, you infernal curs! Those dogs all ought to be shot!"

And so, talking loud and fast, as was his manner, the hearty Captain led the way into the house. A small room at the left of the hall, with two windows looking out upon the ice-bound lake, constituted the Captain's private den. A bright wood fire blazed in the open grate. The host drew up a couple of arm-chairs before it.

"So you've decided to immure yourself in the backwoods for another year, I hear," he said, when his guest was comfortably seated and supplied with a cigar. "Come, Archie, this will never do. Two years was the limit you set when you took the school, and there's no more the matter with you than there is with me. You're actually getting fat, man!"

"Why, I do believe I am," said the other apologetically. "I shall probably grow corpulent and lazy, and settle down in Glenoro to a peaceful old age."

"Not a bit of you! You look like a new man, and you ought to get back to your law books."

Monteith drew his hand over his grey hair with a meaning smile. "It seems rather foolish at my age, but I believe I shall; the Oro air has really made a new man of me, as you say. I believe I should have gone long ago if I hadn't been interested in a certain young person there."

"A young person! Thunder and lightning, Archie, don't tell me you've gone and fallen in love!"

Monteith laughed. "Upon my word I believe I have," he asserted, "but don't look so aghast, the object of my devotion is six feet high, and is cultivating a moustache."

"Oh, that young MacDonald chum of yours. You gave me quite a shock." The guest noticed that his friend's face changed at the mention of Scotty; there was a moment's rather awkward silence.

"So the ladies are away," said Monteith at last. "I am unfortunate."

Captain Herbert burst into a hearty laugh. "Why, bless my soul, you've had the escape of your life! Eleanor has it in for you, for shifting your responsibility and sending little Bluebell home with your young MacDonald; an uncommonly handsome young beggar he is too, with the airs of a Highland chieftain, quite the kind calculated to be dangerous,

Eleanor thinks. I'm afraid she wasn't as cordial to the boy as she might have been, and probably lost me a couple of good MacDonald votes."

Monteith looked enlightened. "Why, I must apologise," he said, "but I did not dream I was transgressing. Miss Herbert surely knows that they have been like brother and sister since their baby days?"

"Oh, that's just the trouble. Eleanor's scared they're not going to remain like brother and sister. She and your minister's wife down there have got it into their busy heads that the little monkey's inclined to think too much about this old chum of hers. Bluebell's the right sort, I assure you, Archie, never forgets an old friend. Harold's just the same. Every time he writes he sends his love to every old codger that chopped down a tree on this place. It's a fine quality. It's Irish. We get it from my mother's side, though I'm more English than Irish myself, praise the Lord. Well, it seems this loyalty is out of place in this case, and Eleanor thinks the less Belle sees of this young man the better. All perfect bosh and unthinkable nonsense, you know; but you can never account for the mental workings of some people. A woman's mind picks up an idea, particularly if it concerns matrimony in the remotest degree, as

a hen does a piece of bread, and runs squawking all round this earthly barnyard advertising the matter until she convinces herself and all the rest of the human fowl that she's got a whole baking in her bill. Eleanor has snatched up some such notion about Isabel and this young MacDonald, and the youngster hardly out of short dresses yet! But there it is. She'll never let go. All rubbish!"

He burst into a hearty laugh, and poked the fire until it crackled and roared. "Now, Archie, what sort of figure do you think I shall cut running for Parliament next fall? Think the Oa 'll run me off the face of the earth?"

"Just one moment, Captain, before you leave this subject, and we'll talk politics all day afterwards. Far be it from me to even glance into the dark mysteries of matchmaking, but I'd like to know why Miss Herbert should object so strongly to my young friend on so short an acquaintance?"

Captain Herbert looked surprised. He drew himself up with a slight access of dignity. "Oh, come now, Monteith!" he exclaimed, "you are surely worldly wise enough to understand that, though this young Scotty may be the most exemplary inhabitant of that excellent section where you teach, he would scarcely be a match for my niece."

"I understand perfectly. And if Ralph were one of the ordinary young men of the place I should most heartily agree with you. But you don't know him. He is an exceptionally fine fellow; he has had as much education as I have been able to guide him to since I came here, and indeed he is a thorough gentleman at heart."

Captain Herbert shrugged his shoulders. "I suppose that's all true, but what difference does that make? You don't want me to offer him my niece, I hope."

Monteith paid no attention to such frivolity. He turned squarely upon his host.

"Then I suppose you know he's the equal in birth to anyone in this part of the country. You know, of course, that his name is not really MacDonald?"

Captain Herbert seized the poker and attacked the fire again. He seemed waiting for Monteith to proceed, but as he did not, he answered rather shortly, "So I believe."

There was a long silence. The host sat back again, swung one foot over the other impatiently, and at last turned upon his silent companion.

"Go on!" he cried. "Out with it! I know what you want to say!"

Monteith slowly turned his eyes from the fire and looked into his host's face.

"I don't want to say anything disagreeable, Captain," he said courteously.

Captain Herbert arose and walked to the window.

"I knew this would come some day, when I saw you were getting so infernally chummy with all the MacDonald clan. That dear friend of mine, old Firebrand Malcolm, has been telling you tales, I see."

"On the contrary, he has scarcely ever mentioned your name to me. Big Malcolm is not that sort," said Monteith, with some dignity. "But it was impossible for me not to remember Ralph Stanwell, Senior; it all came to me the moment the boy told me his name."

There was a moment of intense silence, and at last the man turned from the window.

"Well," he said, coming to the fireside, "why don't you speak? What have you got to say about it?" His manner was half-defiant.

"I don't know that you'll think it's my place to say anything, Captain. But—well, since you ask my opinion, I must confess that, though I am not in possession of all the facts, the thing does not look exactly—straight."

Captain Herbert glared at him. "You are the

only man in Ontario who would dare to say that to me, Archibald Monteith!" he cried.

Monteith arose, smiling. "Well, Captain, be thankful you have at least one honest friend in Ontario. And," he added, with a sudden change of tone, "look here, I haven't come to you about this in anger. I am Ralph's friend, but I am yours, too, and have many debts of kindness owing you. But, honestly now, is it or is it not true that you jumped a claim and appropriated the boy's property, perhaps unwittingly?"

"It *was* unwittingly, Archie," burst out the other, with a look of relief. "I know the affair must look nasty to you; but, as sure as I stand here, I didn't know the child was alive until he was nearly seven years old."

"But the grandfather? Did he never interfere in the child's interests?"

"That old fire-eater! If he hadn't been such a maniac, I should never have made the mistake I did. I tell you the whole thing was misrepresented to me. Stanwell and his wife and, as I was told, his child too, died just before I landed here. This property of his was partially cleared, but was represented to me as totally unclaimed. You know that as well as I do. Don't you remember the day I left Toronto

to come up here? Well, after I had spent hundreds of dollars on the place that old Lord of the Isles got wind of it away back there in the bush, and came down on me like a deposed king. He talked so loud and so fast, and half of it in Gaelic, that I paid no attention to him, and at last ordered him off the place. My brother Harold had been instrumental in getting the place for me, so I wrote him and asked if it was possible that anyone connected with Captain Stanwell could have any claim on my property. He wrote back to say that Stanwell and everyone belonging to him were dead, but that he would come up soon and see about it. Well, you know he died the next week, and little Bluebell was left to me. Those were hard times for me, Archie, as you know. Maud was taken next, and I was left alone with two helpless children on my hands and my finances in the very deuce of a state. I forgot all about everything but the troubles that had come upon me. Then I sent for Eleanor to look after my family, and after she came I had other reasons you know nothing about for keeping silent concerning Captain Stanwell. And so the years slipped away, and there it is, you see. If I had given up the property when I settled here first I should have been almost destitute. Now, I ask you, is there any living man could blame me?"

Monteith answered warily. "There are not many men who would have acted differently in your place, I fear, only—it's rather hard on the boy."

"Pshaw, I don't believe the boy's claim was worth a brass farthing. If it was, why couldn't his old grandfather have gone to law about it?"

Monteith shook his head. "You don't know those Highlanders; they would sooner be bereft of every stick or stone they possess than enter a law court. Besides, you can't deny, Captain, that even had Big Malcolm wished to take such measures, he well knew that in those days a man of his class hadn't much chance against one of yours."

Captain Herbert tramped up and down the little room. Monteith sat silent, waiting. He was able to guess with some degree of accuracy the workings of his friend's mind. Captain Herbert was a man who believed in letting circumstances take care of themselves, particularly if they were of the disagreeable variety; but he would willingly do no man a wrong; and Monteith well knew that his warm heart was a prey to regret, and he was therefore full of hope for Ralph. But the Captain had a stormy journey to traverse before arriving at any conclusion.

"If the matter were taken into a law court now, no fool would say for a moment that I wasn't the

owner of this place after all these years. It was a howling wilderness when I came here."

"But a court might say you were under some obligation to that boy, Captain."

"Nonsense! Do you want me to present him with a deed of all my property?"

"Not at all, but I want you to act fairly by him, as I am sure you will."

The steady tramp ceased at last, and as Monteith had expected his host came and stood before the fire.

"It's a mean business, the whole thing, I know, Archie; and I've hated the thought of it all these years. But what could I do? It was too late to mend matters when I found my mistake."

"It's never too late to mend," quoted the imperturbable guest. "And you're comfortably well off now, Captain, with that last legacy."

Captain Herbert evidently did not hear him. "I'm sorry about that boy," he said, staring into the grate with brows knit, "I'm truly sorry."

Monteith felt that now was his opportunity, and he put Scotty's case forward strongly. He was careful not to press the boy's legal claims, but made much of the moral obligation. Here was a young man with marked ability and no worldly resources, his high ambitions fettered by poverty. He had

already spent two winters in the lumber camps; he was getting to be a famous river pilot, and, as matters stood, there seemed nothing better ahead of him. Ralph was a youth who would probably make his way in the world somehow, but just now he needed a helping hand. A little assistance at present would make his fortune, and who so fitted to give that assistance as Captain Herbert?

The appeal was received in silence. Captain Herbert sat, his brows drawn together, his eyes fixed upon the fire. "There's another reason, stronger than any you suspect for my sister's antipathy for the young man," he said suddenly without looking up.

Monteith's eyebrows rose.

"It is a very unpleasant subject to refer to, but it seems necessary that you should know. When Captain Stanwell came to this country he was engaged to marry my sister. He came out here, presumably to make a home for her. A pretty face among the emigrants took his fancy, and he married shortly after he landed. So you may imagine I am not likely to have any warm feeling for the rascal's son."

Monteith sat staring. He had come to represent Scotty's righteous cause, to uphold him as the wronged, and here were the tables turned upon him.

"All these years, Eleanor never dreamed that the

child lived. Indeed, I am not sure that she knew Stanwell had a child, and of course she never guessed who little Bluebell's Scotty was. And I naturally didn't see any reason for enlightening her. She nearly discovered it once, the first time I saw the boy. But when he brought Bluebell here she saw the resemblance at once—he's the image of his father—she asked him his name, and it all came out, and you can imagine the scene. She sent him off, and ordered the youngster never to speak to him again, and the poor little monkey's been fairly sick over it. There couldn't possibly be anything between them, but she liked him; they were chums. Now don't you see how difficult it is for me to show him any kindness, even if I wanted to? And I'm sure I don't owe his scoundrel father much consideration, anyway."

The ambassador had nothing to say. Scotty's chances for redress were very poor. He looked into the fire in deep disappointment. Monteith was not a religious man, but at that moment he remembered vaguely a passage from the Bible about the fathers having eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth being set on edge.

But for all his talk, Captain Herbert had not settled the affair to his own satisfaction. He was blustering up and down the room again, trying to work

off his indignation against fate. He paused once more in front of his visitor.

"I tell you what, Archie," he cried for the fifth time, "I hate the whole business. It's been grinding at me for nearly fifteen years. I've got a son of my own about that boy's age. His mother died when he was a baby, and he's everything to me; and when I think that if I had been taken too, he might have fared badly,—well—it's—— Look here, what kind of ability has young Stanwell?"

Monteith gasped. "He's as bright as a steel trap; all brains."

"Well,"—the Captain was thoughtful—"what does he want?"

"He wants a chance to earn some money in a hurry so that he can go to college. He's determined to get an education, but the money isn't forthcoming."

"Well, if I should see him through——"

Monteith shook his head smilingly. "He wouldn't accept it. You must remember, the boy has the real old Highland pride. No, give him some position where he can earn some money, or think he is earning it, in a short time."

"You're a Jew at a bargain, Archie Monteith, and a Scotch Jew, at that, which is the worst kind. What sort of aptitude would he have for figures?"

"He seems to display a special aptitude for almost anything he undertakes."

"Well,—I might,—pshaw, why not? Eleanor needn't know. There's Raye & Hemming. They want a young man in their office. It means a responsible position, though, Archie, with good pay, and I'm depending entirely upon your recommendation. He ought to know something about lumber surely."

"Raye & Hemming!" Monteith started. "I'd be delighted to see the boy get such a good opportunity, but the name of that particular lumber company isn't absolutely synonymous with fair-dealing. Remember, Ralph's been very strictly brought up, Captain."

"Pshaw, they're supposed to muddle a little with politics, but what's the difference? If your paragon is so squeamish you'd better keep him in the bush. I can't think of anything else I could do for him half so good. Those fellows are sharp, I'll admit, but they know how to make money."

Monteith considered for a moment, then stood up and held out his hand. "I knew you would do the square thing, Captain," he said heartily.

"Well, to be honest, I confess I'm not entirely disinterested. That young Carruthers the Grits are bringing out will be sure to rake up this story if

I run next fall; and those MacDonalds are double-dyed Grits already. I don't want to give them a handle against me. Young Stanwell will make a better friend than an enemy. I can clear my tender conscience and get him out of the road, and save myself a great deal of future trouble all in one stroke. So there you are, you see."

Monteith laughed. There was something irresistible about the candour of the man.

"He certainly is an Irishman all through," was the Scotchman's mental comment.

"And by the way, Archie, does he know anything about this?"

"Not a word. Big Malcolm never told anybody, I fancy. That's a gentleman for you!"

Captain Herbert looked slightly embarrassed.

"I suppose you'd better tell the boy—everything?"

"I think it would be better. He's very fair-minded, and, besides," Monteith smiled, "he is not likely to feel any resentment against Miss Isabel's uncle."

"That brings up a very important item in our bargain," said the Captain frowningly, "and one upon which everything depends."

"Yes?"

"He'll have to understand that there's to be nothing between him and Bluebell. It seems absurd to talk about such a thing already, but Eleanor seems certain of danger. So you'll have to put the matter plainly to the young man, and explain that if he's so much as caught speaking to her, his position is gone as quick as a gunshot. I owe that much to my sister. She couldn't stand the sight of him, and neither of the youngsters is old enough to be hurt."

Monteith looked dubious, but he did not hesitate to comply. Ralph would soon forget when he got away into the world, he told himself, and Miss Herbert would probably make the keeping of the bargain very easy for him.

"And now," cried Captain Herbert, rising with an expression of relief, "that's over. It's been an abominable tangle all through, a perfect mess, with everyone in the family mixed up in it, and it's a relief to have it settled. Come along, let's go out and breathe some fresh air and look at the dogs!"

XIII

THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Out of the strife of conflict,
Out of the nightmare wild,
Thou bringest me, spent and broken,
Like the life of a little child.

Like the spume of a far-spent wave,
Or a wreck cast up from the sea,
Out of the pride of being,
My soul returns to Thee.

—William Wilfred Campbell.

RAYE & HEMMING, managers of that branch of the Great Lake Lumber Company that had its headquarters in the town of Barbay, soon learned that their new clerk was a young man of no mean parts. For beside an unusual ability, young Stanwell brought to his work that tenacity of purpose and tendency to unremitting toil which is the product of the farm.

Scotty found himself treated with every consideration by his chiefs. Captain Herbert's protégé was evidently a person of some importance, and he guessed that his generous salary was largely due to his

patron's influence. Though his feelings towards his benefactor were naturally somewhat mixed, since hearing how he had defrauded him of his birthright, nevertheless Scotty could find small room in his heart for any ill-will against Isabel's uncle. He had ill-used him, no doubt, but he was making reparation, and what more could any man do? And, indeed, Scotty's affairs were turning out so much better than his fondest hopes had pictured, that he could not wish the past different. A few years with Raye & Hemming, he felt assured, would open the golden gates of college to him, and there he would vindicate himself.

For the young man was in happy ignorance of the fact that his present good fortune depended upon his separation from Isabel. Monteith had not seen fit to apprise him of that item in Captain Herbert's bargain. The shrewd schoolmaster had a suspicion that the foolish young man might throw up his hopeful prospects in a fit of romantic gallantry, and determined to run no risks until all danger was past.

So the boy did not know how hopeless was the love he and his golden-haired sweetheart had pledged beneath the pines at Kirsty's gate. Miss Herbert strongly objected to him, he knew, but she could be overcome in time. They must be separated for a

time, but Captain Herbert was his friend, surely, and Isabel—well, he was certain of her, anyway—Isabel would never forget, for had she not promised that she would think of him always, no matter how far apart they might be, and how could anyone doubt Isabel?

His life in the town was beneficial in many ways. Socially he learned as much as he did in the office of Raye & Hemming, knowledge which he knew would stand him in good stead when that longed-for day would come when he would be permitted to visit Isabel in her home. He was received in Barbay society in spite of his rural training, for was he not Captain Herbert's friend, and the only son of that dashing Captain Stanwell whom the best people knew in the early days. And was there not the chance that he might be a young man of property some day?

And so, though Isabel and home were far away, Scotty worked away blithely, determined to show Captain Herbert that he was worthy of the trust reposed in him, and resolved to win in spite of all odds.

But as he grew more accustomed to the business, and more intimate with the inner workings of Raye & Hemming's office, there slowly spread over his rosy hopes a shadow of misgiving. He found it impossible to shut his eyes to the fact that the men

with whom he was employed, and from whom he was to learn, were adepts at many of the small, sharp practices which he had been taught to despise. Scotty had been brought up with no hazy ideas of right and wrong. Though Big Malcolm had left the boy's training almost entirely to his wife, still, as much by example as precept, he had instilled into his grandson's very soul a proud contempt for anything resembling a lie. Any form of deceit, sharp dealing or trickery came under one despised category, and within Scotty's earliest memory had been looked upon by all his household with supreme scorn.

And now in his new environment he found himself a daily witness of a dozen little petty transactions such as he had been taught to loathe. Sometimes, when he was compelled to assist in the sharp tricks of his employers and received afterwards their laughing congratulations upon his success, he turned away from them with a feeling of nausea. He tried to picture his grandfather in similar circumstances, but could not. Well he knew Big Malcolm would not stoop from his lofty height to touch the business of Raye & Hemming with his finger-tips.

And yet they were not absolutely dishonest; perhaps this was only what the world considered being "sharp" in business, he argued. But he could not

quite convince himself, and in his perplexity hinted at his troubles in a letter to Monteith.

The schoolmaster's answer did not succeed in putting his mind at rest. "I know those fellows have the name of doing some slippery things," he wrote, "and personally I wish you had hit upon men who had a better reputation, but there's no denying they know how to make money, and the shareholders are naturally rather fond of them. You must just learn to shut your eyes to little things that don't exactly suit you and go ahead. Your chance in life depends upon your ability to please those fellows. Don't lose it, my boy, it means everything."

Scotty was rather bewildered by this advice, coming from one whom he had long regarded as an infallible authority. In his backwoods simplicity he felt himself at sea. Was there, then, a different code of honour in the country from that which was adhered to in the town?

Not since the days when Granny had had to chide him for childish naughtiness had he been greatly troubled over the vexed question of right and wrong. Looking back now, he could see that he had been hedged about by what he chose to call circumstances. First there had been the influences of that home beneath the Silver Maple, and the strong, gentle control

of his grandmother. And when his high spirits had been in danger of taking him beyond the "borderland dim," Monteith had come, and there had been no more trouble. Monteith's training had been quite different from that which he had received at home. The schoolmaster despised as a fool anyone who did not walk the straight and narrow path. Wrongdoing was idiotic, he declared; it didn't "pay." But Monteith's creed did not hold here. It did pay, as far as Scotty could see. And here he was with no hedging circumstances to keep him in the right path, standing at the parting of the ways.

And yet he did not for a moment consider the possibility of drawing back. There was too much at stake. As Monteith had said, everything depended upon his faithfully filling his post. To lose the favour of Raye & Hemming meant to lose everything he had set his heart upon, Captain Herbert's friendship, his education, Isabel herself.

No, he could not dream of giving up. And so he took Monteith's advice and went forward doggedly. But all the enjoyment in his new work was soon gone, his happy, sanguine days gradually changed to a season of worry and humiliation; until he sometimes longed with all his soul to fling all the unclean business aside, take an axe and go back to the bush.

He struggled on through the winter, morose and plodding, until the spring came with scented breezes and the songs of birds calling him to come away. Barbay was situated picturesquely on an arm of Lake Simcoe. From the office window he could catch enchanting glimpses of sapphire lake and emerald hill, and he was seized with an intense longing to return to his outdoor life. If he could only get back to his old environment for even a day, he felt he could readjust his ideas and see things more clearly. The 24th of May, the birthday of the good Queen, brought him the longed-for holiday. The office claimed him for a few hours in the morning, but early in the afternoon he hired a canoe, and, supplied with a gun and rod, a blanket and plenty of bread and meat, he paddled away into the blue expanse. He would go on until he came to the forest, he determined, and there he would camp for the night.

His spirits rose like a freed bird as, with long, steady strokes, hour after hour, he glided smoothly up the low, green shore. He was some distance from any human habitation when the steady dip, dip of his paddle echoed farther inland than usual. He paused and peered into the woods. He was on the edge of a forest whose tangled fringe of birch and elm hung over the greening water. But just behind this fringe

was a little clearing, all smothered in riotous undergrowth. Scotty ran his canoe up on the sandy beach, her bow sweeping aside the drooping elm branches, and leaped ashore. He plunged into the little tangled circle of undergrowth, and at the first sight gave a boyish whoop of delight.

In the centre of the space, facing the water, stood an old log shanty, a temporary structure erected in the lumbering days. It contained bunks filled with straw. Here was the very place to spend the night; it seemed waiting for him. He set to work to make camp with the skill of a lifelong practice. A splendid black bass that responded hungrily to his bait made a fine addition to his larder. He soon had a merry fire in front of the cabin, sending a blue column of smoke straight into the treetops, and when it burned down to a bed of coals he cooked his fish. Supper was soon over, the canoe stowed safely high up on the shore, and he had nothing to do but enjoy the silence and peace of the wild, lonely spot. He built up his fire again, partly because the May night was cool and partly to keep off the mosquitoes, and stretched himself full length upon the ground before it. It was the first time in months that he had been absolutely at peace. Around him was the encircling forest, which bulked largely in his earliest memories,

and always gave him the sensation of being at home. The sweet pungent odour of burning evergreens filled the air, mingling with the scents of the forest. Above the dark ring of wild, luxuriant growth the sky shone a clear transparent crystal, with faint illusive suggestions of rose and orange, for out there in the wide world the sun was setting, and Lake Simcoe glinted between the tree trunks flushed and smiling. The little breeze of the afternoon had died away, and not a leaf stirred; only where the subsiding waves disturbed the shells and pebbles on the beach could be heard a soft whispering rustle.

But as the night fell, from the darkening forest there arose the evening chorus of the birds. Each tall pine tree, silhouetted sharply against the crystal sky, was soon ringing with the transporting vespers of the veery. Away back on a hill, far above the little clearing, a whip-poor-will stationed himself in a treetop to complain over and over of the darkness and loneliness of the world. Just at Scotty's right hand, from behind a screen of scented basswood, came a sudden discordant sound, the rasping "meyow" of the cat-bird; a moment's silence followed and then arose a burst of delirious, bubbling melody, as though the naughty songster, hidden within his aromatic curtains, were laughing impudently at having deceived

his hearers into thinking he was only a cat. A loon arose with a splash from the reedy shore of an island opposite and sailed away through the amber air; his wild, derisive laugh echoed back from the glimmering sunset bay where he had joined his comrades. Far above, the "scree-ak, scree-ak" of the night-hawks whirling in the heavens echoed away into the green depths; up the long dark aisles came the sweet "hoo, hoo" of the owl, and the clear ringing notes of the whitethroat "calling across the dusk." The frogs, down by the whispering water's edge, joined their chorus to the night music; and on every side, keeping at a respectful distance from the smoke of the fire, the mosquitoes "all in a wailful choir" uttered their little, thin, doleful tunes. And always, far up in the dark pinetops, like bells in a cathedral tower, rang out the clear, enchanting, metallic notes; the long liquid carol of the veery.

Scotty drew a great sigh of content; he was home again. The magic spirit of the woods, with its sense of peace and freedom, enfolded his very soul. Those things of earth, the sordid meannesses of his everyday life, faded away; they were as far removed as that diamond star he was watching twinkling on the sharp peak of a dark fir. He lay on his back, his hands clasped beneath his head, and gazed up into

the tender blue of heaven until the night began to deepen. The crackling embers of the fire slowly smouldered down, the chorus in the treetops began to subside. Gradually a great stillness settled over the velvet darkness of the woods, and still lying motionless and content he could hear only the soft stir of a leaf or the occasional "hush, hush!" that the waters and the shells whispered, as though they were telling each other that the world was going to sleep.

Scotty forgot his bed in the shanty, a soft balsam limb made a fragrant pillow, and mother earth was the best couch. His senses floated away.

He was at home, lying under the Silver Maple; the sound of Granny's spinning-wheel came drowsily through the doorway. The pathway across the swamp to Kirsty's clearing was blue with violets; a white figure was flitting down it,—coming to him with the sunshine on her golden hair and the violets at her feet.

Suddenly he was wide awake; not startled, but with all his keen, woodsman senses alert. Instinctively he reached for his gun. Something strange in his surroundings had aroused him, he knew. What was it? He lay listening intently.

And then out of the depths of the darkness came

the answer,—a sound, dim and far off, but echoing melodiously through the leafy arches, a voice as of an angel, singing:

> "The Lord thee keeps, the Lord thy shade
> On thy right hand doth stay:
> The moon by night thee shall not smite,
> Nor yet the sun by day."

Scotty raised himself upon his elbow; the sound of the old psalm, coming without warning out of the uninhabited darkness, struck him with awe. Had the forest taken voice, or was it all but a part of his dream? He listened breathlessly until the psalm was finished and the silence had again fallen. There seemed something too sweetly mysterious about the singing to come from a human source. There was an intense silence for a few moments, then the voice rose again, this time nearer and more distinct,

> "The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,
> He makes me down to lie
> In pastures green, He leadeth me
> The quiet waters by."

Scotty was overwhelmed with a sudden rush of memory. He was reminded of that day so long ago when the awesome shadows of the winter woods had terrified him with the first conception of death, and sent him with unerring instinct to the true refuge.

Who could be wandering in this wild, lonely place at night singing,—singing the very things calculated to touch the depths of his soul?

The sound was coming nearer, growing in power, as though the singer felt the sublime confidence of the words.

> "Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,
> Yet will I fear no ill,
> For Thou art with me and Thy rod
> And staff me comfort still."

And then Scotty recognised the voice. It was one which, once heard, was not easily forgotten. It belonged to the great preacher, Mr. McAlpine, the man who years before had come to the Glen, and with his message from the Eternal roused the place to a better life. But he was an old man now, and retired from his labours, and how came he to be wandering in this trackless wilderness after nightfall?

The voice had ceased, and now the sound of footsteps in the crackling underbrush could be heard. Scotty could discern a dim figure coming towards his fire. He stood up as it approached. The old man with his long white beard, his bare silver head, for he carried his hat reverently, his tall, gaunt figure and piercing eye gave the young man the impression of one of the great men of Bible times, Isaiah, or that

one who preached in the wilderness beyond Jordan and called to his hearers to make straight the paths for the coming of the Messiah.

With the mutual feeling of friendship that arises between men in the lonely places of the earth, the two met with outstretched hands.

A smile of pleasure at the open face and fine physique of his unexpected host flashed over the old man's face.

"Big Malcolm MacDonald's grandson!" he cried, when Scotty had introduced himself. "Oh, yes, indeed, I know Big Malcolm well,"—he shook the young man's hand once more: "Ah yes, it was his eldest son's funeral that first took me to the Oa. God moves in a mysterious way, indeed. And you were but a child then, and now you are a man. And it is a good thing to be standing upon the threshold of life, is it not?"

A good thing? Scotty would have given a most emphatic affirmative in response some months before, but now he was doubtful.

"Yes," he said hesitatingly, "in some ways. But how do you happen to be away back here alone, Mr. McAlpine?"

The minister explained his presence. He had been asked to go to Barbay to assist with the sacrament

on the following Sabbath, and had intended to spend the night with a friend and take the stage out in the morning.

"But I could not wait," he concluded, "I was constrained to come on." There was that strange gleam in his eye which had always so filled Scotty with awe in his childhood. The young man understood. Mr. McAlpine's burning restlessness, his erratic way of making arrangements to be driven to certain places, and then suddenly setting out in the dead of night to walk prodigious distances had been the wondering talk of the Oa since he was a child. For this man carried a burden of souls that gave him no rest day or night, and that even now, when he was broken and aged, sometimes drove him to stupendous labour.

"But you will surely stay here to-night!" cried Scotty, feeling in the capacity of host even in this wild tangle of forest growth. "I am camping, but there is plenty of room in the shanty, and I can cook you some supper."

The old man accepted the hospitality gratefully. He appeared worn and exhausted, and seemed to have suddenly lost his restless energy, as though the spur which had driven him forth in the night had been removed.

Scotty made a comfortable seat for him of cedar

boughs placed against a large tree trunk, and stirred up the fire to a blaze. Its rays danced forth, lighting up the worn face and white hair of the old man seated before it, and the strong frame of the young one standing erect in splendid contrast. The light made the log walls of the old shanty stand forth, touched here and there the fantastic heaps of dead brushwood and misshapen stumps, illumined the underside of the adjacent trees and danced away down the dim avenues to be lost among the ghostly shadows.

And while his host prepared supper, the minister beguiled the time by asking after all his friends in the Oa and the Glen, especially the Highlanders, for Mr. McAlpine was not above possessing a little weakness for anyone who spoke the Gaelic. And then he must know what the young man was doing, and how he came to be there.

Scotty answered his questions in the distantly respectful manner that all the Glenoro youth had been wont to show this man. He explained his sudden excursion to the woods as merely a natural desire to be out of doors. He told something too of his life with Raye & Hemming in Barbay, but he had all the reticence of his class and kin, and the minister learned little from what he said.

And while they conversed the elder man was watch-

ing the younger with the keen eye of a detective. For to old John McAlpine every soul with whom he came in contact was a burden to be carried until it was laid safely at the foot of the cross, and he was yearning to know if this young man, so respectful and kindly of manner, had yet had his heart touched by Divine love.

He tried to read the dark, young face in the light of the dancing flames, noting every feature—the intellectual brow, the kind, bright eyes, the mouth, still boyish, and showing some wilfulness and impatience of rule; the resolute chin. A good face, the man concluded, with rare possibilities. But he was convinced before the conversation closed that its owner was not a follower of the meek and lowly One.

For the minister was a marvellous reader of character, and in spite of Scotty's reserve, before the evening was gone he had allowed his guest to discover that he intended to carve out his own destiny as he desired, fearless of consequences.

When everything was in readiness for the night, and the young man had returned from making up a second bed in the shanty, the minister drew up close to the fire and took from his pocket a Bible.

He slowly turned over the leaves, praying earnestly that he might be guided in his choice to something

that would touch this young man's soul. The 139th Psalm caught his eye, and the deep voice slowly and solemnly read:

"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. . . . Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me."

Leaning back against a fallen tree trunk, his face partially hidden in shadow, Scotty listened intently. Had this man been sent out of the darkness of the forest to show him how foolhardy were his attempts to escape from God? For had he not been saying to himself all these past months that surely the darkness of secrecy would cover his wrongdoing; that somehow he would escape from God.

He had not read the Bible since he left home, and the old familiar words, coming like a long-lost friend, struck him with their inevitable truth. His rest in the lap of nature had brought him to himself; he saw

things with a clearer vision, and he realised now that the fierce yearning to be away which had driven him to the forest had been really the desire to escape the Eye that never sleeps. The longing to take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea had been upon him, and here God's messenger had met him, and he stood like a hunted animal at bay.

The minister read on without pause almost to the end, and then stopped.

There were two more verses, Scotty well knew; he and Isabel had learned that Psalm years ago at Granny's knee. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." He looked up half-inquiringly as the voice ceased. The minister smiled comprehendingly.

"I see you know what follows," he said; "it is a great thing to be grounded in the Scriptures in youth. Do you know why I stopped?"

"No," said Scotty, in a whisper.

"Because the next is a verse I hardly dare to read. It is a fearful thing to ask the Almighty God to search the heart, for there are wicked ways in us, many and deep." He began slowly turning over the

leaves again, and Scotty waited with a strange dread of what was coming.

The passage was from the challenging words that came to Job out of the whirlwind, and like a whirlwind they swept over the young man's soul.

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel, by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins, like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me."

He paused a moment and his listener held his breath. To him the words did not seem to be spoken by man, but seemed to come out of the whispering darkness of the great forest.

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. . . . Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the cornerstone thereof; when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Scotty's heart suddenly swelled. This great Jehovah was speaking directly to him; the Jehovah whose inexorable laws were written in man's very being, as well as in His Book. And he, His creature, was about to set them aside, declaring that he would walk as seemed right in his own eyes.

But the minister was still reading. "Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused

the day-spring to know his place? . . . Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? . . . Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?"

Scotty listened with heart and ears, and when the minister came at last to Job's confession, he felt he could echo the words, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

The amber column of smoke rising straight to the circle of sky was suddenly touched with a silver radiance. Up from behind the dark island the moon had arisen, radiant and burnished, and was sending a long shimmering pathway across the deep blue of Lake Simcoe. Scotty's eyes followed its glint between the tree trunks and the words came over him again, "Now mine eye seeth thee." But when the minister paused he came back to realities. Another picture rose before him, the sweet face of the girl he loved, the one whom he was to win by keeping in the path wherein he now walked. A look of defiance flitted across his face. No. He would go on. He could never give up now!

But the leaves had rustled again, and now the

minister had resumed his word pictures. This time they were not of the mighty Jehovah, just, unapproachable, omnipotent; but of the lonely Man of Nazareth standing by the lakeside and calling the fishermen to Him, and then on to Calvary when He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The elder man's keen eyes saw the tokens of a conflict in the other's face, and he was too wise to address him directly. His occasional remarks had the effect of soliloquies, but they plunged Scotty's soul in the valley of shadows.

He was thinking how all his life he had been compassed about. He knew now that what he had called hedging circumstances had been God's very Hand. His grandmother's faithful teachings had guided his careless boyish feet; his grandfather's falls from the high position he had set himself were graphic object-lessons to teach the value of righteousness; Monteith's influence had kept him in the right way, and now how dared he turn aside of his own will?

But what was the minister reading now? What but the story of a young man, one so goodly and commendable in person and character that the Master had regarded him with an especial feeling of comradeship; but there was one thing he refused to give

up, and he turned his back upon the Saviour of mankind and went away sorrowful, "for his possessions were very great." And Scotty's possessions were great also—those he was about to reach out and seize, infinitely beyond the value of gold and silver, and he wanted to turn away, too, but something held him.

The minister glanced at the young man's face, and knew his heart had been touched. He closed the Book. "Let us pray," he said, and rising, knelt by the side of a moss-grown log. But Scotty did not kneel; he sat erect, staring with desperate eyes into the fire, and striving with all the force of his will to harden his heart. To his relief the old man made no remark upon his strange conduct when he arose from his knees, but at once went to his bed in the shanty. Some subtle instinct told him the young man would be better alone.

Long after he had retired Scotty walked up and down before the fire, fighting out the old, weary battle; but now with a fury as if for life.

To go on with his work at Raye & Hemming's now in the light of what had come to him this night would be, he knew, to cast aside all the teachings of his lifetime—the teachings of Granny, of experience, yes, even of Monteith, for he realised now they had all

come from God, and were one. He was down in the valley of the shadows, and the rod and staff were of no comfort to him, for they meant pain and renunciation.

He could not give up Captain Herbert's friendship and Isabel; he could not go on. The fire had died down to a red eye looking sullenly out of the smoky darkness, the moon had sunk behind the forest ring, and out of the blackness of night came a sensation of approaching change, a hint that the dawn was near. As Scotty, pale and haggard, stood looking into the dying fire, a step aroused him and the minister was by his side.

"Why, sir," he cried in surprise, "you will surely not be getting up yet. It is quite dark."

"I was not sleeping," said the old man. "I could not but watch you," he added gently, "for I cannot but see you are carrying a burden; one heavy for your time of life, my lad, and I wondered if I could be of any help."

All Scotty's mental attitude of defiance melted away before this gentle sympathy. He was silent, simply through the inability to speak, and the minister continued, "Do not speak of it if you would rather not. I would not force your confidence, but just come and we will pray about it, and

you will tell the Father and He will be making it right."

Scotty turned with a gesture of defeat. To pray was the last thing he desired to do, it meant surrender; but this time he knelt obediently at the minister's side by the dying fire.

And as he bowed his head he was suddenly startled by the words that broke forth. It seemed as if all his own soul's struggle had been transferred to the man at his side. Old John McAlpine had a wondrous gift of prayer, one that never failed to cast a solemn spell over his hearers, and to-night he pleaded for the soul of this young man as if for his life. His big hands were knotted, the perspiration stood in beads on his white forehead, and his agonised voice rose and went ringing away into the forest. Scotty was awesomely reminded of One who prayed in a garden, quite unlike this one of nature's wild making, and sweat drops of blood because of the sin he was to bear. And before the minister had ceased it seemed as if that other One came to his side and took up the petition, for Scotty felt his worldly desires slip from him like a garment. The struggle was over. Henceforth there could be no indecision, for he was not his own, but had been bought with a price.

When they arose from their knees the darkness had

suddenly become transparent. A mysterious rustle and whisper of awakening life was on all sides, the dawn was on the point of breaking. Scotty's fire, like his worldly hopes, had died down to pale ashes, but far out on the faintly grey bosom of Lake Simcoe, and away beyond its dark forest-ring, soon to put all lesser lights to shame in their triumphant blaze, were kindling the fires of Heaven.

XIV

THE VOYAGEURS

Oh, the East is but the West, with the sun a little hotter;
And the pine becomes a palm by the dark Egyptian wáter;
And the Nile's like many a stream we know that fills its
brimming cup;
We'll think it is the Ottawa as we track the batteaux up!
Pull, pull, pull! as we track the batteaux up!
It's easy shooting homeward when we're at the top.

—William Wye Smith.

THE Imperial transport, *Ocean King*, had loosed from her moorings at Montreal and was swinging down with the tide of the mighty St. Lawrence, and on her deck, many leaning eagerly over the railing to get a last glimpse of home, stood some four hundred stalwart sons of the Maple Land. Great, strong fellows they were, all with the iron muscles and steady, clear eyes of the expert river-man. For these were the famous voyageurs, trained from childhood on the rapids and cataracts of Canadian streams and summoned now to the help of the mother country on the ancient river of Egypt.

When Lord Wolseley found himself face to face

with the tremendous task of reaching Gordon far up the hostile Nile, he remembered the assistance he had received in an earlier expedition in a western land from the daring, untiring, cool-headed, warm-hearted Canadian boatmen. And he asked that once more they might give him aid. And here they were, the best the country could produce, a rollicking, light-hearted crew, ready for anything—adventure, hard work, danger, death.

Among those who stood longest gazing at the receding land were two who had begun their years of apprenticeship for this great day on the little, noisy, foaming stream that scolded its way into the Oro river. And one of them, looking at the fast-fading outline of Mount Royal, saw instead an old log house among the enfolding Ontario hills, with a Silver Maple spreading its protecting branches above the roof. His home!—and the dear home faces, how they rose up from the misty shore; and another face, the most beautiful in the world, as he had seen it that winter night in the sunset glow!

And he had left all, had turned his back upon friends and home, and love itself, for what? A mere sentiment? A mad notion born of that night in the wilderness the spring before? The man who had been his guide and instructor, his staunchest friend

and truest adviser from boyhood, had called his new impulse by just such a name, and the loss of his esteem had been one of the bitterest drops in Scotty's cup of renunciation. Apparently he had done injury to himself in every quarter, by giving up his connection with Raye & Hemming. Captain Herbert had been disgusted and had declared he washed his hands of him, Monteith had been filled with righteous indignation over such blind folly, and his grandparents had been keenly disappointed. And Isabel? That was the hardest part. What would Isabel think? Perhaps she, too, was offended, and he had had no opportunity to vindicate himself. And yet, through disappointments, estrangements and doubts, he clung tenaciously to his purpose. He was done forever with Raye & Hemming, and no power on earth could drive him back. Before he left Barbay, Monteith had come down upon him to bring him to a more reasonable state of mind. The schoolmaster had scolded, entreated, and had even brought up arguments which Scotty was powerless to combat. In his perplexity and bewilderment he could answer nothing; only there had come vividly to his mind the reply of another young man in somewhat similar circumstances; a young man, who, when clever people argued that the Man who had opened his eyes

was at fault, could only say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

For that night in the wilderness had given this young man a clearer vision of right and wrong, the keen perception granted to those only who have passed by Calvary and seen the One who suffered there and conquered. And in that uplifting moment he had heard the voice of the Eternal say, "This is the way, walk ye in it"; and he could not but obey.

So Scotty had turned his back upon all his worldly prospects, because they had led from the way of integrity; and early in the summer had gone to seek employment amongst the lumbering centres of the Ottawa. And away back there he had been tracked and joined by his faithful henchman, Dan Murphy. This strange freak on Scotty's part had no effect on Danny's warm heart. What cared he that his chum preferred working in the bush to a college education? That mattered little, so long as they were together. For had Scotty turned Mohammedan and gone forth to convert the world to his beliefs, not one inch would his friend's loyalty have swerved.

And, while they worked on the upper Ottawa, the call for the Nile voyageurs had come. Here was an opportunity to see the world and serve the Em-

pire, and the boys had gladly embraced it. And so Scotty was going down into Egypt, because the great Controller of Destiny had need of him there, as He had long before needed another young man in that same land to perfect His divine plans.

The Canadians commenced active work at a station on the Nile a few miles from Wady Halfa. The busy little trains, that came puffing up from Cairo, landed this latest addition to Britain's forces amid all the bustle and stir of the departing army. Here the naval detachment of the River Column was preparing to embark. The steel-keeled whaleboats, the especial care of the voyageurs, were being fitted up with masts and oars. As soon as ready they were filled with soldiers or Dongolese boatmen, the Canadian bowman and helmsman took their places, and out they shot up the swift, brown current.

Scotty and his chum found that their turn to embark was not likely to come for some time, and they employed their first day of leisure in looking about them. To their unaccustomed Western eyes the place presented endless interest. It was full of the noise and display of a military camp, and alive with potent signs of war. Trains loaded with ammunition went puffing out; bands of baggage-mules, driven

by scantily-dressed natives, came down to the water's edge to drink; and stately camels swayed past.

Now and then a detachment of a regiment swung out desertward, whether on hostile acts intent or for exercise, only the initiated could tell. The boys stood watching them with absorbed interest. First came the Coldstream Guards, then the Grenadiers, and finally the Black Watch stepping out splendidly to the rousing scream of the pipers. Scotty had been taking in all the sights calmly, but this last was too much for his Highland blood; and, in spite of Dan's jeers, he leaped to his feet with a cheer, as they whirled past.

But even such spectacles as these began to pall. The Canadians soon discovered that an army is an unwieldy monster, and that even a flying column moves slowly. When the third day came and they still awaited their call to the boats, Dan became restless. This period of enforced idleness acted upon him like firewater upon a wild Indian, and his friend soon had his hands full keeping him from disaster.

On the last afternoon of their waiting Scotty composed himself under a gum acacia tree near the river to write home. They expected to go at any moment and he must leave a last message for Granny.

With the aid of an old box for a writing desk and the battered lid of a tin can for an inkbottle he managed his task fairly well. The sun was blazing down on rock and sand and river, but the breeze from the north blew up cool and grateful, reminding him of the June zephyrs that came up from Lake Oro to stir the boughs of the Silver Maple.

Near him, stretched full length upon the ground, lay Dan, striving to be as cross as his light-hearted Irish spirits would permit. Scotty had just a moment before forcibly rescued him from a row with some idle, poker-playing Tommies, and the wild Irishman felt small gratitude towards his preserver. He rolled about restlessly, pronouncing serio-comic denunciations upon everything in Egypt from Lord Wolseley to the baggage-mules, and informing his inexorable keeper at short intervals, that if something didn't hurry up and happen, glory be, but he'd commit high treason—a crime of which Dan had only the vaguest notion, but one which he imagined immeasureably transcended all other forms of iniquity.

Scotty paid no attention to these threats; he finished his letter, packed his writing materials into his kit bag, and stood up to stretch his limbs. Over near the officers' quarters a couple of Tommies were making strenuous efforts to hold down a reluctant

and evil-minded camel long enough to permit a fat and pompous Colonel to mount.

"That brute must be some relation to you, Dan," said Scotty laughingly, "he seems to have got up a mighty objection to everything in the way of common sense."

Dan did not reply; he had raised himself upon his elbow and was listening eagerly to something else. His attention had been caught by the conversation of a couple of officers who were coming up from the water-side. One was a young army subaltern, fresh from home, very innocent and well-meaning, but belonging to that class of youth who, because of a serene consciousness of vast inward resources, is certain to fall a prey to circumstances. His companion was slightly older, a young officer of the Naval Brigade under Lord Beresford. He was squarely-set, with a frank, good-humoured face.

The subaltern was evidently showing his newly-arrived friend the sights. "Those are the American Indians we've brought out to pilot the boats," he explained, with a nod in the direction of a group of French Canadians standing at the boat-slip; "rather a fine looking lot o' beggars, aren't they?"

His companion laughed. "Indians be hanged!" he exclaimed merrily. "More than half those fellows

are no more Indians than you are. Jove, it does a fellow's eyes good to see something from home. I'm going to have a chat with them."

"Pshaw, you don't expect to find friends there, I hope. 'Pon honour, they're red Indians, every one of them. Wolseley got 'em. And Harcourt says they're the aboriginal thing."

"Your Colonel's an insular baa-lamb, Bobby; you can bet Wolseley never said it. Surely, as I was born and brought up in Canada I'm likely to know a red Indian from myself now, am I not?"

The subaltern looked annoyed. "I think you're mistaken this time," he said with some dignity; "perhaps an odd one or so may be white, but the majority are the real thing. Look at that big fellow there, now. I'll bet two to one he's a full blood, anyway."

The other glanced at the man indicated. Scotty's face and arms, always brown, had become almost copper-coloured in even his short exposure to the Egyptian sun, and his lithe, muscular figure, leaning easily against the tree, was not unlike that of the stalwart Caughnawagas from the St. Lawrence, but as the young naval officer looked at him he laughed derisively.

"Done with you," he cried gaily. "Go and ask him."

The subaltern marched up promptly to the voyageur. "I say, Canadian," he said somewhat stiffly, "here's a gentleman who says you're not an Indian. Just tell him politely that he's mistaken, please."

Scotty turned from his contemplation of the camel to find, to his surprise, that he was being addressed. But before he could reply, Dan had forestalled him. That young man, whose red hair and Hibernian features could have left no doubt even in the subaltern's mind as to his nationality, had been listening, with huge enjoyment, to the conversation. He had risen to his feet and was saluting with grave respect.

"Sure it's yourself that's right, sir," he said with an apologetic air. "Anybody can see he's an Indian. He belongs to one of our worst tribes—the Blood-drinkers, they call themselves. His name's Big Scalper. And sure," he added, lowering his voice fearfully, "it's the bloodthirsty brute he is, an' no mistake!"

The young naval officer came forward and gazed fixedly into the speaker's meek and innocent countenance, but could detect there no smallest sign of deceit. The subaltern looked solemn.

"Is that all true he's telling us, Big Scalper?" he asked dubiously.

"Sure, there's no use talkin' to him, sir," broke

in Dan, with patient surprise; "he can't spake a word but his own outlandish jabber. The cratur was jist runnin' wild in the bush when Colonel Denison caught him an' brought him out here." The young man's air of kindly anxiety, mingled with innocent seriousness, was too much for mortal gravity. Big Scalper turned his back with strange suddenness and stared fixedly out upon the hot, grey glint of the river.

A little group of idle Canadians had begun to gravitate towards them. Dan Murphy had already earned a reputation among them as a source of entertainment, and was particularly interesting whenever anyone evinced a desire to learn anything of his native land. The officers were wont to question the voyageurs, and Dan played upon their ignorance of the western half of their Empire, which was deep enough to begin with, and made it abysmal.

"I told you," cried the subaltern triumphantly. "I've won my bet, old fellow!"

"Strange how he's going to pilot a boat-load of men up the river without the use of the English language," suggested the young naval officer, with a slightly sarcastic drawl.

"Aw, ye don't know him," cried Mr. Murphy in a tone expressive of fear, "he'll find a way to make

them mind or he'll bash all their heads in. Sure, he's the Divil himself, sir. Jist look at the wicked eye o' him now, will ye?"

This was going too far for safety, and Big Scalper turned upon his loquacious showman. He was too much an artist to spoil the play by proclaiming it a sham, so he spoke a few rapid words in Gaelic. The Murphy's knowledge of that language was naturally limited, but there was never a boy in Glenoro school, be his nationality what it might, who did not pick up much of the war-vocabulary of the Fighting MacDonalds, and Dan had no difficulty in gathering from Scotty's remark that he was being strongly advised to immediately shut his mouth.

"What's he sayin'?" inquired the subaltern interestedly.

Dan's face was a study in pained and polite anxiety.

"I'm askin' yer pardon, sir," he said nervously, "but I think it would be safer if ye wouldn't be lookin' at him anny longer. He's askin' me which o' yer scalps I think would look best danglin' from his belt!"

There was a shout of long-suppressed laughter from the on-looking Canadians, and the young officer's face flamed up angrily.

"I shall report you for this insolence!" he cried, suddenly awakening to his ignominious position.

But his friend caught his arm and drew him away.

"Come out of this, Bob!" he cried in a choking voice. "You'll report nothing! You'd better not monkey with those fellows. That young Irish ruffian was improvising as he went along. And I'm awfully sorry, Bobby dear, but I'm afraid I've won my bet," he added, allowing his laughter to overcome him, "because—because—oh, Holy Maria, hold me up, I'm going to die!—because Big Scalper speaks a language that's amazingly like the stuff the pipers of the Black Watch jabber to one another!"

As Scotty moved down to the landing he gave his tormentor a good-humoured shaking. "It's lots of fun, I know, Dan; but you'd better keep that long, Irish tongue of yours still before the officers, or you'll get into trouble. I don't know what that fellow's going to do."

"Be jabers, it would be worth pickin' oakum for a year jist to take down his blamed consate. Did ye iver see such a banty rooster as the young wasp was? The little sailor chap wasn't half bad. And, say, Scot, did ye hear him say he was a Canadian

or from Canady, or somethin' like that? It accounts for his good manners."

"Who, the bluejacket?" Scotty looked with interest after the young man's retreating form. There was something in his trim, straight figure that somehow seemed familiar.

"What's his name, I wonder?" he began, when a peremptory order interrupted. "Stanwell, into number 150!" cried the sharp voice of the overseer, and Scotty sprang into the stern of the boat and was off for his first battle with the cataracts of the Nile.

XV

THE SECRET OF THE NILE

O mystic Nile! Thy secret yields
Before us; thy most ancient dreams
Are mixed with far Canadian fields
And murmur of Canadian streams.

—C. D. G. Roberts.

THE awe-inspiring designation which Dan had bestowed upon his friend was not readily dropped. The Canadians seized and used it joyfully. Others who heard the name and were not aware of the joke in which it originated supposed that the bearer of it was really an Indian chief, about whose bloody prowess they were ready to believe any tales which the ingenious Mr. Murphy might invent. And so, for the remainder of the voyage, Scotty was known throughout the column as Big Scalper, the fiercest Indian from the Canadian wilds.

But in the days that followed Dan found few opportunities for indulging his reckless humour, for soon the army was moving forward rapidly and the boatmen were in the midst of stupendous toil. The

River Column had been bidden to make haste. Gordon was shut up in Khartoum waiting his rescuers, and no one must rest. On they went, day after day, past dreary stretches of sand, broken only by an occasional and equally dreary dom palm; past barren ledges of rock, deserted mud villages and ruined temples; battling madly with a rapid, only to find when it was overcome that another lay ahead; toiling strenuously to catch up with the enemy, only to see at nightfall their spearheads disappearing over the last brown ridge of sand hills. Scotty felt himself becoming a machine, something that did the day's work mechanically. To toil all day in the bow or stern of a boat in the scorching heat of the pitiless sun, or walk over blistering rock and dazzling sand; to sleep at night inside a square of good British bayonets, chilled by the numbing wind from the north; to rise at the bugle-call and go at it again —that was the unvarying programme. Cataract and sand plain succeeded cataract and sand plain with such deadly monotony, that all sense of time, place, and progress was blotted out. They seemed stationary in an endless desert, toiling against an endless river, always moving but never advancing.

He often wondered, as he watched the brown, turbid water racing down to meet him, what secret the

mysterious Nile held for him. What would be its bearing upon his life? But he always ended his questionings with the assurance that whatever the outcome might be, even though he should never see it, it was controlled by a higher Power, and he was content.

And through all the hardships and stress of the work, the struggle with the rapids, the hunger and privations, the new life which had been implanted in Scotty's heart was his greatest stay. Many a time in the face of temptation he blessed the saintly old woman far away in the Canadian backwoods for the godly training he had received beneath the Silver Maple. He found he needed all his strength in this new, wild life; for a more gaily-gallant, reckless, devil-may-care crew than the Canadian voyageurs, who fought and overcame the ancient Nile, surely never wielded paddles. His chief trial was his own faithful follower, for Dan Murphy strove to out-Canadian the wildest river-driver of the Ottawa valley. And had Scotty's strong hand not been often placed upon the unsteady tiller of his friend's life, there might have been a sadder wreck among the Nile voyageurs than has been set down in history. His vigilant oversight of Dan's conduct did not prevent him distinguishing himself in quite a unique way.

Ever since he had left Cairo that young man's one hope in life had been to participate in a battle. There came a day, later, when he and Scotty worked side by side on the blood-stained rocks of the desert, helping to remove the dead and wounded; when they saw their General's body lowered into its lonely grave, and witnessed the hundred harrowing sights of a battlefield; and then and there, much of the boyish glamour of battle faded before the horrible reality. But that time had not yet come; and, like Napoleon, Dan was convinced that war was a grand game.

So when the reluctant enemy at last massed itself upon the rocky ledges of Kirbekan to delay the column, and the joyful news spread through the impatient army that at last they were to meet the foe, none was so eager for the fray as Dan. In spite of Scotty's admonitions, he went to one of his officers to beg permission to join the advance the next morning. The request was promptly refused, and the volunteer bidden with scant ceremony to go back to his boat and mind his own business. But Mr. Murphy was convinced that his business lay with the front rank of the advancing column. He had not been trained to army discipline and was not minded to lose the glorious chance of participating in a

real battle for such a trifling consideration as one man's opinion.

So in the grey dawn of the morning, when the troops marched out over sand and barren rock, there went with them a man who had neither the uniform nor the dogged stride of the rank and file. But he made up in enthusiasm what he lacked in military precision; for, having appropriated the arms and accoutrements of the first man who fell, he rushed to the front, and was right in the van of the victorious charge that swept the enemy from their rocky stronghold.

Dan Murphy was the hero of the Canadian voyageurs for the remainder of the journey. When the six months' term for which they had signed had expired, and he and Scotty resolved to go on to the end, there were many who remained with the column because the former chose to act as an independent recruiting officer. If he was going to Khartoum, then they would follow, for where Murphy was there must surely be some fun.

But the end of the journey came sooner than was expected. A little above Kirbekan General Brackenbury received the tragic news of the fall of Khartoum and the martyred Gordon's death. Just a few days earlier, just a little more haste, and the gallant

heart that had looked bravely into the face of despair for so many weary weeks, still patient, still hoping, might have seen the answer to his prayers! But the succors were too late by less than a week. Gordon was murdered, Khartoum was fallen, and at Huella the baffled column received orders to return.

If the toil of descending the Nile was not equal to that experienced in the ascent, the skill and vigilance required of the pilots was even greater. Only a few days' journey had been completed when the column halted at the head of a long series of cataracts. Here the Dongolese boatmen had been put to their utmost strength to haul up the boats through the boiling, writhing channel, and the question was, could any boat go down it and live? General Brackenbury gave orders that none but the Canadians should be entrusted with the descent; so, early in the morning, the voyageurs walked down the stream to survey it. They pronounced the channel bad, but not impossible, while one old St. Lawrence pilot sniffed contemptuously and declared that the Lachine would make this puddle look "seek."

But the Nile cataract was bad enough, as Scotty realised, when he found himself among the first called to go down. Dan was his bowman and the stroke oar was a hardy old Scotch sergeant. Upon both

of these he could rely with certainty. Nevertheless, as he steered out into the middle of the river, he realised that they had good need of all their courage and resource. On an overhanging rock above him stood the commander with some of his staff, anxiously watching the experiment. The shore was lined with soldiers, as though they had come to witness a boat-race. Scotty had a fleeting glimpse of them as he raced past, and then his boat was caught in the swift current and shot forward with lightning speed. The men bent to their oars with all the might of their brawny arms, to give their helmsman more power, Dan stood in the bow, alert and tense, his paddle ready, and Scotty held the tiller in an iron grip. The channel curved sharply to right and left; at the quickest turns great rocks stood in mid-stream over which the angry waters boiled and roared. At many points an instant's hesitation on his own part, Scotty well knew, or a second's relaxation of Dan's vigilance, would hurl boat and crew to destruction. They were in it now, dashing through a blinding rain of spray, leaping, turning, dodging, twisting, as though the boat were a living creature pursued.

Down they shot through the boiling zig-zag current, now avoiding great, jagged rocks by a hair's-breadth, now bounding like a deer over a smooth

incline, now plunging into a seething white billow; and, when at last they swept round into the quiet bay at the foot of the cataract, Dan leaped up, and waving his paddle on high uttered a wild war-whoop learned long ago in the swamps of the Oro. There was an answering cheer from the group of men waiting at the landing. "Well done, Big Scalper!" cried the foreman.

A young naval officer who had just ridden down from the head of the rapid turned quickly at the words.

"What, Big Scalper, is that you?" he cried as the pilots stepped from the boat. "How is it you're not hanged yet?"

Scotty glanced up and encountered a laughing glance from the speaker's merry eyes. He recognised the young man whom Dan had vainly tried to befool, away back at the beginning of the voyage. He was prevented from replying by a word from the officer in command. As the voyageurs were few and the boats many they had to walk back to the head of the cataract as soon as one descent was accomplished and prepare for another. Their commander was bidding them make haste, and, when Scotty turned to leave the landing, the young man had disappeared. He was vaguely disappointed. There was something

very attractive in his good-humoured familiarity, so different from the manner of the ordinary under officers.

When the long day's labour was over and the darkness prevented the descent of any more boats, the Canadians received orders to return to the upper camp to be in readiness for the morning's work. Dan had been required for steering early in the day, and had been separated from his friend, so Scotty found himself upon the rocky path leading to the head of the cataract quite alone.

Dan had promised to join him, but when Dan was in the company of the voyageurs there was generally sufficient cause for delay. Scotty walked on slowly, glad to be alone for a few moments after the tremendous toil of the day; the desert was quiet, and acted upon his spirits as did the deep, fragrant swamps at home.

The sun had set and the desert, which had glowed golden in the blistering sun all day, now lay grey and ghostly in the moonlight. Away ahead stood the ruins of an ancient temple overgrown with dusty mimosa bushes. The whispering Nile, brown and gleaming in the daytime, ran swiftly past, touched to silver by the moon that hung in the great empty space overhead. The breeze from the north was

cool; the night was quiet and restful. He strolled along easily, looking back occasionally for signs of his comrades; a solitary figure in the barren desert.

The toil over rocks and rapids of the last few months, though it had hardened his physique and left him in superb health, had played havoc with his clothes; and he was so disreputable and tattered a figure, that he smiled to himself, as he pictured Granny's distress could she have seen him.

He reached a turn in the rocky path and stopped to listen for sounds of those who were to follow. The breeze from the north brought faintly the music of the old French Canadian song that had so often enlivened alike the toil of the shantymen on the Ottawa and the pilots on the Nile.

> "En roulant, ma boule roulant,
> En roulant, ma boule."

The boys were coming, then; he seated himself upon a rock to await them. The sound died away for a moment, only the dry rustle of the mimosa bushes disturbed the silence.

He seemed absolutely alone in the world, until from a break in the rocks to his right a camel emerged with its stately, undulating stride. It bore an officer presumably riding down to the foot of the cataract.

The long, fantastic shadow moved across the grey sand. Scotty could hear the rider's voice urging the animal forward. As they came out into the open, the two figures were silhouetted against the pale sky; a splendid mark for a prowling Dervish, he reflected.

As if in answer to his thought there came the sudden crack of a rifle from the direction of the ruined temple. The figure of the rider lurched over, and, with a leap, the animal had thrown him and was off desertward. There was a fiendish yell from the mimosa bushes. Three or four dark forms rose like magic from their shadows, their spears glinting in the moonlight as they leaped forward. The wounded man lay between his assailants and Scotty, somewhat nearer the latter. As it was Scotty reached him first. The man was lying on the sand. He had his revolver in his hand and was striving desperately to raise himself into a position to shoot. Scotty dragged him into a sheltering nook between two ledges of rock, snatched the weapon from his hand, and crouching down sent a bullet spinning out to meet the advancing rush. The Dervishes halted; the revolver spoke again; there was a howl as a man fell. Scotty felt a moment's inner exultation in that steady aim he had never lost since the days he and Dan shot chipmunks behind the schoolhouse. But the

yell had been answered by another farther from the river; three more glinting spearheads suddenly appeared from the dark expanse beyond, and came hurtling towards him. He poured the remaining chambers of his revolver into the mad charge; but, when the last was gone, the enemy were still leaping forward. He threw down the weapon and looked about swiftly. The wounded man had a sword at his side. Scotty grasped it and the same instant the yelling savages were upon him. There was no use trying to take cover now. He stood erect and struck out madly. He was dimly surprised when the first man went down before him. He swung his weapon fiercely, with no thought of aim; but he was as agile as even these wild sons of the desert and his arm had the strength of ten. It could not last long, he knew, and he fought with the energy of despair. There was a strange roaring in his ears, as though he were in the midst of the cataract again, something warm was streaming down his face and obscuring his vision; he struck out blindly, desperately.

But now another sound arose, even above the roaring in Scotty's head, the sound of a familiar voice; a shout from down the river. Scotty's heart leaped; he uttered a strange, weird yell—"Oro, Oro, woo-

hoo!" It was the long, fierce battle-cry of Glenoro school. If Dan were in Egypt that would bring him, he knew!

"Oro! Oro!" came the answer; and like a sand-storm across the desert came the company of voyageurs, Dan at their head, uttering the blood-curdling war-whoop with which he had so often awakened the echoes of the Canadian swamps.

The fierce-eyed Soudanese who had raised his spear to hurl at his opponent hesitated. He must have thought that all General Brackenbury's army was upon him. He leaped back with a sharp word of command; one more yell from the advancing column, followed by the crack of a random shot decided him; the dark figures took to their heels, and in the magic way known only to the desert-born, had melted in a moment over the low hills.

Scotty's head was spinning wildly, and when Dan flung himself upon him he sank unsteadily upon the ground.

"Hello, Danny," he tried to say, with his usual calmness, "just on time."

Dan clutched him by the shoulders and shook him violently; his voice was unsteady. "Be jabers, didn't I hear ye bleatin' like a stray lamb, half-a-mile back. How did ye happen to have such luck, ye beggar?

Aw, the black-hearted brutes has give ye a bang, Scotty, boy. Hold on to me now, old man, here, an' we'll fix ye up in no time."

"The other fellow needs it worse," said Scotty, making a motion towards the man at his feet. Someone struck a light; the voyageurs raised the wounded man gently. His eyes opened.

"Are you much hurt?" asked one of the rescuers, bending over him.

Scotty looked down at him and was conscious of a feeling of glad surprise. It was the young naval officer who had spoken to him that morning.

"Not much," he gasped pluckily. "It's under my arm here. You were just in the nick of time, Canadian."

Another match was lit to enable the men to see the rough bandages they were trying to adjust. The light flashed up into Scotty's face, and the wounded man's eyes brightened.

"Why, was it you, Big Scalper?" he asked, with a faint attempt at a smile. "The Devil's not so bad as he's painted——" He made an effort to hold out his hand, but before Scotty could take it the young man's head fell back and he had fainted in Dan's arms.

The buzzing in Scotty's head grew louder, other

sounds became dim and far away. He was vaguely conscious that the boys were binding up his head, hurting him most unnecessarily in the process, and that they were leading him away, away, through the revolving darkness, over an interminable desert.

But the next morning saw him in the stern of his boat ready to take the cataract once more. His head was still bandaged and felt rather light, but he did his day's work as usual. And before the next evening he was at the head of the column, far down the Nile, without knowing even the name of the man whose life he had saved.

And that same day a young naval officer, lying in a hospital boat asked anxiously if he might not see the Canadian pilot, known as Big Scalper, and was informed that the Indian of that name had gone on at the front of the column, but that he would see him when they disbanded at Korti.

But when the voyageurs drew up before the flagstaff to receive the General's farewell, the young officer lay tossing in delirium; and when next he saw his preserver it was not in Egyptian bondage, but in the new land of promise.

XVI

RE-VOYAGE

"For dere's no place lak our own place, don't care de far you're goin',
Dat's what the whole worl's sayin', w'enever dey come here,
'Cos we got de fines' contree, an' de beeges' reever flowin',
An' le bon Dieu sen' de sunshine nearly twelve mont' ev'ry year."
—William Henry Drummond.

AND surely the Israelites, on the borders of Canaan, felt no more joy than did the two voyageurs when they first sighted the green shores of Canada. As they steamed up the St. Lawrence Dan's delight reached the dangerous stage. He was dying for a fight, and a fight he must have, he declared. And for this purpose he danced about the deck, brandishing his fists, and beseeching everyone within hearing to speak up and say that Canady wasn't jist the flower garden of creation, barrin' ould Ireland. Before he succeeded in getting himself into serious trouble, Scotty wisely put the wild Irishman down upon the deck and sat on him until the first spasms of the home-coming ecstasy were over.

But when the boys reached the little railway station a few miles from Glenoro, and saw Hamish's kind,

brown eyes and old Pat Murphy's red face beaming a double welcome, there were no noisy demonstrations. For as they drove up through the ever-changing panorama of hill and valley, with the flash of the river and the blue gleam of lakes peeping through the green, Scotty had a choking lump in his throat —and even Dan was silent. For they were home again, and Oro was vocal with the joy of returning spring.

The pink-tinted buds were everywhere bursting into green, the marsh marigolds lit the dark borders of the swamp with their little golden lamps, the hepaticas and trilliums spangled the dun-coloured carpet of the woods; just the same, Scotty thought, as in the happy days when he and Isabel scampered among them. The air was deliciously laden with the exhilarating scents of the young green earth, the bluebirds flashed from bough to bough of the elm trees, and the robins, how they sang! Dan declared the little spalpeens knew he was home, for what else would make them bust their foolish little throats wid shoutin'?

His quiet mood did not last long. The Canadian air was getting into his blood again. A sudden whirr and flash, where a host of red-winged blackbirds arose in a cloud from the road, proved too

much for him. He leaped from the buggy, yelling like a madman, and for the rest of the journey was quite beyond the limits of reason. He sat in the vehicle only on rare occasions, and spent his time scrambling over fences, tearing into the woods and back again, chasing squirrels and whooping like an Indian, until his father privately questioned Scotty as to the effect of the Egyptian sun on the brain.

Scotty sat beside Hamish, laughing helplessly at poor old Dan's madness, and in his quieter way revelling just as much in all the dear familiar sights. He was feeling how good it was to be a son of the north land, to live in this garden of lake and river, forest and meadow, and see it come to life afresh each year, and as they climbed a hill, and he stood up in the old buggy to catch his first glimpse of Lake Oro he realised solemnly that, though he might be called English, Irish, Scotch, Indian, Egyptian, what not, he was altogether and entirely and overwhelmingly Canadian.

And at the brow of the hill came the Murphy homestead, with all the Murphys far and near assembled to greet the returned wanderer. Scotty and Hamish had intended to leave Dan at his home and hurry away, but when the hero of the house of Murphy was dropped into the arms of the excited crowd, they

found leave-taking a difficult enterprise. Irish hospitality, especially when transplanted to the land of Canadian plenty, is a compelling force.

At first Scotty's impatience to get home resisted all invitations, and old Pat was about to reluctantly allow them to depart, when Mrs. Murphy, who until now had been weeping loudly on Dan's broad shoulder, oblivious to everything but his return, suddenly awoke to the shameful fact that someone was about to leave her doors without stopping to eat. She issued no further invitation, but with her apron still to her eyes and still exclaiming over and over in muffled sobs, that "the darlin' had come back to his mother," she darted into the road; and snatching the horses' bridle, dragged her guests through the gate and up to the door, amid the applause of the assembled Flats.

And so they had supper in the Murphy home perforce, and all the great deeds of their expedition had to be recounted. Scotty told how Dan had disobeyed orders and run away at the battle of Kirbekan; only, like a true Irishman, he had run to, not from the fight. But when his friend returned the compliment and launched into an account of the midnight skirmish at the ruined temple, the hero of that event arose hastily, and declared they must be going.

There was much for Hamish both to tell and hear

on the road, so the afternoon was fading into evening when at last they reached the Scotch Line. They had taken a detour round the Glen, for Scotty did not want to be delayed by more friends. They passed the Weaver's clearing, and Hamish declared how Jimmie and Kirsty were such an agreeable pair as never was, for indeed the two lived in such a state of connubial felicity as was a wonder to all the neighbours. Scotty caught a glimpse of the little path through the cedars, the path where he and Isabel had walked so often in those magic days succeeding Kirsty's wedding. And there was the boiling spring by the roadside where they had so often played, and the pools where they had gathered musk, and yonder in the fence-corner they had built their first house.

And then there came a turn in the road and there it was! His old home! It was just the same; the old garden in front with the rose bushes turning green, and the Silver Maple putting forth its pink buds above the roof! And there was Granny at the door, shading her eyes with her hand; and beside her Mary Sandy, Rory's sister-in-law, who was now her help; and Grandaddy, who had been pretending to cut wood all afternoon, still holding the axe in his hand; yes, and even Old Farquhar, bobbing about as excited as any!

With the instinct of long custom, Scotty jumped from the vehicle to open the gate, but his trembling fingers refused to pull out the pin, and the next moment he had cleared the bars in one mighty spring, leaving Hamish, helpless with laughter, to shift for himself. Before the gate was open he had charged up the hill like a whirlwind and caught Granny off her feet.

And then such a time as there was with talking and hand-shaking and laughter and tears, for even Mary Sandy took to crying out of sympathy with her mistress, and Scotty himself had some work to keep his eyes dry.

And no one could hear a word anyone else said, for as the long-absent one crossed the threshold, Old Farquhar burst into loud and joyous song. And what could do justice to the great occasion but "The Grave of Highland Mary"? The old man's voice was strong with excitement, and he drowned both the noise of joyful greeting and the din of the barking dogs as he shouted triumphantly,—

"Then bring me the sigh of a fond lover's bosom
And bring me the tear of a fond lover's e'e,
And I'll pour them a' doon on thy grave, Highland May-
ay-re,
For the sake o' thy Bur-urns who sae dearly loved thee!"

When the excitement had slightly subsided they had to sit down and partake of such a supper as had never before been set out in that house; for Granny would not listen to such foolish nonsense as that they had eaten at Murphy's. She sat beside her boy, never touching her own food, but heaping his plate, clapping him upon the back and showering upon him all the endearing epithets she knew in a language that is famous for them.

Big Malcolm sat close to him on the other side, his old warlike spirit aroused, as his boy told his story. Scotty softened the hardships for his grandmother's ears and said nothing of his own encounter in the desert. He was graphically describing the manœuvres of the Highlanders at Kirbekan, much to his grandfather's delectation; when, as if to give point to his narrative, there suddenly arose from the direction of the road a splendid roar of pipes; and behold here came Rory driving up the lane in a wagon, his whole family aboard; and he himself, forgetful of his dignity as the father of the family, standing up in the wagon and blowing up a tremendous pibroch on Fiddlin' Archie's Sandy's bagpipes!

Scotty flung out of doors to meet him and had scarcely time for a greeting when they sighted

Weaver Jimmie and Kirsty hurrying up the path from the bush. Then a shout from the hill behind the barn attracted everyone's attention, and Long Lauchie's whole household appeared trooping down the slope; Long Lauchie himself plodding joyfully at the tail of the procession, full of bewildering prophecies and analogies, in which there was something about Lake Simcoe's being the Red Sea, and the Oa, Mount Pisgah.

It was well that Mary Sandy merited her mistress's oft-repeated declaration that she was "jist the smartest, tidiest girl in the Oa, indeed." The multitude had to be fed, in accordance with the laws of Canadian hospitality, which alter not, no matter what the circumstances may be, and without Kirsty's and Mary Lauchie's help even Mrs. MacDonald's paragon might have found herself inadequate.

Big Malcolm and his wife were quite helpless with excess of happiness. The latter moved about in a happy daze, making ineffectual efforts to assist her friends, picking up articles and putting them down again in a haphazard fashion.

At last Kirsty declared that they must all clear out and let her do some work. Yes, and Mrs. Malcolm was to go too, for how could she be of any use with a big gomeril like Scotty clattering after her every

step, as if he was a bairn, and mostly with Big Malcolm and Rory's wee Callum trailing behind. It was enough to put a body fair daft.

Thus banished, Scotty laughingly followed his grandmother out of doors. He was well pleased, for he was longing to get a word with her alone. He knew that her tender eyes had long ago read his heart's secret, and if she had any news for him she would surely give it without asking.

There was a new stone milk-house a few yards from the door, built since his departure; and he must needs see it, Granny said. So she took him with her when she went for a jug of buttermilk for the guests. And when he had admired the place and the buttermilk had been procured, they stood in the cool, sweet dampness, and Granny told him how all the friends had asked for him so often. The minister, indeed, came up several times just to inquire if they had had a letter, and Store Thompson's wife had said that whenever the Captain himself came to the Glen he always asked for him. Then she went to the farther end of the little chamber and commenced a diligent search for something that was not there, and, with her back turned to him, remarked with elaborate carelessness that the Captain's family were expected at the Grange any day now. The Captain had been

away nearly all the time since he lost the election, he had been that disappointed, poor body. They had spent the last winter in Toronto. The wee Isabel hadn't been jist very well all winter, Kirsty had said, and the aunt had wanted to take her to the seashore, but she had said that nothing but the Oro air would do her any good, and Kirsty was expecting her some of these days.

Scotty drew a deep breath. She was coming back then! She would be at the Grange, she might even come to Kirsty's! And then Kirsty herself darted in and snatched the pitcher of buttermilk from Granny's hands and disappeared as quickly. Neither of them noticed her, for Scotty was in a rosy but hopeless dream, and Granny was patting him lovingly upon the arm in expression of the sympathy she dared not speak. There was silence for a moment, the old woman still caressing him tenderly.

"Eh, it would be the Lord would be bringing you back to me, *m'eudail bheg*," she said at last. "He would be good to Malcolm and me in our old age, for you would jist be our Benjamin, whatever. And has it been well with Granny's boy all this weary time?" she added in a whisper.

Scotty put his hands upon her shoulders and looked long into her loving eyes.

"Granny," he whispered, "do you remember the first day I went to school, and how I came through the swamp alone on the way home."

"Eh, the wee man it was! And how would I be forgetting, indeed, for it would be the first time you would be leaving me!"

"And do you remember what I found a comfort then? The swamp was so lonely it frightened me, and I thought it must be like the valley of the shadow of death; so I said over the Shepherd's Psalm, because you had taught it to me and I knew it must be good, and I wasn't afraid any more. And now I've been away from you again, Granny, in the valley of the shadow of death, yes, and worse than death often, but—the rod and the staff were always with me."

The tears were running down the old wrinkled face, happy tears, for Granny had feared often for her boy; not so much the temporal ills; the arrow that flieth by day was not to her so dangerous as the "secret fear." But her fears had been happily disappointed, he had had the great Keeper with him, and one more joy was added to her deep content.

The celebration at Big Malcolm's lasted half the night, and before it had ended Scotty found he had yet one more draught to drink from his cup of

happiness. The assembly was sitting round him breathless as he related the many incidents of his journey, when Weaver Jimmie, who was sitting in the doorway to allow his feet to hang in the greater freedom of outdoors, suddenly interrupted with an exclamation, "Losh keep us, is yon the Schoolmaster come back?" Scotty came to the doorway with a spring and met the outstretched hands of his friend. Monteith had heard the boys were expected and had journeyed all the way from Barbay, where he now resided, to bid his pupil welcome. Scotty was speechless over this last greeting, for in the long warm handshake of his old friend there was not the smallest hint of a past estrangement.

XVII

THE PROMISED LAND

Love and Hope and Truth and Duty
Guide the upward striving soul,
Still evolving higher beauty
As the ages onward roll.

—Agnes Maule Machar.

THE next day Scotty found that he was not yet through with his lionising. With the morning sun up came Dan from the Flats with the news that "the boys" were to meet at Store Thompson's that evening, and they must both go down and show themselves. At first Scotty was for refusing, but his grandfather decided for him. Big Malcolm, who was no better at dissembling than his wife, suddenly remembered that he had urgent reasons for going into the Glen that evening and promised that he would bring his grandson with him.

So there was nothing for Scotty to do, as Monteith, who was still with him, explained, but to be a real lion and roar properly. Granny made them an early tea and, the schoolmaster accompanying them, they drove off in the old buckboard.

On the way Big Malcolm regaled the two exiles with tales of the great events that had transpired since their absence. The most important one related to Store Thompson's latest achievement in the philological field. This time he had routed completely young Mike Murphy. Mike had never received anything through the post office in his life, but never a day passed but he poked his head in at the little wicket and demanded in a loud voice, "Anythin' for Murphy the day?" Store Thompson had endured the youth's uncouthness with his usual serenity, but one day Mike asked twice at the wicket. That was once too often, and Store Thompson fell back on his reserve forces. "Murphy?" he queried. "Young man, ye're jist ambeeguous like, aye, ye're jist ambeeguous." Mike had never inquired for letters since. He retired in a rage, under the impression that Store Thompson had called him some insulting name, but, like many another brave man, overawed by the mystery of the unknown. Ever since, Store Thompson had been free from his tormentor and the young man was known between the Oa and the Flats as "Ambiguous Mike." Big Malcolm chuckled audibly and jerked the lines in delight over the remembrance of his old friend's victory.

The way seemed very short to Scotty, there was

so much of interest to see. Soon they left the Highlands and began to descend into the Glen, and he found his eyes growing misty again as they dwelt on the winding white road, the silver curves of the river between the faint green of the hills, and the cosy homesteads nestled in the budding orchards.

The place was so little changed in the two years he could almost believe he had never left it. He noticed only one radical difference. Pete Nash's establishment had disappeared. The tavern had not been able to withstand the united progress of commerce and righteousness; Mr. Cameron's advent had heralded its downfall, and the toot of the railway train through Oro had sounded its death knell.

Big Malcolm had not finished dilating upon the blessing its departure had been to the community, when they reached the post office. A crowd stood collected about it, eager but quiet. They hid their concern in the true rural fashion and stood leaning against every available support with supreme indifference, shoulders high, hands in pockets, caps on one side. Store Thompson was more ceremonious. Before Scotty could alight, out he came with hands outstretched in greeting. He had prepared an elaborate speech of welcome, adorned with all the available polysyllables in the dictionary; but, when

he saw Scotty's familiar face, his eyes shining with the joy of his home-coming, and Big Malcolm, erect and full of fire as though he had suddenly dropped twenty years of his life, his heart got the better of his head and he could only shake the voyageur's hand again and again and say:

"Aye, ye're home again. Aye, ye've jist come home, like!"

And then out bustled Store Thompson's wife, who was as blithe and brisk as she had been twenty years before, and she had no difficulty in kissing Scotty this time, though she had to stand on tip-toe to do it.

And at last the crowd flung off its lethargy and one by one came forward in greeting. Dan had already arrived and was resplendent amid the whole population of the Flats; and not the Flats only, for such a cosmopolitan crowd had not been seen in the Glen since the old days of the fights. There were all the Murphys and the Caldwells and, of course, every MacDonald from far and near. And Hash Tucker had brought over a goodly representation of the Tenth to do honour to his old schoolmates. Scotty had got through only half the hand shakes when the minister came up from the manse to welcome the boys and tell them they had made him proud of Canada.

Scotty found, somewhat to the dismay of his reticent soul, that Dan had been spreading abroad the story of his gallant rescue of an English officer against overwhelming odds, and the ovation he received was particularly trying.

"It's a pity you couldn't have kept your long, Irish tongue still for a day!" he grumbled, and Dan laughed and thumped him soundly upon the chest for an ungrateful and stony-hearted old Scotchman.

The two were standing, the centre of a breathless ring, while Dan, with true Irish fluency, described the fight at Kirbekan, when the sound of rapidly approaching wheels partly diverted the attention of the audience.

"Eh, yon must be the Captain an' his family jist gettin' home," said Store Thompson, turning away to welcome the new arrivals. For, since the departure of the tavern, Store Thompson was public host in the Glen. Scotty heard and felt his heart leap into his mouth. Would she be there?

The wheels were stopping. "That'll be his son most like, the young man," he heard someone say above the buzzing in his ears. "He's been away in the wars."

Captain Herbert's voice came next, "No, thank

you, James, not to-night; we just want to water the horses. But what's all this? You haven't lapsed into the old warlike days in my absence, I hope?"

And then Scotty shoved Dan aside and looked up. Yes, there she was, and not at all pale and ill as his heart had feared, but smiling and flushed like a wild rose. And her eyes were looking a welcome straight into his, over the heads of the people; such a welcome as not all the love of his own kin had been able to give.

And the next instant a marvellous thing happened, a thing that astounded all the spectators and left them amazed and gaping. For the pale young man at Captain Herbert's side suddenly leaped to his feet as though he had gone mad. He gave a shout, "*Big Scalper!*" and the same moment he had cleared the carriage wheels and several people's heads and had flung himself upon Scotty and delivered him a blow that sent him staggering back against the verandah. And instead of resenting such outrageous treatment, as any right-minded descendant of the Fighting MacDonalds should, Scotty submitted very meekly. In a laughing, half-ashamed manner he allowed himself to be pounded and shaken, and when his assailant had almost wrung his hands off, even

permitted himself to be dragged up to the carriage wheels.

"Father!" cried the young man, his voice high with excitement, "it's the very fellow himself! It's Big Scalper!"

At that Dan Murphy uttered a yell that made the topmost pine on the Oro banks ring.

"It's the English spalpeen!" he roared to the dumbfounded crowd. "It's the cratur Scotty pulled out o' the black divils in Agypt. Oh, hooray!"

It seemed as if all the township of Oro joined him in one mighty shout. Some said afterwards that even Store Thompson cheered, though most people believed that the excitement of the moment gave birth to that wild rumour. But certain it is that an equally wonderful thing happened, for at the sound of the uproar the minister turned back from the manse gate, and when he was made aware of the cause, he actually waved his hat in the air and made everyone give three more cheers.

And such a prodigious handshaking ensued that Scotty was almost overcome. Captain Herbert acted as if he could never let him go; and there was Store Thompson and the minister and half the crowd to shake hands with again, and it seemed to Scotty that every second man was the young Egyptian officer,

and he found to his amusement that even that absurd Dan was greeting him as though they had not met for years!

But he was only half-conscious of it all, only half realised what it meant even when Miss Herbert took both his hands in hers and whispered softly: "God bless you, my boy." For he could see nothing but Isabel's face and her blue eyes swimming in happy tears, and felt only her clinging hands as she whispered brokenly: "Oh, Scotty, isn't it wonderful, wonderful?" And Scotty knew that even she did not quite realise just how wonderful it was.

Then, amid all the expressions of good will, Big Malcolm stepped forward and held out his hand to Captain Herbert. It was grasped warmly and the old man felt, with a great uplifting of his spirit, that his last forgiveness was accomplished and his last feud buried.

It was very late that night when the company broke up and Scotty found himself at home once more. Monteith had returned with him, and as he took his leave the young man accompanied him to the gate.

"I wanted a chance to tell you, before I go," he said, as they paused in the moonlight, "that you were right, after all, Ralph."

"In giving up?" asked Scotty eagerly. "Is it because of what you saw this afternoon?"

"No; the reward of a right act doesn't always come so suddenly; but because I have learned something since you went away, something that your grandmother taught me up there under the Silver Maple. I know now that when a man has once realised what the Great Sacrifice means he cannot choose his own way."

And Scotty went up to his old bed in the loft and lay listening to the branches of the Silver Maple softly caressing the roof, unable to sleep for joy and thankfulness.

The days that followed were very busy ones. Scotty was often at the Grange; not altogether because inclination turned his feet thither, but because there was much business to settle. Lieutenant Herbert wanted to return soon to England, and he would not leave until his new friend had received due restitution and more. Scotty wanted nothing; the look in Isabel's eyes was enough, but Harold would not listen. No, he must have the Grange and all that pertained to it, he declared; for the Captain and his sister had long thought of going back to England to end their days. "So," he concluded, "when you are through that college course, which it appears you

must take, you and Bluebell can settle down here to farming; and good luck go with you, because I don't envy you your lot!"

But Scotty and Isabel cared very little whether they were envied or not. Their own happiness was sufficient.

And so Ralph Stanwell came into his inheritance at last, and by the right road, the road of truth and equity, which, though it may often descend by the way of the cross, is sure and straight and leadeth unto life eternal.

. . . . . .

The day before he left to take up his studies in the city, Scotty went down to the Grange and brought Isabel up, ostensibly to spend the day with Kirsty, but really because they wanted to say farewell among their old haunts. The girl had spent the afternoon at Big Malcolm's and as evening fell and Scotty prepared to take her home, they went round to the side of the house and sat for a few moments under the Silver Maple. Lake Oro was a sea of gems flashing between the dusky points of the fir trees. The hilltops were flushed with rose, the valleys steeped in purple, and the vesper sparrows filled the golden twilight with their music.

"Scotty," said the girl softly, "I've been re-

minded all day of the psalm Granny Malcolm taught us here—'Thou hast beset me behind and before and hast laid Thine Hand upon me!'"

And Scotty, whose mind held the vivid remembrance of a great temptation, to which he had almost yielded and from which he had been saved that wonderful night in the wilderness, added: "'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain unto it.'"

And a little breeze, dancing up from the golden bosom of Lake Oro, tossed the green canopy above their heads and showed that every dark emerald leaf had its silver lining.

THE END