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# THE END OF THE RAINBOW

BY

MARIAN KEITH

*Author of "Lisbeth of the Dale,"  
"Treasure Valley," "Duncan Polite," etc.*

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# THE END OF THE RAINBOW

## CHAPTER I

### THE GLEAM

All afternoon the little town had lain dozing under the lullaby of a June rain. It was not so much a rain as a gentle dewy mist, touching the lawns and gardens and the maple trees that lined each street into more vivid green, and laying a thick moist carpet over the dust of the highways. And the little town, ringed by forest and lake, and canopied by maple boughs, had lain there enjoying it, now blinking half-awake in the brief glimpses of sunlight, now curling up again and going to sleep.

In the late afternoon the silent tournament between sunshine and shadow resulted in a conquest for the sun. His victorious lances swept the enemy from the clean blue skies; they glanced over the lake, lodged in every treetop, and glittered from every church spire. The little town began to stir. The yellow dogs, that had slept all afternoon on the shop steps, roused themselves and resumed their fight in the middle of Main Street. Now and then a clerk ran across to a rival firm to get change for a customer. A few belated shoppers hurried homeward. A farmer's double-buggy backed out of the hotel yard with a scraping sound, and went rattling up the street towards the country. Everything seemed pervaded with an atmosphere of expectancy, a tense air of unrest, as though the whole place were holding itself in readiness for a summons.

And then it came: the great consummation of the day's work. From the tower of the fire-hall burst forth the loud peal of the town bell. Six o'clock! Like the castle of the Sleeping Beauty the town leaped into life. The whistles of the saw-mills down by the lake broke into shrieks of joy. The big steam pipe of Thornton's foundry responded with a delighted roar. The flour mill, the wheel-factory and the tannery joined in a chorus of yells. From factory and shop, office and store, came pouring forth the relieved workers, laughing and calling across the street to each other above the din. There was a noisy tramp, tramp of feet, a hurrying this way and that, a confusion of happy voices. And over all the clamour, the big bell in the tower continued to fling out far over the town and the lake and the woods the joyous refrain that the day's work was done, was done, was done.

Near the corner of Main Street, on a leafy thoroughfare that ran up into the region of lawns and gardens, stood a neat row of red-brick office buildings, with wide doors and shiny windows. Over the widest door and on the shiniest window, in letters of gold, was the legend: EDWARD BRIANS, Barrister, etc.

Never a man passed this door on his homeward way without saluting it.

"Hello, Ed! Coming home?"—"Hurrah, Ed! Will you be along if we wait ten minutes?"—"Ed! Hurry up and come along!"

No one appeared in response to the summons; but from within came refusals, roared out in a thunderous voice, each roar growing more exasperated than the last.

The streets were almost deserted when, at last, the owner of the big voice came to his door. He was a man of about thirty-five; of middle height, straight, strong and alert. His fair hair had a tendency towards red, and also towards standing on end, and his bright blue eyes had a tendency to blaze suddenly in wrath or shut up altogether in consuming laughter. He had practised law in

Algonquin for ten years, and as he had been brought up in the town and was related to one-half the population, and loved by the whole of it, he was spoken of familiarly as Lawyer Ed.

A tall man, leading a little boy by the hand, followed him slowly down the steps. The man was not past middle age, but he was stooped and worn with a life of heavy toil.

"Well, Angus," Lawyer Ed was saying, his deep musical voice thrilling with sympathy, "that'll make you comfortable for a while now, until you're better, anyway. And there's no need for me, or any one, to tell you not to worry over it."

The older man smiled. "No, no. Tut, tut! Worry! That would be but a poor way to treat the Father's care, indeed." His dark eyes shone with an inner light. "If He needs my farm, He'll show me how to lift the mortgage. And if He needs me to do any more work for Him here, He'll give me back my health. But if not—" he paused and his hand went instinctively to the shoulder of the little boy looking up at him with big wondering eyes—"if not—well, well, never fear, He knows the way. He knows."

An old light wagon and a horse with hanging head were standing by the sidewalk. The man clambered slowly to the seat and gathered up the lines. Lawyer Ed picked up the little boy and swung him up beside his father. He shook him well before he set him down, boxed his ears, pulled his hair, and finally, diving into his pockets, brought out a big handful of pink "bull's-eyes" and showered them into his hat. The little fellow shouted with delight, and having crammed his mouth full, he doubled up his small fists and challenged his friend to another scuffle.

But Lawyer Ed shook his head.

"No! That's enough nonsense to-day, you young rascal! Good-bye, Angus, and—" his musical voice became low and soft—"and God bless you."

Angus McRae's smile, as he drove away, was like the sun breaking out over Lake Algonquin, and the lawyer felt as if their positions were reversed, and he had just put a mortgage on his farm and Angus were trying to comfort him.

He stood for a moment on the sidewalk, his bright eyes grown misty, and watched the pair drive down the hill. Then he looked across the street and saw Doctor Archibald Blair climbing into his mud-splashed buggy, satchel in hand. Lawyer Ed walked across to him, his shining boots sinking in the soft mud.

By descent Lawyer Ed was partly Scotch, by nature he was entirely Irish. He possessed a glib tongue of the latter order and his habit was to address every one he met, be he Indian, Highland Scot, or French Canadian, in the dialect which the person was supposed to favour. So he roared out in his magnificent baritone, as he picked his way among the puddles:

"Hoot! Losh! Is yon yersel', Aerchie mon?"

Doctor Blair glared down at him from under lowering brows.

"Dear me, Ed, you're an object of pity, when you try to get that clumsy tongue of yours, hampered as it is by a brogue from Cork, around the most musical sounds of the most musical language under heaven. Give it up, man! Give it up!"

"Haud yer whisht! Or whisht yer blethers!—whichever way that outlandish, heathenish gibberish your forebears jabbered, would have it. You see, Archie, one great advantage of being Irish—and it's not your fault that you're not, man, I don't blame you—one great advantage is that you can speak all languages with equal ease. Now a Scotchman's tongue is like his sense of humour and his brains—a bit hard to wiggle."

*"Beware a tongue that's smoothly hung,  
A heart that warmly seems to feel!"—*

quoted Doctor Blair, who was always ready with his Burns. He shoved his black satchel under the seat, and hauled the muddy lap-robe over his knees.

"Do you want anything in the line of common sense, or did you just come over here to blather?"

"I came to see what you thought of Angus. Is he very sick?"

"Angus McRae? Yes he is, Ed, I'm sorry to say. I felt I ought to tell him to quit work altogether, but he can't afford it."

"Is it anything dangerous?"

"Well, if anything should happen—a shock or strain of any kind on his heart—he'd be laid up—maybe put out of business altogether."

"And to-day he put a mortgage on his place, to help pay the debts of Peter McDuff and a dozen other old leeches that live on him."

The two friends looked at each other and nodded silently.

"He's a wonderful man, that Angus McRae," said Dr. Blair.

"He's the finest man living!" cried Lawyer Ed, always enthusiastic. "I owe that man more than I can ever pay—not money, something more valuable—nearly everything I have that's worth while."

His friend nodded. There were few men in Algonquin who were not indebted to Angus McRae for something of value.

"Angus is rich in that sort of wealth," said Archie Blair.

*"It's no in titles nor in rank;  
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,  
To purchase peace and rest.  
It's no in makin' muckle mair;  
It's no in books; it's no in lear;  
To make us truly blest."*

"But Angus knows where it is, and he's not like most people who go to church and sing and pray one day in the week and cheat their neighbours the other six!"

The doctor cracked his whip and drove off in high good humour, for he had made a smart slap at the church, as he always loved to do in Lawyer Ed's presence, and had escaped before that glib Irishman could answer. He could catch something roared out behind him, about a man who could stay home from church so that he might be a hypocrite seven days in the week and half the nights too, but he pretended not to hear.

Meanwhile Angus McRae and his little son rattled away down one street and along another and out upon the country road. Just where the town and country met stretched a row of ragged, tumble-down buildings. There was an ill-smelling hotel, with two or three loungers smoking on the sagging veranda, a long fence covered with tattered and glaring circus posters, a half-dozen patched and weather-beaten houses and a row of abandoned sheds and barns.

Algonquin proper was a pretty little town, all orchards and gardens and winding hilly streets smothered in trees. And the dreary wretchedness of its back entrance, as it might be called, was all the more painful in contrast. Willow Lane, this miserable little street was named; but Angus McRae had long termed it, in his secret heart, the Jericho Road. For the old tavern at the end of it had proved the downfall of many a traveller on that highway, and many a man had Angus picked up, who had fallen there among thieves.

Every one on the Jericho Road knew him well, and went to him for help in time of trouble and, though they did not realise it, he was indeed their neighbour in precisely the way his Master meant him to be.

The lane turned into the country road, and once more all was fragrance and beauty. It curved around the southern shore of Lake Algonquin; on one side the forest, dark and cool, its dim floor splashed with golden light, its arches ringing with the call of the Canada bird, on the other side the blue and white of the lake, laughing and tumbling beneath the blue and white of the sky.

When the gleam of the water came into view, the little boy clapped his hands and churned up and down in delight. The fresh, damp wind fanned his face, and he shouted to the white-winged gulls dipping and soaring out there in their free ocean of air. He looked up laughingly into his father's face, but quickly became grave. His father's eyes were wistful; he had not spoken for a long time. The child remembered vague hints of trouble that afternoon in Lawyer Ed's office.

"You won't have to work when I get a big man, Daddy," he said comfortingly. "I'll work for you. An' I'll get rich, an' you'll have lots an' lots of money."

His father smiled down at him lovingly. "Och, indeed, it's your father will be the happy man when Roderick grows up. He'll have nothing to do at all at all."

"What was Lawyer Ed doing?" queried the child, after a moment's thought. "Is he goin' to let Jock McPherson take away our house?"

"No, no, child. You must not be troubling your head with such thoughts. It was just some business Roderick is not old enough to understand."

The little fellow sat swinging his short legs and gazing out over the lake, struggling with a vague sense of danger. He had been brought up on the edge of poverty, but had been joyously unconscious of the fact. His father, Aunt Kirsty, Collie, his dog, and the farm had been his world, a world of love and enjoyment and plenty. But now he felt the nearness of some unseen foe, something that had made Lawyer Ed and Doctor Blair look so grave, and was now keeping his father quiet and thoughtful. He had a notion that it all had something to do with money.

"If you only had a pot o' gold," he said at last, still staring out over the lake.

"A pot of gold!" repeated his father, with a laugh. "And what would be putting that into your foolish little head?"

"A pot o' gold would buy anything you wanted, Peter says. He told me about it, Peter Fiddle did. Once a boy found a pot o' gold hangin' on to the end of a rainbow. There's always one there, Daddy. Yes, there is, Peter Fiddle says so. An' a boy travelled a long, long way to the end of a rainbow, an' he found it—the pot o' gold. An' he was rich, an' he gave money to all the poor people an' made them happy."

"And so Peter's been telling you more fairy-tales, eh? Well, well, it will be a pretty one. And now, I suppose the first rainbow you see, you'll be off to get that pot of gold."

He nodded excitedly. "Wouldn't I just!" he cried.

Angus McRae was not despondent over the mortgage which his ill health and his extravagant expenditure for oil and wine and inn-fees had compelled him to put on his little farm. He was one of those glad souls, with such a perfect faith in his Father, that he could not but believe that what might seem to be a bane was in reality a blessing. But he was a little puzzled and thoughtful. The solution of the problem was in his Father's hands, of course, but he could not help wondering just how it would be worked out, and if he himself were using his every faculty for the best ends.

The greatest part of his problem was the Lad. His boy had been the very centre of all his thoughts since the day She had left him, with only faith in God and the Lad's baby hands to hold him up from despair. She had always hoped that the Lad would have an education, and Angus had planned that he should. But if the little farm was to go, the Lad would have to work for his father and Aunt Kirsty just as soon as he was big enough. And She had always hoped he should be a minister some day, or even, perhaps, a missionary to a heathen land.

And next to the Lad was his ministry to his neighbours. What was to become of that? Ministry was not the word Angus McRae would have used in speaking of his humble calling,—the mere working of a little market garden farm and the selling of what it produced. And yet he had made it a real and beautiful ministry to both God and his fellow-man. He considered the selling of sweet turnips and sound cabbage and unspotted potatoes to his customers as much a religious rite, as did the most devout Israelite the offering of that which was perfect on the altar of Jehovah. For indeed everything Angus sent off his little farm, whether sold for a legitimate price or given away, as it so often was, to a needy neighbour, was truly an offering to the Most High.

So he was a little puzzled, though not at all saddened, by the thought that his ministry was to be curtailed, perhaps stopped. He had hoped to be always able to give a bag of potatoes to a poor neighbour, or to bring to his home any one who had fallen on the Jericho Road. But then, if the Father wanted him to stop that, He surely had other work for him. So he flapped his old horse with the lines and, leaning forward, hummed the hymn that was his watchword in times of stress:

*"My soul, be on thy guard,  
Ten thousand foes arise,  
The hosts of sin are pressing hard,  
To draw thee from the skies!"*

The Lad interrupted constantly with eager questions about this flower and that tree, and his old horse demanded much attention, to keep her from turning off the road and regaling herself on the green grass. He flapped her at regular intervals with the lines, saying in a tone of gentle remonstrance, "Tut, tut, Betsy, get up now, get up."

Betsy had had so many years' intimate acquaintance with her master that this encouragement to greater speed had long ago lost its real meaning to her. She had come to regard its gentle reiteration as a sort of pleasant lullaby, and jogged along more peacefully than ever.

They slowly rounded a curve in the road and came into view of their home, the little weather-beaten house facing the lake, with Aunt Kirsty's garden a glory of sweet-peas, the long rows of neat vegetable beds sloping down to the water, the straggling lane with the big oak at the gate. And there was Collie bounding down the lane, uttering yelping barks and twisting himself almost out of joint in his efforts to wag his tale hard enough to express his welcome. The Lad leaped down and ran to open the gate; Collie knocked him over in his ecstasy, and his father smiled indulgently as the two rolled over and over on the grass.

"Run away in to Aunt Kirsty and tell her we are home, Lad," he cried, as he drove past to the barn. The boy put the pin in the old gate and went frolicking along the lane, the dog circling about him. The lane ran straight past the house down to the water, hedged by an old rail fence and fringed with raspberry and alder bushes. From it a little gate led into Aunt Kirsty's garden, which surrounded the house. The boy paused with his hand on the latch of the gate, looking down at the water. And then he gave a loud, ecstatic "Oh!" that made Collie bark, and stood perfectly still. He could see Lake Algonquin spread out before him, stretching away to the north in lovely

curves like a great river. Its gleaming floor was dotted with green, feathery islands. To the west, in a silver haze, lay the town; to the east, a low, wooded shore where the spire of the little Indian church pointed up like a shining finger out of the green. Great masses of clouds were piled high in the west, where the sunset was turning all the world into glory. But it was not the beauty of the scene that was holding the little boy spellbound. Down there, straight ahead of him, was a most marvellous thing, the fulfilment of his dreams. Across the radiant water, stretching from some fairy island in the heavens, far over to the opposite shore, hung a rainbow! And more wonderful still, right down there at its foot, just beyond Wanda Island, gleaming and beckoning, hung the pot of gold!

The Lad's heart gave a great leap. There it was, just as Peter Fiddle had described it! Why should he not go after it, right now, and bring it home to his father? He went tearing down the hill, Collie leaping at his side. Peter Fiddle had said that the reason more folks did not get the rainbow gold and be rich and happy ever after, was because they did not go after it right at once. For the pot of gold did not hang there very long, and might slip into the water with a big splash any minute, and be gone forever. So the Lad ran in frantic haste, and the dog bounded ahead and nearly rushed into the water, in his mistaken idea that he was to catch the gulls that came swooping so near and were off and away before he could snap. The old green boat belonging to his father was lying on its side half in the water; the Lad tugged at it madly without moving it an inch. He glanced about him and spied with delight Peter Fiddle's canoe lying upside down under the birches. Peter worked for his father, when not away fishing or playing the fiddle or spinning yarns; and when he went away by land his canoe was always at home, and sometimes the Lad had paddled out in it alone. He pulled and tugged at it manfully, and after great exertions that left him panting, he managed to launch it. Collie, just returned from a mad charge after the gulls, leaped in beside him. The boy seized the paddle and pushed off hurriedly. He seated himself on the thwart and looked out to get his direction. Yes, there it still hung, away out there at the end of the island, gleaming bigger and brighter than ever. The canoe was large, and the paddle clumsy, but he was filled with such a passion to get that gold that he made wonderful progress. He leaned far over the side, splashing the heavy paddle into the water, until, what with his unsteady stroke, his dangerous position on the thwart, and Collie's mad attempts to catch the passing gulls, the wonder was that the rainbow expedition did not come to grief as soon as it was launched. But the Lad had been brought up on the water, and had already had many a lesson in canoeing from Peter Fiddle, and, after the first excitement, he realised his mistake. So he slid to his knees and ordered Collie to the bottom of the canoe in front of him. Then, gazing intently ahead, he paddled, in a zigzag course, out towards the wonderful golden haze.

Somehow it had a strange, elusive way of seeming to be in one place and then appearing in another. The canoeist grew hot, and panting with his efforts. The perspiration stood out on his round, rosy face, and the curls on his forehead became wet. He flung off his hat, and redoubled his efforts. He bent his head to his task, as his paddle bumped and splashed its way into the water. When he looked up again, he found, to his dismay, that Wanda Island lay right between him and his shining goal.

This little garden of spruce and cedar had heretofore marked the bounds of his excursions. His father had often allowed him to go out alone in the boat or Peter's canoe, but only when he was watching from the fields or the shore, and then he was permitted to go only up and down in the shelter of the island. But he did not hesitate to go farther, fearing the magic gold might vanish while he lingered. He revived his flagging energies by picturing his father's joy and wonder when he returned and came staggering up the path with the money. And then his father could wear his Sunday blacks every day in the week, and never work any more, but just ride to and from town all day long in a new buggy, a painted one like Doctor Blair's. And they would hire Peter Fiddle and young Peter every day in the year to hoe the fields, and they would give away everything they grew. And the people in Willow Lane would all be good and happy ever after. Oh, there would never be any trouble of any kind when he came home with that pot of gold!

He paddled manfully round the island, pushing through the reeds of the little bay and just skimming the rocks at the western extremity. But his arms ached so, that he had to pause a moment to rest. As he did so, he heard a loud whistle, and the steamer, *Inverness*, came round a far point and turned her long bowsprit towards the town, lying off to the left in a shining mist. The boy grabbed his paddle again and redoubled his efforts. Peter had gone down to Barbay that morning on the *Inverness*, and was in all likelihood on board, and although the young adventurer intended to reward Peter liberally for the use of his canoe, he felt it would be safer for him to have it on shore before its owner returned. He took one tremendous splashing stroke, and, as he did so, he felt a strange, sharp pain in his right arm. It made him cry out so loud that Collie turned quickly to him with a whine of grieved sympathy. The boy dropped the paddle across his knee and caught his arm. Gradually the pain left and he took up the paddle again. But somehow the glory of the expedition seemed to have vanished. He wanted Aunt Kirsty when that pain came into his arm, more than he wanted all the gold of all the rainbows he had ever seen. He bent to his paddle with much less vim, and slowly and painfully round the island he came, and out into the open lake. And then,—where, oh, where, was the pot of gold? And where was the rainbow? He seemed to have come out with one stroke of his paddle from a world that was all colour and light to one that was cold, grey and dreary. He looked about him amazed. All the beauty of the lake had faded into mist. The rainbow was gone! A chill, damp breeze fanned his hot face, coming down from the north, where the clouds had grown black. The little mariner sat on his heels in the bottom of his canoe and looked about him in dismay. Surely the pot of gold had not gone. Perhaps

it was hidden away behind those dark clouds and would come gleaming out again right in front of him. But though he sat and waited, the world only grew greyer and darker. Collie stood up again and barked defiance at a heron that sailed away overhead, but his little master sharply bade him lie down. The pain in his arm gave another twinge, and slowly and sadly he took up his paddle and turned his canoe homeward.

As he did so he felt a light breeze lift him. It came from the north, where those dark clouds had swallowed up his rainbow. A strange, weird thing was happening up there in those clouds, and the boy paused to watch. Down the shimmering floor of the lake, sweeping slowly towards him, came a great army. Stealthy, hurrying shapes, with bent, grey-cowled heads, and trailing garments, rank on rank they stole forward, mystery and fear in their every movement. Many a time, on an autumn evening, the boy had watched the fog start away up the lake and come stealing down, until the islands and the town and the forest were covered as with a blanket. But he had never seen anything so awesome as this. The strange shapes into which the light gusts of wind had driven the mist made them look like an army of ghosts driven out of the haunts of night. They were bringing night in their train, too. For as they swept silently onward, everything in earth and lake and sky was blotted out. One by one the islands vanished; the far-off eastern shore was wiped away as if by some magic hand. The tower of the little Indian church stood out for a moment above the flood and then sank engulfed; and the next moment the great host had swept over the little sailor and he was walled in and cut off from land and water, alone in a cloudy sea with neither shore nor sky nor surface. The boy turned swiftly towards his home, and when he saw that it, too, was gone, he uttered a cry of terror. "Daddy, oh, Daddy!" he wailed. Collie came close and licked his face and whined, then looked about him and growled disapprovingly at the weird thing that surrounded them. The boy put his arms tight around the dog's neck and hugged him. "Oh, Collie!" he cried, "we're lost, and I don't know where home is and where Daddy is." It was not the loss of gold that troubled him now. He stared about him in the greyness, striving to make out some object. The fog was so thick that he could see only the length of the canoe, but a big, darker mass of shadow in a world of shadows, told him where Wanda Island lay, and grasping his paddle, he started in what he believed to be the direction of home. He paddled until he was out of breath, rested a moment, then went at it again with all his might. The pain in his arm returned, but he dared not stop. And as he worked madly in his efforts to reach home, the gentle wind was slowly but surely carrying him out to the open lake.

Every few minutes the thought of his father would overcome him and he would drop his paddle and, sinking down beside Collie, would sob aloud. Then he would rise again bravely and go at his task, but each time with feebler efforts. The pain in his arm, which kept returning at intervals, was sometimes so bad he had to stop and nurse it. He was wet to the skin now, and Collie's hair was dripping. Whenever he rested, he spent the interval calling loudly for his father, while Collie helped him by barking, but though he listened till his ears were strained, only the soft lap, lap, of the waves against the canoe answered. As night came on the thick pall grew heavier and blacker, and at last he could not see even the length of the canoe.

The sore arm became almost helpless at last, and he could paddle only a few strokes at long intervals. He slipped down beside Collie, hugging him close, and sobbed out on his sympathetic head his sorrow for the rash venture. He even confessed that he wished he had left his friend at home. "Aunt Kirsty and Daddy will be that lonesome, Collie," he wailed, "without either of us. But I couldn't do without you at all, Collie!" he added. And Collie licked his face again, and whined his appreciation of the compliment. They seemed to drift on and on for hours and hours. The boy's imagination, fed by the wild tales from Peter Fiddle—tales of shipwrecks at sea, and dead men's bones cast upon haunted islands—, became a prey to every terror. There were ghosts and goblins out here, and water fairies, that might spirit you away to a land whence there was no returning; and there were those other creatures so terrible that Peter had not dared even to describe them, called "Bawkins." He shivered at the thought of them, and clung to the dog, too frightened to cry out. He had been trying to pray in broken snatches, but now, in his extremity of fear, he felt he must put up a petition of more force. He scrambled to his knees and tried to get Collie to join him by bowing his head. But Collie seemed of an altogether irreverent nature, and only licked his little master's face all the more. So the Lad gave it up, and, putting his hands together behind the dog's head, whispered: "Oh, dear Lord, we're lost, me and Collie. Please send Father and Peter Fiddle with the boat to find us. Please don't let us get drowned or don't let the Bawkins get us. And please don't mind Collie not prayin' right, 'cause he's only a dog, but he's lost, too; and please bring us safe home. And oh, Dear Jesus, I'm sorry I came out alone to hunt for the pot o' gold, but I didn't know it was so far, and please won't you make Daddy and Peter Fiddle hurry, 'cause I'm so cold and so hungry and my arm's awful sore and I can't paddle no more. And please, if Peter Fiddle ain't home yet and has gone off and got drunk, won't you please send young Peter with Daddy. And please send them in a hurry." He paused, but felt he must end in a more becoming way. It was his first extemporaneous prayer of any length, and he scarcely knew how to close. Then he remembered how Dr. Leslie, in the church where he went every Sabbath with his father, was wont to bring his morning petition to a close, so he added, "Only please, *please*, don't let Peter Fiddle get drunk to-night—world wifout end. Amen."

There were some more tears after that, but not such bitter ones; for Angus McRae's son could not but believe that God heard prayer, and he waited for his answer in a child's faith. "He's sure to send Daddy soon, Collie," he said comfortingly; and then, quaveringly, after a few moments of intense listening and waiting, "It wouldn't be like God not to, now, would it, Collie?"

There was another period of calling into the darkness and of silent waiting, broken only by the wash of the little ripples against the canoe. And then there was a spasmodic attempt at paddling, followed by another season of prayer and a piteous plea for haste. Then the Lad bethought himself of his father's hymn, the one he sang so often when he was in danger; though the son often was puzzled as to what sort of danger it was that assailed his father. There was no doubt about his own danger just now, so the child lifted a tremulous voice and tried to sing:—

*"My soul, be on thy guard,  
Ten thousand foes arise,  
The hosts of sin are pressing hard,  
To draw thee from the skies!"*

But the singing was a failure. He was hoarse with crying and shouting, and fearful that the "Bawkins" would hear, and come and carry his canoe through the air, away, away, to the land of mists and dead people. And the poor sounds he managed to make seemed to strike Collie as the most grievous thing of all this disastrous voyage, for he put back his head and howled dismally. So the Lad gave it up and took to praying again, sure that though Father and Aunt Kirsty and Peter Fiddle were far away, that God was near. He was wet and chilled through now, and was so exhausted that at last his head sank on Collie's neck. He was lying there, half asleep, when the dog suddenly gave a leap and a loud bark that roused him in terror. He clutched Collie and held him down with stern threats. But his terror changed to wild hope. Away behind him was a dim yellow light making a long tunnel through the fog. And down it a far, far voice was calling, "Roderick! Roderick, my son, where are you?"

"Daddy! Oh, Daddy!" the boy answered with a hoarse scream. "Here I am in the canoe with Collie!" There was no need to announce the dog's presence, for Collie was barking madly and leaping so his little master could hardly hold him. But he was not nearly so careful as he would have been a few minutes before, for it did not seem to matter even if the canoe did upset, when his father was near!

The next moment a boat swept alongside with a blinding glare of light, and such a crowd of people!—Peter Fiddle at the oars, and young Peter at the rudder, and Lawyer Ed! And there seemed to be lights suddenly appearing on every side, and the whole lake was ringing with shouts! But the boy heard only his father's voice, saw only his outstretched arms. He fairly tumbled out of the canoe into them, and there sobbed out all his terror and exhaustion, while Collie leaped and barked and tried his best to upset the boat.

"Oh, Daddy," the little boy sobbed, with the wisdom born of adversity, "I didn't get the gold—but—I—don't want anything ever—if I've just got *you!*"

## CHAPTER II

### "THE GREATEST OF THE THREE"

Angus McRae had been an intimate friend of Edward Brians, ever since the days when the latter was a little boy and the former a young man living on adjoining farms. Angus had, early in life, taken upon himself the rôle of Good Samaritan, watching with especial care over this young neighbour, and many a time the headlong lad might have fallen among thieves had a friend's example and assistance not been always at hand.

And now Lawyer Ed's mind was busy with schemes for returning a little of that life-long assistance, as he set out for his office the morning after young Roderick's rainbow expedition. "I've got to get some money, and I will get it," he announced to the blooming syringa bush at his door, "if I have to take it by assault and battery."

He had come home very late the night before, but he was astir none the less early for that. For though he was usually the last man in the town to go to bed, and often worked nearly all night, he always appeared in good time the next morning, looking as fresh and well-groomed as though he had just come home from a month's vacation.

Like all the other professional folk of Algonquin, Lawyer Ed lived up on the hill to the north of the town. His widowed sister kept his house and wondered, with all the rest of the town, why on earth Ed didn't get married. Her brother answered all enquiries on the subject according to the age and sex of the enquirer; and had nearly every young lady in the place convinced that he was secretly pining for her. He came swinging down his steps this bright June morning humming a tune in his deep melodious voice. He picked a rosebud and fastened it in his button-hole and strode down the street, stopping at the gate of every one of his friends—and who wasn't his friend?—to hail the owner and summon him to his work. He ran into "Rosemount," the big brick



house where the handsome Miss Armstrongs lived, to make arrangements for a Choral Society practice, he drummed up a half-dozen recreant Sunday-school teachers within the space of two blocks, and he roared across the street to Doctor Archie Blair to be sure not to forget that the bit bills for the Scotchmen's picnic maun be gotten oot that week. For Lawyer Ed belonged to every organisation of the town in church or state, except the Ladies' Aid—and he often attended even its meetings when he wanted something, and always got what he wanted, too. So, although he had started early, it was rather late when at last he reached the home of his special friend, J. P. Thornton, and hammered loudly on the gate. So late, in fact, that J. P. had gone. He went on alone very much disappointed. When any one in Algonquin was in trouble he went to Lawyer Ed, but when Lawyer Ed was in trouble himself, he went to his old chum, J. P. Thornton. And he was in trouble this morning, none the less deep that it was another's. He looked down the street towards his office, knowing a big day's work awaited him there.

"You can just wait," he remarked to the trim red brick building. "I've got to get Angus off my mind;" and he whirled in at the Manse gate and went up the steps in two springs.

The Manse was a broad-bosomed, wide-armed house, opposite the church, looking as if it wanted to embrace every one who approached its big doorway. Its appearance was not deceiving. No matter at what hour one went inside its gate, one found at least half the congregation there, the sad ones sitting in the doctor's study, the happy ones spread out over the lawn. As Lawyer Ed remarked, the Lord had purposely given the Leslies no children, so that they might adopt the congregation and bring it up in the way it should go.

Mrs. Leslie was at the other end of the garden, cutting roses; she waved a spray at him, heavy with dew, and he took off his hat and made her a profound bow. He would have shouted a greeting to any other woman in Algonquin, but he never roared at Mrs. Leslie. There was something in the stately old-world atmosphere surrounding the lady of the Manse, that made even Lawyer Ed treat her with deference.

The door was open and he went straight in and along the hall towards the minister's study. As he did so a door at the opposite end of the hall opened suddenly and admitted a round black face and an ample red-aproned figure.

"Good mawnin', Missy Viney!" drawled the visitor. "I done wanta see de ministah, bress de Lawd!"

Viney's white eyeballs and shining teeth flashed him a welcome.

"Laws-a-me, Lawya Ed! Is you-all gwine get marrit?"

Viney was a fat, jolly young woman, whom Mrs. Leslie had lured from the little negro settlement in the township of Oro, a few miles from Algonquin. She felt the responsibility of her position fully, and showed a marked interest in the affairs of every one of the congregation. But of all living things she loved Lawyer Ed most. His presence never failed to put her in the highest spirits, and his bachelorhood was her perennial joke.

"Yassum," he answered, hanging his head shyly, "if you done hab me, Viney. I bin wantin' you for years, but I bin too bashful."

Viney screamed and flapped her red apron at him. "You go 'long, you triflin' lawya-man!" she cried, going off into a gale of giggles; but just then the study door opened, the minister's head came out, and the cook's vanished.

"Ah, I thought it was you, Edward, by the joyful noise," said Dr. Leslie, smiling. He took his visitor by the hand and drew him in.

"Come away, come. I was hoping you would drop in this morning."

They sat down, the minister in his arm-chair before his desk. Lawyer Ed balanced on the arm of another, protesting that he must not stay. It was his way when he dropped in at the Manse and remained a couple of hours or so, to bustle about, hat and stick in hand, changing from one chair to another, to assure himself that he was just going. Dr. Leslie understood, and did not urge him to sit down.

Though not an old man, the minister had seen Lawyer Ed grow up from the position of a scholar in his Sabbath School, and quite the most riotous and mischievous one there, to the superintendency of it, and to a seat in the session; and he had a special fatherly feeling towards his youngest elder. Dr. Leslie was the only man in Algonquin, too, folk said, whom Lawyer Ed feared, and to whose opinion he deferred without argument.

"And have you heard from Angus this morning,—or the wee lad?"

"Archie came home about an hour ago. The little rascal's all right, except for a sore arm. I guess he nearly put it out of joint, paddling. Angus was better, too; but I'm bothered about Angus, Dr. Leslie. That's what I came in for."

He moved about the room, fingering ornaments, picking up books and laying them down

again.

"Archie Blair says the anxiety was so bad for his heart, that he's got to stop work right away, for all summer anyway, and perhaps longer. And his place is all planted, and yesterday, at my advice, he put a mortgage on it."

He stopped before his minister and looked at him with appealing, troubled eyes. "I feel as if I shouldn't have let him, but I didn't anticipate this."

Dr. Leslie sat drumming his fingers on the table, his face very grave.

"We can't see Angus McRae want, Edward. We're all indebted to him for something—every one of the session, and the minister most of all."

"The session!" Lawyer Ed jumped off the arm of the sofa where he had just perched. "There's an idea. If you laid it before them, they'd do something; and J. P. and I'll push it and Archie Blair will help."

The minister shook his head. "The session is a big body, Edward, and—" he smiled,—"it has wives and daughters. This must not be talked about. If we help Angus, we mustn't kill him at the same time by hurting his Highland pride."

Lawyer Ed whacked a sofa cushion impatiently with his cane.

"There it is, of course! Hang Scotchmen, anyway! You can't treat them like human beings. That abominable thing they call their pride—always clogs your wheels whichever way you go."

"Don't revile the tree from which you sprung, Edward," said the Scotchman, smiling.

"Thank the Lord, the limb I grew on had a few good green Irish shamrocks mixed with the thistles. If Angus had been as fortunate we'd have him out of distress to-morrow."

"Angus McRae will be the least distressed of us all. I thought of Paul last night when I saw him, 'troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed but not in despair.' We must think of some way in which we can help him quietly—so quietly he may not know it himself. Who has the mortgage?"

"Jock McPherson, of course, who else?"

The minister's face brightened. "Jock McPherson! Well, well, that is fortunate, Edward. Jock's heart is big enough to put the whole church inside provided you find the right key."

"Yes, but it's a ticklish job fitting it when you do find it. Some small item in the business will strike him the wrong way and he will get slow and stiff and arise to the occasion with, 'I feel, Mister Moterator, that it is my juty to object.'"

His imitation of Mr. McPherson's deliberate manner, when in his sadly frequent rôle of objector in the session, could not but bring a smile to the minister's face.

"I have no fear of your not being able to overcome his objections, should any arise. Now, sit down just a few minutes, and let us see what is to be done."

The two talked far into the morning, and laid their plans well. Mr. McPherson was to be persuaded to remove the mortgage, and instead, as Angus was in need of the money, to rent the farm. Lawyer Ed was to see that it was let for a goodly sum that would keep its owner beyond anxiety, and whatever Jock stood to lose by the bargain was to be returned to him in whole or part by a little circle of friends. It was a great scheme, worthy of a legal mind, Dr. Leslie said, and Lawyer Ed went away well pleased with it.

He went two blocks out of his way, so that he could reach J. P. Thornton's office without passing his own, and spent another hour laying the scheme before him.

So, when he finally got to his place of business, irate clients were buzzing about it like angry bees. But little cared Lawyer Ed. He laughed and joked them all into good humour and dropping into the chair at his desk, he drove through a mass of business in an incredibly short time, telephoning, writing notes, hailing passers-by on the street, and attending to his correspondence, all while he was holding personal interviews,—doing half-a-dozen things at once and doing them as though they were holiday sport.

The rush of the day's business kept him from speaking to Jock McPherson until late in the evening, when, at the end of the session meeting, he found himself walking away from the church with Mr. McPherson on one side and his friend, J. P. Thornton, on the other. He felt just a little anxious over the outcome of the interview. He had no fear that Jock would be unwilling to help Angus McRae, but he had every fear, and with good reason, that he would want to do it in his own way. If Jock were in a good humour, he would fall in with the plan, if not, he would do exactly as he pleased and spoil everything.

And, as ill-luck would have it, when they were coming down the steps under the checkered

light from the arc-lamp shining through the leaves, Lawyer Ed made the most unfortunate remark he could have chosen.

He was carrying home a Book of Praise under his arm and was humming a psalm in a rich undertone. And the unwise thing he said was: "I'd like to sing the *Amen* at the end of the psalms, as well as the hymns. What do you say, J. P.?"

"An excellent idea, Ed," said Mr. Thornton heartily. "The psalms would sound much more finished—" He stopped suddenly, realising that they had made a fatal mistake. Mr. McPherson had overheard, and uttered a disgusted snort. For he hated the new appendage to the hymns, and looked upon its importation into the church service much as if the use of incense had been introduced. He was a little man, with a shrewd eye and a slow tongue—but a tongue that could give a deadly thrust when he got ready to use it.

"The Aye-men," he said with great deliberation, and when he was most deliberate, he was most to be feared. "Inteet, and you'll be putting that tail to the end o' the psawlms too." He tapped Lawyer Ed on the arm with his spectacle case. "Jist be waiting a bit till you get permission, young man. You and John Thornton are not jist awl the session."

Mr. McPherson was the senior elder, the champion of all things orthodox, and he was inclined to regard Lawyer Ed and J. P. as irresponsible boys.

"Hoot toot, mon," shouted Lawyer Ed jovially. "What's wrong wi' a bit Aye-men foreby? It's in the Scriptur', 'Let all the people say Amen'—and here you would forbid them!"

Jock was a Highlander, and Lawyer Ed's habit of addressing him in a Lowland dialect was particularly irritating as the mischievous young elder well knew.

"Yus. You know the Scriptures ferry well indeed, but if you would be reading a little farther you will find that it will be saying, 'How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen?'"

This tickled Lawyer Ed and he laughed loudly. "Tut, tut, Jock! It's a small thing to make a fuss about. You and Jimmie McTavish and a lot more of you fellows are dead set against all sorts of things that you accept in the end. Why, man, I can remember the day when you two objected to the little organ in the old church, and you got used to it and liked it."

"I liked it? Indeed, and when would that be?"

"Well, you stopped kicking, anyway, until we got the big one, which was clean unreasonable, whatefer."

"No, sir." Mr. McPherson's spectacle case tapped the younger man's arm peremptorily. "I was perfectly logical then, as I am now. I objected when the wee squeaking thing was brought in, and I objected more when you and the weemin filled up the end o' the church with a machine to turn us all deaf. As I say, I was perfectly logical, the greater the organ, the greater the objection."

J. P. hid a smile in the darkness and hastened to interpose, for when Jock once got riding his objection hobby he would agree with nothing under the sun.

"There's an article in the *British Weekly* on the evolution of the church service—" he began; but his impetuous friend was bent on setting Jock right in his own way, and hastened to his destruction.

"And on the same principle, the more Amen, the more objection, eh?" he cried laughingly. "But now, look here, if you'll only consider this thing with a fair mind you can't help seeing that, as J. P. says, a hymn or a psalm sounds unfinished without an Amen at the end. Take any hymn for example—"

They had reached the McPherson gate by this time, where an arc light, high up in its leafy perch, was sputtering away shedding a white glow over the side-walk and embroidering it with an exquisite pattern worked out in leaf-shadows. Lawyer Ed paused under the lamp and opened the Book of Praise.

"I defy you to find one that isn't improved and finished and rounded off by an Amen at the end." He selected a hymn at random, and sang a stanza in his rich voice that poured itself out gloriously on the evening air.

*"Faith and hope and love we see  
Joining hands in unity,  
But the greatest of the three  
And the best is love. Amen."*

The beautiful words, sung in Lawyer Ed's melodious voice, were enough to move even Jock's orthodox heart. He was silent for a moment, then the noise of a window being raised above their heads interrupted.

Mrs. McPherson was accustomed to after-session meetings, and noisy ones too, at her gate. But when they were accompanied by singing and shouting, at the disgraceful hour of eleven P. M. she felt it time to interfere. So she opened the window noisily and enquired if there was a fire anywhere.

There was. It blazed up in Lawyer Ed's heart, so enraged was he at this very inopportune interruption, coming just when he thought he saw Jock wavering. He shouted at her to go in and mind her own business.

No one in Algonquin heeded what Lawyer Ed said when he was angry, but Mr. McPherson was in no mood to put up with even him. He became deadly slow and deliberate. He turned his back on the turbulent young man, and addressed the open window:

"No, it will not be a fire, Mary," he called. "It's just an Eerishman got loose, and we'll haf to let him talk off his noise. He reminds me," he continued, still addressing the window, though it had closed with a bang, "he reminds me of that Chersey cow, my Cousin McNabb had in Islay. She wasn't much for giffin' milk, and it was vurry thin at that, but she was a great musician. You could hear her bawlin' across two concessions."

J. P. Thornton was a jolly young Englishman, very prone to mirth, and this was too much for him. He turned traitor and laughed aloud. Lawyer Ed glared angrily at him; but Jock's face underwent a peculiar twist. He had had no notion of saying anything witty, he had been too angry for that; but he had learned by experience that he never knew when he was going to make a joke. He was often surprised in the midst of a speech by a burst of laughter from his friends, Lawyer Ed generally first. Then he would pause and survey the path he had travelled, to find that all unconsciously he had stumbled upon a humorous vein. So when J. P. laughed he stopped to consider. The enemy flew to defend his "bawlin'" and there was no time to see if he really had made a joke. But he was suspicious, and the suspicion put him into a good humour. A sudden inspiration seized him; he caught the book Lawyer Ed was brandishing and, opening it, laid it carefully on the top of the gate-post.

"It's more feenished and rounded off, with the 'Aye-men, is it?" he enquired with deep sarcasm. "But you would not be feenishing it after all. If ye're bound and deturmined to put a tail on the end o' the hime, why don't ye sing awl that's in the book. You would be leaving out a bit."

He took his glasses from their case, fitted them on, and held the book carefully towards the electric light.

"If ye want it feenished, this is the way it should be sung."

Now, not even Mrs. Jock, who believed her husband the cleverest man in Algonquin, could say he was a singer, and it was with a terribly discordant wail that he lifted his voice in the melancholy words of the hymn before him:

*"There are no pardons in the toomb,  
And brief is mercy's day.  
A-m-e-n-T-h-o-m-a-s-H-a-s-t-i-n-g-s—"*

The awful "Amen," drawled out to an indefinite length, with the author's name, on the end, was irresistible. J. P. broke into a shout of laughter. For a moment, Lawyer Ed's eyes gleamed in the darkness, but only for a moment, then he too gave way, and when Lawyer Ed laughed, a really good hearty laugh, it was a musical performance that did not stop until every one within hearing was joining in the chorus.

And then Jock began to realise that he had been witty again. He paused and bethought himself of what he had done, and he too saw how funny it was. He did not laugh right out at first. Jock's mirth, like his wit, was too deliberate for that. He began by uttering a low subterranean sort of chuckle, which finally worked to the surface in a rhythmic shaking of his whole sturdy little body. By this time J. P. was leaning against a tree wiping his eyes, and everybody up and down the street was smiling and saying, "That's Lawyer Ed's laugh. What's he up to now, I wonder?" Jock checked his mirth quickly; it was not seemly to rejoice too heartily over one's own humour, but before the joy of it had left, by an adroit turn, J. P. had sent the conversation into its proper channel.

"A good joke on you, Ed!" he cried. "I must tell that to Angus McRae. Angus doesn't love the 'Amen' too much either, Jock."

"Angus is in great trouble," exclaimed Lawyer Ed, wiping his eyes and trying to look serious. "Did you hear about it, Jock?"

Jock had not heard, so the story of little Roderick's rainbow expedition and his father's consequent heart affection was quickly told. And when the splendid plan to help was adroitly unfolded, Jock was quick to respond. It was the psychological moment; Thomas Hastings had driven away all dourness and Angus McRae's case was safe.

The two friends walked homeward under the shadows of the maples, the night-air sweet with the perfume of many gardens. They were both very happy, so happy indeed, that, as usual, they walked miles before they finally settled for the night.

First, J. P. recollected again that fine article in the *British Weekly*, and strolled up the hill with his friend while he gave a synopsis of it. When they reached the gate, Lawyer Ed remembered that he should have told J. P. about old man Cassidy's will and the trouble Mike was in over it, and so returned to J. P.'s gate. The Cassidy will was finished and J. P. in the midst of another fascinating article on Imperial Federation, when they reached there, and Lawyer Ed made him come up the hill again so that he might hear it. It was their usual manner of going home after a session meeting.

"And may I ask," said J. P., when their personal part in the financing of Angus's affairs had been finally settled, and they stood at his gate for the third and last time, "may I ask, if it is not too curious on my part, if you intend to appropriate church funds for your contribution, or just rob the bank?" For J. P. knew well that Lawyer Ed's extravagant generosity always kept him on the edge of poverty.

"Well, neither. Jock mightn't think the first was orthodox. I don't believe he'd object so strongly to the second, but it mightn't be successful. I think,—yes, I'm afraid, I must draw on the Jerusalem Fund again."

"Of course, I knew you would. Let me see; that's seven times we've stayed home from the Holy Land, isn't it?—the perfect number. A person naturally thinks of sevens in connection with Bible places."

Lawyer Ed laughed light-heartedly. Ever since the days when these two had tried to sit together in Sunday-school, and been separated by Doctor Leslie, they had planned that some time, they would make a visit together to Bible lands. Many a time since the trip had almost materialised, but Lawyer Ed's money would fade away, or J. P.'s business interfere or some other contingency arise to make them stay at home. The final plans had been laid for the coming autumn, and now it was again to be postponed.

But J. P. was not deceived into supposing Lawyer Ed was merely drawing upon a holiday fund.

"I believe you have somewhere about five dollars laid away for that trip, haven't you?"

"Four-and-a-half, to be correct," said his friend brazenly.

"I thought so. And where's the rest going to spring from?" He was accustomed to keeping a stern eye on Ed's affairs or the extravagant young man would have given away his house and office and all their contents long ago.

Lawyer Ed did not answer for a moment. He looked like a naughty schoolboy caught in a foolish prank. The confession came out at last.

"I'd almost decided not to go in with Will Graham's scheme. I don't see how I can leave here just now, that's a fact."

"Ed!" cried his friend, half-admiring, half-impatient. "Why, man, it's the chance of your life. Bill's making money so fast he can't keep count of it. You'll be a rich man and a famous one too in a few years if you go in with him, do you realise that?"

"Oh, there are lots more chances."

"Yes, and they'll slip away like this one. I,—can't I help a little more?"

"No. And don't talk any more about it. It's just this way, Jock, I've no choice in the matter. If it was my last cent, and I knew I'd go to jail for it to-morrow, I'd help Angus. I just couldn't see him want. It's all right. I'll stay on in Algonquin a few more years, and we'll see what'll happen. Good-night."

"Yes, and good-night to all your ambitions and the Holy Land too."

"Not a bit of it! Ambition be hanged. I don't care about that. But we're going to the Holy Land yet, if we put it off until seventy times seven. We'll wait till young Roderick's grown up and pays us back, and then we'll go. Indeed, I'm going to refuse positively to go to the New Jerusalem until I've seen the old!"

He swung away up the street as bright and gay as though he had just accepted a fine new position instead of refusing one. He was so happy that he softly sang the hymn that had opened the good work of the evening. It was very appropriate:

*"Faith and hope and love we see  
Joining hands in unity,  
But the greatest of the three  
And the best is love."*

He was passing near Jock's house so he roared out the "Amen" in the hope that the elder had not yet gone to sleep. And Mrs. Leslie's Viney declared the next morning that she done heah dat Lawyah Ed and J. P. Thornton gwine home straight ahead all de bressed night, and she did 'clar dey was still goin' when she put on de oatmeal mush for de breakfus!

## CHAPTER III

### LIFE'S YOUNG MARINER

On a hazy August afternoon the little steamer *Inverness*,—Captain, James McTavish—came sailing across Lake Simcoe with her long white bowsprit pointing towards the cedar-fringed gates opening into Lake Algonquin. She was a trim little craft, painted all blue and white like the water she sailed. Captain McTavish, who was also her owner, had named her after his birthplace. He loved the little steamer, and pronounced her name with a tender lingering on the last syllable, and a softening of the consonants, that no mere Sassenach tongue could possibly imitate.

There were not many passengers to-day; the majority were mothers with their children, the latter chasing each other about the deck or clambering into all forbidden and dangerous places, the former sitting in the shade, darning or sewing or embroidering according to their station in life. A few young ladies sat in groups, and chatted and ate candies, or read and ate candies while one young man, in white flannels and a straw hat waited upon them with stools and wraps and drinks of water, and magazines, fetching and carrying in a most abject manner. There was always a sad dearth of young men on the *Inverness*, except on a public holiday; but as the girls said, they could always depend on Alf. He was Algonquin's one young gentleman of leisure, and beside having a great deal of money to spend on ice-cream and bon-bons, had also an unlimited amount of good nature to spend with it.

He seemed to be the only one on board who had much to do. Down below, old Sandy McTavish, the engineer and the captain's brother, was seated on a nail keg smoking and spinning yarns to a couple of young Indians. His assistant, Peter McDuff the younger, who did such work as had to be done to make the *Inverness* move, was lounging against the engine-room door, listening.

Up in the little pilot house in the bow, the captain was also at leisure. He was perched upon a stool watching, with deep interest and admiration, the young man who was guiding the wheel.

"Ah, ha! ye haven't forgotten, I see!" he exclaimed proudly, as the strong young hands gave the vessel a wide sweep around a little reedy island. "I was wondering if you would be remembering the Sand Bar, indeed."

"I've taken the *Inverness* on too many Sunday-school picnics to forget your lessons, Captain. There's the Pine Point shoal next, and after you round that, you head her for the Cedars on the tip of Loon Island, and then straight as the crow flies for the Gates and then Home! Hurrah!"

He shook his straight broad shoulders with a boyish gesture of impatience, as though he would like to jump overboard and swim home.

"Eh, well, well! It's your father will be the happy man, and to think you are coming home to stay, too." The captain rubbed his hands along his knees, joyfully.

The young man smiled, but did not answer. His eager, dark eyes were turned upon the scene ahead, marking every dearly familiar point. Already he could see, through an opening in the forest, the soft gleam of Lake Algonquin. There was Rock Bass Island where he and his father and Peter Fiddle used to fish, and the slash in the middle of it whither he rowed Aunt Kirsty every August to help harvest the blackberries. A soft golden haze hung over the water, reminding him of that illusive gleam he had followed, one evening so long ago, when he set out to find the treasure at the foot of the rainbow.

He smiled at the recollection of his childish fancy. For he was a man now, with a university degree, and far removed from any such folly. Nevertheless there was something in the quick movement of his strong brown hands, and the look of impulsive daring in his bright eyes, that hinted that he might be just the lad to launch his canoe on life's waters and paddle away in haste towards the lure of a rainbow gleam.

When Captain McTavish had answered a stream of questions regarding all and sundry in Algonquin, he left him in charge of the wheel and went rambling over the deck on a hospitable excursion, for he regarded every one on board as his especial guest. He had aged much in the eighteen years since he had joined the search party for young Roderick McRae. The *Inverness*

had been overhauled and painted and made smart many times in the years that had elapsed, but her captain had undergone no such renewing process. But he was still famous from one end of the lakes to the other for the hospitality of the *Inverness*. For though his eye had grown dim, it was as kindly as ever, and if his step was not so brisk as in former years, his heart was as swift to help as it had ever been.

He pulled the Algonquin *Chronicle* out of his pocket, smoothed it out carefully, and moving with his wide swaying stride across the deck to where a young girl was seated alone, he offered it to her as "the finest weekly paper in Canada, whatefer, and a good sound Liberal into the bargain."

The girl smiled her thanks, and, taking the paper, glanced over it with an indifferent eye. She was the only stranger on board, and had sat apart ever since she had left Barbay. Of course every one in Algonquin knew that a new teacher had been appointed for the East Ward. And as school opened the next day, the passengers on the *Inverness* had rightly guessed that this must be she. She had been the subject of much discussion amongst the young ladies, for she was very pretty, and her blue cloth suit was cut after the newest city fashion, and the one young man seemed in danger of presenting himself, and begging to be allowed to fetch and carry for her also. Several of the older women, with motherly hearts, had spoken to her, but she had continued to sit aloof, discouraging all advances. It was not because she was of an unsociable nature, but the struggle to keep back the tears of homesickness took all her attention. There was no place on the little steamer where one might be alone, so she had sat all afternoon, with her back to every one gazing over the water. Nevertheless many a pretty sight had passed her unnoticed. Sometimes the *Inverness* had slipped so close to the shore that the overhanging birches bent down and touched her fair hair with a welcoming caress, and again she ran away out over the tumbling blue waves, where the gulls soared and dipped with a flash of white wings. But the strange girl's mind was far away. She was fairly aching with longing for home—the home that was no more. And she was longing too for that other home—the beautiful dream home which was to have been hers, but which was now only a dream. Again and again the tears had gathered, but she had forced them back, striving bravely to give her attention to the passing beauties of land and lake.

Captain Jimmie's kindly eye had noted the stranger as soon as she had come on board, and he had set himself to make the drooping little figure and the big sad eyes look less forlorn.

He had helped her on board, as she came down from the railway station, her trunk wheeled behind her, and had shaken hands and welcomed her warmly to Algonquin, saying she would be sure to like the school and he knew the Miss Armstrongs would be very kind indeed.

She had looked up in surprise, not yet knowing the wisdom of Algonquin folk concerning the doings of their neighbours.

"Och, indeed I will be knowing all about you," the captain said, smiling broadly. "You will be Miss Murray, the young leddy that's to teach. Lawyer Ed—that's Mr. Brians, you know—would be telling me. And you will be boarding at the Miss Armstrongs'. They told me I was to be bringing you up," he added, with an air of proprietorship, that made her feel a little less lonely. "And indeed," he added, with the gallant air, which was truly his own, "it is a fortunate pair of ladies the Miss Armstrongs will be, whatefer."

Many times during the afternoon he had stopped beside her with a kindly word. And once he sat by her side and pointed out places of interest, while some uncertain pilot at the wheel sent the *Inverness* unheeded on a happy zigzag course. Yon was Hughie McArthur's farm they were passing now. Hughie had done well. He was own nephew to the captain, as his eldest sister had married on Old Archie's Hughie. Old Archie had been the first settler in these parts, and him and his wife had it hard in the early days. His father had told him many a time that Old Archie's wife had walked into where Algonquin now stood—they called it the Gates in those days,—twenty mile away if it was one, with a sack of wheat on her back to be ground at the mill, and back again with the flour, while the eldest girl, then only fifteen, looked after the family and the stock. That was when Archie was away at the front the time of the rebellion. Yes, it was hard times for the women folk in those days. Times was changed now to be sure. Take Hughie, now, his sister's son. That was his new silo over yonder, that she could see. Hughie had a gasoline engine and it did everything, Hughie said, but get the hired man up in the morning, and he was going to have it fixed so it would do that. The captain paused, pleased to see that Hughie's wit was appreciated. They had the engine fixed to run the churn and the washer, and Hughie's woman hadn't anything to do but sit and play the organ or drive herself to town. And just behind yon strip of timber was where his father had settled first when they came out from *Inverness*. All that land she could see now, up to the topmost hill was the township of Oro, and a great place for Highlanders it was in the early days, though he feared it had sadly deteriorated. Folks said you could scarcely hear the Gaelic at all now.

The captain looked at her now, trying to fix her attention on the little newspaper and he suddenly bethought himself of something else he could do for her and bustled away down the little steep stair. Whenever the *Inverness* sighted the entrance to Lake Algonquin of a summer afternoon, Captain Jimmie went immediately below and brewed tea for the whole passenger list. He had always done it, and this mid-voyage refreshment had come to be one of the institutions of the trip, as indispensable as the coal to run the engine. He appeared shortly with a huge teapot in one hand and a jug of hot water in the other, calling hospitably, "Come away, and have a cup-a-

tea, whatefer. Come away."

Mr. Alfred Wilbur, the young man in the white flannels ran to help him. The fact that he was given to rendering his services at all functions in Algonquin where tea was poured, had brought upon him an ignominious nickname. His title in full as engraved on his visiting cards, was Alfred Tennyson Wilbur, and a rude young man of the town had taken liberties with the initials, and declared they stood for Afternoon Tea Willie.

It must be confessed that, while Afternoon Tea Willie was the most obliging young man in all Canada, he was not entirely disinterested in his desire to assist the captain to-day. He saw in that big tea-pot a chance to serve the handsome young lady with the city hat and the smart suit. He secured a second teapot and was heading her way in bustling haste when the captain, all unconscious, slipped in ahead of him, and the unkind young ladies whom poor Alf had slaved for all afternoon, laughed aloud over his discomfiture.

As soon as the cup-a-tea had been served the captain went back to the pilot house. They had entered the Channel, a toy river, low-banked and reed-fringed, that led by many a pretty curve into Lake Algonquin. Two bridges spanned the Channel at its narrowest part, which was named the Gates, and Captain Jimmie allowed no one but himself, however expert, to take the *Inverness* through here.

Relieved from his duties, Roderick strolled away. Like the strange girl, he, too, had attracted much attention, especially among the young ladies, and at their bidding Alfred Tennyson had several times attempted to lure him into joining their circle. But Roderick was shy and constrained in the presence of young ladies. He had had no time to cultivate their acquaintance in his school and college days, and had admired them only from afar in a diffident way; so when Alfred approached him and begged him once more to come and be introduced he slipped away downstairs to talk with his old boyhood friend, the fireman.

"Hello, Pete, we'll soon be in Lake Algonquin!" he cried joyfully, as he leaned over the low door and watched the young man heaving coal into the *Inverness's* hot jaws.

Young Peter slammed the furnace door and came up to get a breath of cool air. He put a black hand on Roderick's arm, "Say, I'm awful glad you're home, Rod," he said, smiling broadly.

"And I'm just as awful glad to be home, Pete, old boy. I say, do you do all the work while the Ancient Mariner there smokes and orders you round?"

The crew of the *Inverness*, consisting of an engineer and a fireman, was, whether in port or on the high seas, in a state of frank mutiny. The Ancient Mariner, as every one called Sandy McTavish, was the captain's elder brother, and he made no secret of the fact that he intended to run the *Inverness* as he pleased, if he ran her to Davy Jones. Accordingly he smoked and spun yarns all day long in true nautical fashion, and young Peter McDuff did the work.

But Peter looked at Roderick puzzled, and grinned good naturedly. He did not understand that there was anything unjust in the arrangement old Sandy had made of the work. Poor Peter had been born to injustice. His father was a drunkard and the boy had started life dull of brain and heavy of foot. His slow mind had not questioned why the burdens of life should have been so unevenly divided.

But Roderick McRae felt something of the tragedy of Peter's handicapped life. He put his hands affectionately on the young man's heavy shoulders. They had been brought up side by side on the shores of Lake Algonquin, but how different their lots had been!

"Ah, it's all a hard job for you, Pete, old boy!" he cried.

Peter's dull eyes lit up.

"Oh, no, it ain't! It will be a great job, Rod. Your father would be getting it for me. Your father's been awful good to us, Rod. Say, tell me about the city. Is it an awful big place?"

Roderick studied the young man's heavy face, as he talked. Here was one of his father's neighbours of the Jericho Road. For twenty years or more, he could remember his father struggling to bring Peter Fiddle to a life of sobriety and righteousness and to bring up his son in the same. And what had he to show for it all? Old Peter was a worse drunkard than he had been twenty years ago, and poor Young Peter was the hopeless result of that drinking. Roderick's kindly heart sympathised with his father's efforts, but his head pronounced judgment upon them. He confessed he could see very little use in bothering with the sort of folk that were forever stumbling on the Jericho Roads of life.

Peter went back reluctantly to the engine-room, and Roderick ran up on deck to see the *Inverness* enter the Gates. He had not been home for a whole long year, and he was eager as a child to get the first glimpse of Algonquin and the little cove where the old farm lay.

As he was passing round to the wheel-house, he noticed again the young stranger who had come on board at Barbay. He had been puzzled then by the recollection of having seen her before, and he walked slowly, looking at her and trying to recall where and when it could have



been. As he approached, she turned in his direction, her eyes following the sweep of a gull's white wing, and he recognised her. He remembered her quite distinctly, for he could count on his fingers the number of young ladies he had met in his busy college days, and Miss Murray was not one that could be easily forgotten. He stood at the railing and recalled the scene. It had been at the home of Mrs. Carruthers, Billy Parker's aunt. That kind lady made it a blessed habit to invite hungry students to her home on Sunday nights. And the suppers she gave! Billy had taken Roderick that evening, and there were a half-dozen more. And this Miss Murray had dropped in after church with Richard Wells. Wells was a medical in his last year, and Roderick had met him often before. Miss Murray had worn some sort of soft white dress, he remembered, and a big white hat, and she had been very bright and gay then, not sad and pensive as she seemed now.

He did not realise that he was staring intently at her, while he recalled all this, until she turned and looked at him. She gave a start of surprised recognition mingled with something of dismay. For an instant she looked irresolute; then she bowed, and Roderick came quickly forward. She gave him her hand, a vague look in her deep grey-blue eyes. She remembered him; Roderick's appearance was too striking to be easily forgotten; but it was plain she could not recall where.

"It was a Sunday evening, last fall—at Mrs. Carruthers'," he stammered. She smiled reassuringly.

"Oh, yes, it was stupid of me to forget. You were in law, weren't you?"

"Yes, in my last year. I'm just on my way home now, to practise in Algonquin. Are you going to visit friends here?"

"No, I'm going to teach." She did not seem to want to speak of herself. "Algonquin is a very pretty place, I hear."

"It's is the most lovely place in Canada," said Roderick enthusiastically. He was not as shy in her presence as he usually was with young women. He could not help seeing, that for some unaccountable reason, she was embarrassed at meeting him, and her distress made him forget himself. He tried to put her at her ease in a flurried way.

"How people scatter! The half-dozen that were at Mrs. Carruthers' that night are all over the world. Billy Parker's gone to Victoria to practise law, and Withers is in Germany, and Wells,—he graduated with honours, didn't he? Where did Dick Wells go?"

Roderick had no sooner uttered the name than he saw he had made a mistake. The girl's face flushed; a slow colour creeping up over neck and brow and dyeing her cheeks crimson. But she looked up at him with brave steady eyes as she answered quietly:

"I am not sure where he is. I heard he had gone to Montreal." And when she had said it she became as white as the dainty lawn blouse she wore.

Roderick made a blundering attempt to apologise for something, he scarcely knew what, and only made matters worse.

"I—I beg your pardon," he said, "I shouldn't have asked—but I thought—we understood—at least I mean Billy said," he floundered about hopelessly, and she came to his aid.

"That Dr. Wells and I were engaged?" She was looking at him directly now, sitting erect with a sparkle in her eye.

"Yes," he whispered.

"It was true—then. But it is not now."

"I am so sorry I spoke—" faltered Roderick.

"You need not be," she broke in. "It was quite natural—only—" she looked at him keenly for a moment as though taking his measure. "May I ask a favour of you, Mr. McRae?"

"Oh, yes, I should be so glad," he broke out, anxious to make amends.

"Then if you would be so good as to make no mention of—of this. I shall be living in Algonquin now for some time probably."

She stopped falteringly. She could not confess to this strange young man that she had come away to this little town where no one knew her just to escape the curiosity and pity of acquaintances and friends, and that she was dismayed at meeting one on its very threshold who knew her secret. She was relieved to find him more anxious to keep it than she herself.

He assured her that he would not even think of it again, and then he stumbled upon a remark about the fishing in Lake Algonquin, and the duck-shooting, two things, he recollected afterwards, in which she could not possibly be interested, and finally he made his escape. He leaned over the bow, watching the channel opening out its green arms to the *Inverness*, and tried to recall all that he had heard about Dick Wells. Billy Parker, who knew all college gossip, had

told him much to which he had scarcely listened. But he remembered something concerning a broken engagement. Wells was to have been married in June to the pretty Miss Murray, Billy had said. She had her trousseau all ready, and then Dick had gone on a trip to the Old Country alone. No one knew the reason, though Billy had declared it was the same old reason—"Another girl."

Roderick McRae's chivalry had never before been called into action where young women were concerned. Now he felt something new and strong rising within him. He was suddenly filled with the old spirit which sent a knight out upon the highway to do doughty deeds for the honour of a lady, or to right her wrongs. His warm heart was filled with conflicting emotions, rage at himself for having brought the hurt look into those soft blue eyes, rage at Wells for being the primary cause of it, and underneath all a strange, quite unreasonable, feeling of exhilaration over the fact that he and the girl with the golden hair and the sad eyes had a secret between them.

They were in the Gates now, passing slowly through the railroad bridge. The softly tinted glassy water of Lake Algonquin, with the green islands mirrored in its clear depths was opening out to view. The channel too, was clear and still like crystal, save where the swell from the bows of the *Inverness* rolled away to the low shore and set the bulrushes nodding a stately welcome. The echoes of the little engine clattered away into the deep woods, startlingly clear. An ugly brown bittern, with a harsh exclamation of surprise at the intrusion into his quiet domain, shot across the bow and disappeared into the swamp. A great heron sailed majestically down the channel ahead of the boat, his broad blue wings gleaming in the sunlight. It was all so still and beautiful that a sense of peace and content awoke in Roderick's heart.

The *Inverness* was making her way slowly towards the second bridge. The channel was very narrow and shallow here and the captain's little whistle that communicated with the powers below was squeaking frantically. Just as the bridge began to turn, a man in a mud-splashed buggy dashed up, a moment too late to cross, and stood there holding his horse, which went up indignantly on its heels every time the *Inverness* snorted. His fair face was darkened with anger, his blue eyes were blazing. He leaned over the dashboard and shook his fist at the little wheel-house which held the captain.

"Get along there you, Jimmie McTavish!" He roared in a voice that was rich and musical even in its anger. "Can't you see I'm in a hurry, you thundering old mud-turtle? I could sail a ship across the Atlantic while you are dawdling here. Get out of my road, I tell you! I've got to be in town before that five train goes out, and here's that old dromedary of yours stuck in the mud.—How? What? Oh, what in the name of—?" He choked, spluttering with wrath, for with a final squeak the *Inverness* stopped altogether.

The captain darted out of the wheel-house to call down an indignant enquiry of the Ancient Mariner as to the cause of the delay. Much sailing in all weathers in the keen air of the northern lakes had ruined Captain McTavish's voice, which, at best, had never been intended for any part but a high soprano. And now it was almost inaudible with anger. It ill became the dignity of a sea captain to be thus publicly berated in the presence of his passengers.

"If ye'd whisht ye're noise," he screamed, "I'd be movin' queek enough. Come away, Sandy! Come away, Peter, man!"

For all his sailing, the captain was a true landsman, and when under pressure his thin nautical veneer slipped off him, and his language was not of the sea.

"Come away, Sandy," he called artlessly, "and gee her a bit. *Gee!*"

"I can have the law on you for obstructing the King's Highway!" thundered the man on the bridge.

"The water will be jist as much the King's Highway as the road!" retorted the captain indignantly. "If you would be leafing other folks' business alone, and attending to your own, you would be knowing the law better. It is a rule of the sea that effery vessel—"

"The sea!" the enemy burst in with an overwhelming roar. "The sea! A vessel! A miserable fish pond, and an old tub like that, the sea and a vessel! Get away with you! Get out of my sight!"

He waved a hand as if he would wipe the *Inverness* from off the face of the waters.

During the altercation, Roderick McRae had been leaning far over the railing, striving to attract the attention of the madman in the buggy. But his voice was drowned in the laughter and cheers of the passengers who were enjoying the battle immensely. At this moment he put his fingers to his teeth and uttered a long, sharp whistle. "Ho! Lawyer Ed!" he shouted. The man on the bridge started. His angry face, with the quickness of lightning, broke into radiance.

"Roderick!—Rod! Are you there? Hooray!" He caught off his hat and waved it in the air. "Come on home with me! I dare you to jump it!"

The *Inverness* was at a perilous distance from the bridge, but the young man did not hesitate a moment before the half-laughing challenge. He leaped lightly upon the railing, poised a moment and, with a mighty spring, landed upon the bridge. The onlookers gave a gasp and then a relieved and admiring cheer.

Another spring put Roderick into the buggy, where his friend hammered him on the back, and they laughed like a couple of school-boys. And that was what they really were, for though Roderick McRae was nearly twenty-four, he was feeling like a boy in his home-coming joy, and as for Lawyer Ed he hadn't grown an hour older, either in feeling or appearance, but lived perennially somewhere near the joyous age of eighteen.

Meanwhile the real captain of the *Inverness* had begun to bestir himself. The Ancient Mariner cared not the smallest lump of coal that went into the furnace door for the command of his brother-captain; but he had a wholesome fear of Lawyer Ed, and doubted the wisdom of rousing him again. So he gave an order to Peter, and with a great deal of boiling and churning of the water the *Inverness* slowly began to move. The bridge, worked by a dozen youngsters who always roosted there, began to turn into place. With a defiant yell of her whistle, the *Inverness* sailed out of the Gates, and the buggy dashed across the bridge and away down the dusty road. But though Lawyer Ed was bubbling over with good humour now, he turned, Marmion like, to shake his gauntlet of defiance at the retreating vessel, and to call out insulting remarks to which the captain responded with spirit.

"Well inteed," said the Ancient Mariner, as he settled once more to his pipe, "it will be a great peety that Lawyer Ed has neither the Gawlic nor the profanity, for when he will be getting into a rage he will jist be no use at all, at all!"

All unconscious of his verbal deficiencies, and uproariously happy, Lawyer Ed sped away down the Pine Road towards town. He had been looking forward for a long time to this day, when Roderick should come back to Algonquin to be his partner.

"It's great to see you again, Lad," he exclaimed joyfully, surveying the young man's fine figure and frank face with pride. "I was getting nervous for fear you were going West after all."

"I can't pretend I didn't want to go," he confessed, "though I didn't like the idea of another fellow in my place in your office. You see I'm a good bit of a dog in the manger, and when Father's last letter arrived I felt I must come."

"That's right, my boy. Your place is with your father just now. And you're looking as fine and fit as if you'd been away camping."

"I'm ready for anything. You and J. P. Thornton can start for the Holy Land to-morrow."

"I prophesied once, about a score or so years ago; that I'd go when you could manage my practice, and I'll be hanged if I don't think it's coming true. J. P.'s talking about it, anyway. Does your arm ever bother you now?"

Roderick doubled up his right fist, stretched out his arm, and slowly drew it up, showing his splendid muscle. "Sometimes, but not anything to bother about, only a twinge once in a while when it's damp. I can still paddle my good canoe, and if you'd like a boxing bout—" he turned and squared up to his friend, receiving a lightning-like blow that nearly knocked him into the road. And the two went off into an uproarious sparring match like a couple of youngsters.

Lawyer Ed had never yet married though he still made love to every woman, girl and baby in Algonquin. But Roderick McRae had grown to be like a son to him, filling every desire of his big warm heart, and now the proud day had come when his boy was to be his partner. He and Angus had talked for hours of the wonderful things that were to be accomplished in the town and church and on the Jericho Road when the Lad came home, and had laid great plans at which the Lad himself only guessed. They had feared for a time that all were to be ruined when, after his graduation, he had been kept in the city in the employ of a firm, and had received from them an offer of a position in the West. But he had refused, to their joy, and was to settle in Algonquin and relieve Lawyer Ed of his altogether too burdensome practice.

As they spun along, for the five-o'clock train was still to be caught, the elder man poured out all the news of the town; J. P.'s last great speech, Algonquin's lacrosse victories, the latest battle in the session,—for Jock McPherson was still a valiant and stubborn objector,—the last tea-meeting at McClintock's Corners, where the Highland Quartette, of whom Lawyer Ed was leader, had sung, the errand over to Indian Head, where he had just been, etc., etc. It was not half told when they came to the point in the road opposite Roderick's home, and the Lad leaped down, promising to run up to the office that night when he went into town for his trunk.

He lost no time on the rest of the journey. It was a dash through the dim woods where the white Indian Pipes raised their tiny, waxen tapers, and the squirrels skirled indignantly at him from the tree-tops; a leap across the stream where the water-lilies made a fairy bridge of green and gold, a scramble through the underbrush, and he was at the edge of the little pasture-field, and saw the old home buried in orchard trees, and Aunt Kirsty's garden a blaze of sun-flowers and asters. And there at the gate, gazing eagerly down the lane in quite the wrong direction, stood his father!

The years had told heavily on the Good Samaritan, and Roderick's loving eye could detect changes even in the last year of his absence. Old Angus's tall figure was stooped and thin, and he carried a staff, but he still held up his head as though facing the skies, and his eyes were as young and as kindly as ever. The Lad gave a boyish shout and came bounding towards him. The

old man dropped his stick and held out both his hands. He said not a word, but his eyes spoke very eloquently all his pride and joy and love. He put his two hands on his son's head and uttered a low prayer of thanksgiving.

Aunt Kirsty came bustling out as fast as her accumulating flesh would permit. Poor Aunt Kirsty had grown to a great bulk these later days and could not hurry, but indeed had she used up all the energy on moving forward that she mistakenly put into swaying violently from side to side, she would have made tremendous speed. Roderick ran to meet her, and she took him into her ample bosom and kissed him and patted him on the back and poured out a dozen Gaelic synonyms for darling, and then shoved him away, and burying her face in her apron, began to cry because he was such a man and not her baby any more!

The father's heart was too full for words; but after supper when they sat out on the porch in the soft misty twilight, he found many things to ask, and many questions to answer. Roderick sat on the step facing the lake, filled with a great content. The sunset gleam of the water through the darkening trees, the soft plaintive call of the phoebes from the woods, the sleepy drone of Bossy's bell from the pasture, and the scents of the garden made up the atmosphere of home.

"Well, well, and you have come to stay," his father said for the tenth time, rubbing his hands along his knee in ecstasy, "to stay."

"It'll be great to know that I don't have to run away at the end of the summer, won't it?"

"It'll jist be the answer to all my prayers, Lad. I feel I am no use in the world at all, now that you have made me give up all work." He gave his son a glance of loving reproach. For while Roderick had managed to get his education, he had managed too, to do wonderful things with the little farm, so that his father had long ago given up the work he had resumed after his year's illness. And Aunt Kirsty had a servant-girl in the kitchen now, and devoted all her time to her garden and her Bible.

"You've jist made your father a useless old body. But I jist can't be minding, for I see how you can be taking up all my work. There's the Jericho Road waiting for you, Lad."

The young man smiled indulgently. "And what do you think I can do there, Father? Unless Mike Cassidy goes to law as usual."

"Ah, but is jist you that can. Edward will be finding great opportunities for helping folk and he has not the time now. There's that poor bit English body, Perkins, and his family, and there's Mike as you say, though Father Tracy would be straightening him up something fine. But you must jist see that he doesn't go to law any more. And then there's poor Peter Fiddle."

The younger man laughed. "Peter is the kind of poor we have with us always, Dad. Is he behaving any better?"

"Och, indeed I sometime think I see a decided improvement," exclaimed Old Angus, with the optimism that had refused to give Peter Fiddle up through years of drunkenness and failure. "We must jist keep hold of him, and the good Lord will save Peter yet, never fear."

Roderick was silent. Personally he had no faith in Peter McDuff the elder. He had gone on through the years fiddling and singing and telling stories, his drunken sprees showing a constantly diminishing interval between. Every one in Algonquin, except Angus McRae, had given him up long ago, but his old friend still held on to him with a faith which was really the only thing that kept old Peter from complete ruin. But Roderick had the impatience of youth with failure, and though he had inherited his father's warm heart, he was not at all happy at the thought of becoming guardian of all the poor unfortunates of the town who in one way or the other had fallen among thieves.

"Eh yes, yes, there is a great ministry for you here, Lad. I have sometimes been sorry that you did not feel called to the preaching, but I was jist thinking the last time Edward and I talked the work over, that I was glad now you hadn't. For you will be able to help the poor folk that need you jist as well here, though I would be far from putting anything above the preaching of the Gospel. But there will be many ways of preaching the Gospel, Lad, and the lawyer has a great chance. It will be by jist being neighbour to the folk in want. Folk go more often to the lawyer or the doctor, Archie Blair says, when they are in trouble, than they do to their minister, and I am afraid it's true. And a great many of the folk that will come to you to get you to do their business, Lad, will be folk in trouble, many who have fallen among thieves on the Jericho Road, and you will be pouring in the oil and the wine that the dear Lord has given you, and you will be doing it all in His name." He sighed happily. "Oh, yes, indeed and indeed, it will be a great ministry, Roderick, my son."

Roderick was silent. His heart was touched. He resolved he would do the best he could for any friend of his father who was in trouble. But his eye was set on far prospects of great achievement, where Algonquin and the Jericho Road had no place.

Their talk was interrupted by Aunt Kirsty, who came to the door to demand of him what he had done with his clothes. Had he come home, the rascal, with nothing but what was on his back after the six pairs of new socks she had sent him only last spring?

Roderick sprang up. "My trunk! It will be on the wharf. I yelled at Peter to put it off there, just as we were driving away, and said I'd paddle over and get it. I forgot all about it, Aunt Kirsty." The father and son looked at each other and smiled. It was easy to forget when they were together.

"I'll go after it right now. It's mostly old books and soiled clothes, Auntie, but there's one nice thing in it. You ought to see the peach of a shawl I got you." He ran in for his cap, and she followed him to the door, scolding him for his foolish extravagance, but not deceiving any one into thinking that she was not highly pleased.

Angus stood long at the water's edge watching the Lad's canoe slip away out on the mirror of the lake. The shore was growing dark, but the water still reflected the rose of the sunset. The soft dip of his paddle disturbed its stillness and a long golden track marked the road he was taking out into the light. Away ahead of him, beyond the network of islands, shone the glory of the departing day. The Lad was paddling straight for the Gleam. The father's mind went back to that evening of stormy radiance, when the little fellow had paddled away to find the rainbow gold.

His eyes followed the straight, alert young figure yearningly. He was praying that in the voyage of life before him, his boy might never be led away by false lights. He recalled the words of the poem Archie Blair had recited the evening before at a young folks' meeting in the town.

*"Not of the sunlight  
Not of the moonlight  
Not of the starlight,  
Oh young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions  
Launch your vessel  
And crowd your canvas  
And e'er it vanish  
Over the margin  
After it; follow it;  
Follow the gleam!"*

It held the burden of his prayer for the Lad; that, ever unswerving, he might follow the true Gleam until he found it, shining on the forehead of the blameless King.

## CHAPTER IV

### SIDE LIGHTS

Roderick was not thinking of that Gleam upon which his father's mind was set, as he glided silently out upon the golden mirror of Lake Algonquin. The still wonder of the glowing lake and sky and the mystery of the darkening shore and islands carried his thoughts somehow to a new wonder and dream; the light that had shone in the girl's brave eyes, the colour that had flooded her face at his awkward words. They were beautiful eyes but sad, and there were tints in her hair like the gold on the water. Roderick had known scarcely any young women. His life had been too busy for that—when he was away, books had claimed all his attention, when he was home, the farm. But in the background of his consciousness, shadowy and unformed, but none the less present, dwelt a vague picture of his ideal woman; the woman that was to be his one day. She was really the picture of his mother, as painted by his father's hand, and as memory furnished a light here or a detail there. Roderick had not had time to think of his ideal; his heart was a boy's heart still—untried and unspoiled, but this evening her shadowy form seemed to have become more definite, and it wore golden brown hair and had sad blue-grey eyes.

He swept silently around the end of Wanda Island, and his dreams were suddenly interrupted by a startling sight; for directly in front of him, just between the little bay and the lake beyond, bobbed an upturned canoe and two heads!

To the youthful native of Algonquin an upset into the lake was not a serious matter; and to the young lady and gentleman swimming about their capsized craft, the affair, up to a few moments previous, had been rather a good joke. How it had happened that two such expert canoeists as Leslie Graham and Fred Hamilton could fall out of anything that sailed the water, was a question those who knew them could not have solved. They had been over to Mondamin Island to gather golden-rod and asters for a party the young lady was to give the next evening. They had been paddling merrily homeward, the space between them piled with their purple and golden treasure, and as they paddled they talked, or rather the young lady did, for where Miss Leslie Graham was, no one else had much chance to say anything.

"There's the *Inverness* at the dock," she said, when they came within view of the town. "Aunt Elinor's boarder must have come on it, the girl that's going to teach in Miss Hasting's room."

"I thought your aunt said you weren't to call her a boarder."

The girl put her paddle across the canoe and leaned back with a burst of laughter. She was handsome at any time, but particularly so when she laughed, showing a row of perfect teeth and a merry gleam in her black eyes.

"Poor old Auntie! Isn't she a joke? She's scared the family escutcheon of the Armstrongs will be sullied forever with the blot of a boarder on it. Auntie Bell is nearly as bad too. My! I hope they won't expect us to trot her around in our set."

"Why?" asked young Mr. Hamilton. He was always interested in new girls.

"Too many girls in it already. You know that, Fred Hamilton."

"Well, I say, I believe you're right, Les," he ventured, but with some hesitation. He was a rather nice young fellow, with the inborn idea that, theoretically, there couldn't be too many girls, but there was no denying the fact that Algonquin seemed to have more than her fair share. Only, Leslie was always so startlingly truthful, it was sometimes rather disconcerting to hear one's half-formed thoughts spoken out incisively as was her way.

"There does seem to be an awful swarm of them," he admitted reluctantly, "especially since the Harrisons and the Wests came to town. I danced twenty-five times without drawing breath at Polly's last spree, and never twice with the same girl. Where did she pick 'em all up, anyway?"

That was the last remark they could remember having made. And the girl was wont to explain that the thing which happened next was a just judgment upon the young man for uttering such sentiments, and a fearful warning for his future. But the most elaborate explanations could never quite solve the mystery, for they never knew how it chanced that the next moment the canoe was over and they were in the water. To a girl of Algonquin, a canoe upset was inexcusable; to a boy, a disgrace never to be lived down. So when Leslie Graham and Fred Hamilton, who had been born and brought up on the shores of the lake and had learned to swim and walk simultaneously, found themselves in the water, the first expression in their eyes, after an instant's startled surprise, was one of indignation.

"What on earth did you do?" gasped the girl, and "What on earth did you do?" sputtered the boy.

And then, being the girl she was, Leslie Graham burst out laughing, "'What on the water,' would be more appropriate. Well, Fred Hamilton, I never thought you'd upset!"

"I didn't!" he cried indignantly. "You jumped, I saw you."

"Jumped! I never did! And even if I did, I don't see why you should have turned a somersault. I could dance the Highland Fling in a canoe and not upset. Oh dear! all my flowers are gone!" They put their hands on the upturned craft and floated easily.

"What are you going to do about it?" she asked. "We're a long way from shore, and the walking's damp."

He glanced about. They were a good distance from land, but the only danger he anticipated was the danger of a rescue. He would be disgraced forever if some fellow paddled out from home and picked them up. But a little island lay between them and the town, screening them from immediate exposure.

"Do? Why, just hop in again. Here, help me heave her over!"

Many a time in younger days, just for fun, they had pitched themselves out of their canoe, righted it again, "scooped" and "rocked" the water out, and scrambled back over bow and stern. But that was always when they wore bathing suits and there were no paddles and cushions floating about to be collected. But they were ready for even this difficult feat. They tumbled the canoe over to its proper position, and the young man, by balancing himself upon one end and swimming rapidly, sent the stern up into the air and "scooped" most of the water out. Then they rocked it violently from side to side, to empty the remainder, while the girl sang gaily "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," her dancing eyes no less bright than the water drops glistening on her black curly hair.

But the emptying process was longer than they had anticipated, and the evening air was growing cool. By the time the canoe was ready to enter, the girl had stopped singing.

"Hustle up, Freddie!" she called, giving a little shiver, as he shot away through the water for a paddle. "This water's getting wetter every minute." When he returned, he placed himself at the stern and the girl at the bow.

"Now," he cried, "when I say go, you climb like a cat, Les. Don't hurry, just crawl in easy. Ready? Go!"

She placed her hands on the gunwale and drew herself up, while her companion, with an eye on her progress, slowly crawled over the stern.

But the heavy drag of her soaked cloth skirt was too much for the girl's strength. She paused, failed at the critical moment, slipped to one side, and they were once more in the water, the canoe bottom up.

"Oh, hang!" exclaimed the young man. Then apologetically, "Never mind, heave her over, and we'll do it again."

But the girl's teeth had begun to chatter, and the work of emptying the canoe the second time was not such a joke. And the second attempt to get in and the third also proved a failure.

"What's the matter, anyhow?" grumbled the boy impatiently. "You've done that three times, Leslie!"

He was amazed and dismayed to see her lip quiver. "I can't do it, Fred. I'm all tired out. I—I believe I'm going to yell for help."

"Oh, Great Scott, Leslie!" groaned the young man. Then encouragingly, "You're all right. Cheer up! I'll get you into this thing in no time."

He set to work again briskly, but though the girl helped, it was without enthusiasm. She was going through an entirely new experience. In all her happy life, untouched by sorrow or privation of any kind, she had never felt the need of help. Fred and she had been chums since they were babies, and were going to be married some day, perhaps. Fred was a good, jolly fellow, he was well off, well-dressed, and quite the leader of all the young men of the town. But now, for the first time, her dauntless gay spirit was forsaking her, and a vision of how inadequate Fred might be in time of stress was coming dimly to her awakening woman's heart. She would almost rather have drowned than play the coward. But she wanted Fred to be afraid for her. She was more of a woman than she knew.

And then, just as a wave of fear was coming over her, Roderick McRae, in his canoe, came out around the point and paddled straight towards them.

She gave a cry of joyful relief. "A canoe! Oh, look, Fred! Somebody's coming this way from McRae's cove!"

The young man turned with some apprehension mingling with his joy. He would almost as soon be detected appropriating funds from the bank where he clerked, as be caught in this ignominious plight. There was just a slight sense of relief, however, for they had been a long time in the water. But he would not admit that.

"Pshaw!" he grumbled. "I wish they'd waited a minute longer."

"Well, I don't!" cried his companion tremulously.

The boy looked across the canoe at her. Never, in the twenty years he had known Leslie Graham intimately, had he before seen her daunted.

"What's up?" he demanded. "You're not losing your nerve, Leslie?"

"No, I'm not!" she snapped, trying desperately to hide an unexpected quaver in her voice. "But—"

"You're not chilled, are you?"

"No. Not much."

"Nor cramped?"

"No."

"Well, you're all right then. Goodness, you've been in the water hours longer than this, heaps of times. Cheer up, old girl, you're all right. What's the matter, anyhow?"

But she did not answer, for she hardly knew herself. She had no real fear of being drowned, that seemed impossible. But strange new feelings had begun to stir in the heart, that so far had been only the care-free heart of a girl, almost the heart of a daring boy. She did not realise that what she really wanted was that Fred should be solicitous about her. If he had shown the slightest anxiety over her she would have become recklessly daring. But young Fred would as soon have shown tender care for a frisky young porpoise in the water, as Leslie, even had it been his nature to care unduly for any one but Fred Hamilton.

The canoe was approaching swiftly, and the man in it was near enough to be recognised. "I say," cried Fred, "it's Rod McRae. I didn't know he was home. Ship ahoy, there!" he shouted gaily. "Hurrah, and give us a lift; it's too damp for the lady to walk home!"

Leslie Graham looked at the approaching canoeist. She and Fred Hamilton had both attended the same school, Sunday-school and church as Roderick McRae. But she could remember him but dimly as an awkward country boy, in her brief High School days, before she "finished" with a year

at a city boarding-school. Her life at school had been all fun and mischief, and rushing away from irksome lessons to more fun at home; his had been all serious hard work, and rushing away from the fascination of his lessons to harder work on the farm. Fred Hamilton had never worked at school, but he knew him better; the free-masonry of boyhood had made that possible.

"Why, what's happened?" cried Roderick as he swept alongside the wreck. "Fred Hamilton! Surely you're not upset?"

"Doesn't look like it, does it?" enquired the young man in the water rather sarcastically. "Here, give this thing a hoist, will you, Rod? I can't understand how such an idiotic thing happened? Miss Graham and I were paddling along as steadily as you are now, and—"

But Roderick was paying no attention to him. He was looking at the girl hanging to the upturned canoe, her eyes grieved and frightened. With a quick stroke he placed himself at her side.

"Why, you're all tired out," he cried. "You must get in here."

She looked up at him gratefully. She had never realised how welcome a sympathetic voice could sound. She answered, not the least like the dauntless Leslie, "I just can't! I can't climb over the bow. It's no use trying."

Roderick was at his best where any one was in distress. His knightly young heart prompted him to do the right thing.

"You don't need to," he said gently. "I can take you in over the side. Here, Fred, come round and help."

Fred came to her, and Roderick slipped down into the bottom of the canoe. He leaned heavily to the side opposite the girl, and extended his hand. "Now, you can do it quite easily," he said encouragingly. "Catch the thwart; there—no, sideways—that's it! Steady, Fred, don't hurry her. There you are. Now!" She had rolled in somehow over the side, and sat soaked and heavy, half-laughing and half-tearful, right at his feet.

"Oh," she said, "I'm making you all wet."

"Well, that's the neatest ever," cried Fred Hamilton in involuntary admiration.

The work of emptying the other canoe, with the help of such an expert, was an easy matter. When it was ready Roderick held it while Fred tumbled in. Stray cushions and paddles, and even an armful of soaking golden-rod were rescued, and then the two young men looked involuntarily at the girl.

"Hop over the fence, Leslie!" cried Fred. He was in high good humour now, for Rod McRae would never tell on a fellow, or chaff him in public about an upset.

But Leslie Graham shook her head. Something strange had happened, she had grown very quiet and grave.

"No," she said in a low voice, "I don't want any more adventures to-night. You'll take me home, won't you—Roderick?" She hesitated just a moment over the name, but remembering she had called him that at school, she ventured.

"It would give me the greatest pleasure," he cried cordially. His diffidence had all vanished, he was master of the situation.

He glanced half-enquiringly at the other young man, to see relief expressed quite frankly on his face.

"All right, Leslie! Thanks ever so, Rod. I can scoot over to the boathouse and get some dry togs, before I go home. And say—you won't say anything about this now, Les, will you?"

The girl's spirits were returning. "Why not?" she asked teasingly. "It wouldn't be fair to keep such a gallant rescue a secret."

"Oh, please don't!" cried Roderick in dismay.

"But it would make such a nice column for *The Chronicle*," said the girl demurely. "I really can't promise, Fred. Tom Allen would give me ten dollars for it, I am sure."

"If you dare!" cried the young man wrathfully. "I'd never hear the end of it. And your mother would never let you out on the water again, you know that, Les," he added threateningly.

"That's so," she admitted. "Well, I'll see, Freddy. Cheer up. If I do tell I promise to make you the hero of the adventure."

She waved her hand to him laughingly, as Roderick's long strokes sent them skimming away over the darkening water. When they were beyond earshot, she turned to her rescuer.



"It's all right to joke about it now," she said, her tone tremulous, "but it was beginning to be anything but a joke. I—I do believe— Why, I just know that you saved my life, Roderick McRae. And there is one person I am going to tell, I don't care who objects, and that's my father. And you'll hear from him; for he thinks, the poor mistaken man, that his little Leslie is the whole thing!"

And even though Roderick protested vigorously, he could not help feeling that it would be a great stroke of good fortune to have Algonquin's richest and most powerful man feel he was in his debt.

## CHAPTER V

### FOLLOWING THE GLEAM

When the *Inverness* bumped against the wharf at Algonquin, the strange girl, standing with her bag in her hand, waiting to step ashore, was surprised to see the late enemy of the boat drive down upon the dock. She was still more surprised to see that his face was beaming with good nature, as he hailed the captain. But then, she did not, as yet, know Lawyer Edward Brians.

"Hech, Jamie, lad!" he shouted. "Hoot! Awa wi ye, mon! Are ye no gaun tae get the fowk ashore the nicht?"

And then there was a long outpouring of strange indistinguishable sounds, which caused the Ancient Mariner to stop smoking and expectorate into Lake Algonquin with a disgusted "Huh!" For Lawyer Ed's Gaelic, though fluent, was a thing to make Highland ears shudder.

At the first appearance of the buggy, the captain had turned away in haughty silence, and went on with his task of seeing that his passengers were safely landed, without so much as a glance at his talkative friend.

But his frigid reception seemed only to tickle Lawyer Ed's sense of amusement. He leaned back in his seat, shut up his eyes, and laughed loudly. "Well, for downright pigheadedness and idiotic pertinacity, commend me to a Scotchman every time," he cried delightedly.

He threw the lines over the dashboard, and sprang out of the buggy, straight, alert and vigorous.

"It's no use, your trying that air of dignity on me, Jimmie McTavish!" he cried, striding over the gang-plank. "You nearly made me lose a train and a client into the bargain. And if I had lost him, that bit of business of yours wouldn't have been worth a puff of smoke, my braw John Hielanman!" He slapped the captain on the back, and a peculiar change came over the latter's face. There was no man in Algonquin who could remain angry at Lawyer Ed and be hammered by him on the back. He was voted the most exasperating person in the world, by people of all ages, and many a time an indignant individual would announce publicly that dire vengeance was about to be launched upon his wicked head. But when all Algonquin waited for the blow to fall, presently Lawyer Ed and the injured party would appear in the most jovial companionship, and once more his execution was postponed. It was as usual this time, the captain's wrath broke, shattered by that friendly blow upon the back. He still kept up a show of taciturnity, by a grumbling monologue concerning the undignified procedure of Irishmen in general, but the Irishman laughed so loud that Captain Jimmie was deceived into thinking he had said something very witty indeed, and laughed too, in spite of himself.

"I'm hunting a young lady," cried Lawyer Ed; "the new teacher. Miss Armstrong hailed me in passing and said I was to drive her up."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Brians," cried Alfred Wilbur, bustling up, "she's over there. I was going to show her the way up myself. It's too bad to trouble you, when you're so busy."

Lawyer Ed eyed him sternly.

"What! Do you think I'd allow you, in all your magnificence, to burst upon the vision of an innocent young girl, first go off, and have her fall in love with you, and get her heart broken? Not much, young man! We'll bring you on the stage gradually. A few ugly old married men like Jimmie here, or a withered old bachelor like myself, will do as preliminaries, and in about six months or so,—ah, well, well,—How do you do, my dear young lady? I'm chairman of the school board and I just drove down to tell you that you are very welcome to Algonquin."

He had pushed Afternoon Tea Willie quite out of sight and followed the captain to where the new teacher stood alone. He took her hand and shook it vigorously, his kind blue eyes beaming a welcome.

"I'm sure we are glad you've come!" he declared again, still more heartily, for he saw the homesickness in the big eyes. "You'll be as happy here as a bob-o-link in a field of clover. I needn't ask you if Captain McTavish took good care of you on the way up. He couldn't help it, with that Hieland heart of his, eh, Jimmie, lad? Whenever we want to make a good impression upon a stranger, Miss Murray, we always see that he comes to Algonquin by boat, for by the time the *Inverness* carries him for an afternoon, he's so prejudiced in our favour, he never gets over it. Eh, my braw John Hielmanman?"

He slapped the captain on the back again, and his forgiveness was complete.

"Now, Miss Murray, I shall show you up to your new home. Give me your bag. Never mind, Alfred Tennyson. You trot round there and tell young Peter to see about that trunk. I'll send a wagon for it. Good-bye, Jimmie. I'll see you at the meeting to-morrow night."

He helped Helen into his buggy and tucked the lap-rug around her, while Mr. Alfred Wilbur held his horse's head, though Lawyer Ed's horse, everyone knew, would stand for a week untethered. He jumped in and started off with a dash that nearly precipitated poor Afternoon Tea Willie into the lake, and away they rattled up the street to the utter discomfiture of the yellow dog and the yellow-and-white dog that were fighting in the middle of Main Street.

It was just the waiting time before the six-o'clock bells and whistles would break forth into a joyful clamour and send every one out on the street; so the place was very quiet. The pretty streets rose up from the lake, all cool and shady under their green canopy. It was like a little town dropped down into the woods, and in spite of her homesickness and the quiet loneliness of it all, the new-comer felt a sensation of pleasure.

Lawyer Ed gave her no chance to be lonely. He chatted away cheerfully, pointing out this and that place of interest. As they turned off Main Street up a wide avenue of swaying elms, he touched his horse into greater speed, and leaning far over to one side, called her attention to something across the street.

"Look there, now!" he cried impressively. "Isn't that a fine building? Just take a good look at this, Miss Murray. I don't think that in all Algonquin there is a place like it."

"I—I don't think I saw," said Helen, looking about her puzzled, for they had passed nothing but a row of very modest homes. She looked at him enquiringly, to find him leaning back, his eyes shut, and shaking with laughter.

"Never mind. Don't hurt your eyes, child. There's nothing there. But we've just passed my office, on the opposite side, and I saw from the corner of my eye about a half-dozen people waiting for me, all in a bad humour. It's just as well that I shouldn't get a better view of them. Tut, tut, don't apologise. I don't want to hurry back. Patience is a virtue every man should practise, and I believe in giving my clients a whack at it whenever I can. There's the Manse. I've heard Dr. Leslie speak of your father. We knew him by report if not personally. You'll find Doctor Leslie a fine pastor. He'll make you feel at home."

He glanced back towards his office and laughed again. "I'm trying to—well not exactly retire—but to ease off a bit on my business. And I'm going to have a partner, the son of an old friend. Why, he came part of the way on the boat with you."

"Oh, yes, the young man who took the terrible leap," she said. She did not want to confess she had met him before.

"That's nothing for Rod!" laughed Lawyer Ed. "He'd jump twice that distance. Ah, he's a great lad, is Roderick. He's going to make another such man as his father, and that's about the highest praise I can give him. Old Angus McRae—well you must meet him to know what he's like. I believe I think more of Angus McRae—outside my own immediate family—than of any living person, of course always excepting Madame. Bless me! You haven't met her yet, of course?"

"Why, no, I don't think so. Who is she?"

"Madame, my dear Miss Murray, is the handsomest and cleverest and most delightful young lady in all Canada or the United States. And she's your Principal, so you may think yourself fortunate. You two girls will have a grand time together."

Helen felt not a little relieved. A Principal who was a girl of about her own age, and who was evidently possessed of so many charms, would surely not be a formidable person to face on the dread to-morrow.

They had been steadily climbing the hills, under great low-branched maples and elms, and past scented gardens. And now they pulled up in front of a big square brick house set primly in a square lawn.

"Now, here's your boarding-house, my dear," said her guide, springing down and helping her to alight. "This is Grandma Armstrong's place. Remember that she's grandmother to nearly all Algonquin, and don't laugh at her peculiarities when there's any one round. You'll have to when you're alone, just as a safety-valve. You'll like the daughters. The elder one is a bit stiff, but

they're fine ladies." He had rung the bell by this time, and now it was opened by a tall handsome lady, slightly over middle age. The Misses Armstrong, because of an old acquaintance with her father, had stepped aside from the strict rules they had hitherto followed, and had taken the new school teacher as a boarder. Helen had often heard her father speak of them and knew, the moment the door opened, that this was Miss Armstrong, the eldest, who had been a belle in her father's day. She belonged so obviously to the house, that Helen had a complete sense of fitness at the sight of her. Like it she was tall, erect and fine looking, in a stately, stiff fashion.

Lawyer Ed presented his charge in his most affable manner, and Miss Armstrong smiled upon him graciously and upon her with some reserve. A boarder, after all, had to be kept at a distance, even though she were the daughter of an old friend.

"And how is Grandma, to-day?" enquired Lawyer Ed. "And Annabel? Isn't she home?"

"Mother has gone to bed this afternoon, Edward, but she is very well, I thank you. She will be disappointed when she hears you were here. Annabel has gone to the meeting of the Club. She will be back presently. I remained at home to welcome Miss Murray."

"Good-bye just now, then, my child," he said paternally, taking Helen's hand. He saw the homesick anguish returning to her big eyes, and he squeezed the hand until it hurt. "You'll have a great time in Algonquin, never fear. The air here will bring the roses back to your cheeks. Won't it, Elinor?"

Miss Armstrong agreed and bade him a gracious good-afternoon, moving out on the steps to see him to the gate. She then led the way up the long steep stair. The ceilings of Rosemount were very high, and every step echoed weirdly. They went along another hall upstairs flanked by two terrible pictures, one a scene of carnage on land—Wellington meeting Blücher on the field of Waterloo, the other an equally dreadful scene on water—Nelson's death on the *Victory*. Her bedroom was a big airy place, stiff and formal and in perfect order. The ceiling again impressed her with its vast distance from the floor. In the centre of this one, like the others, was a circular ornamental device of plaster; flowers and fruit and birds, and great bunches of hard white grapes that looked ready to fall heavily upon one's head. One end of the room was almost filled with a black marble mantel and over it hung a picture of Queen Victoria with her family, in the early days of her married life. There was a big low bed of heavy walnut, four high windows with stiff lace curtains, a circular marble-topped table and a tiny writing desk. Miss Armstrong assisted her to remove her hat, expressing the hope that she had had a pleasant trip from Barbay. Helen did not say that her heart had been aching all the way. She merely assured her that the trip had been very comfortable indeed, and that Captain McTavish had done everything to make it enjoyable.

"Jimmie McTavish is a kind creature," said Miss Armstrong. "Very ignorant, and too familiar entirely; but he is well-meaning, for all that. Now, I hope you will feel perfectly at home with us here, Miss Murray. Your father's daughter could not but be welcome at Rosemount. Indeed, I am afraid, had you not been a clergyman's daughter, I should never have consented to taking you. Having any one to board was so foreign to our minds. But Mr. Brians begged us to take you. You see he is chairman of the school board, and always sees to it that the young persons who teach have suitable homes."

"I am so sorry if my coming has inconvenienced you," stammered Helen, for Miss Armstrong's manner was very impressive.

"Oh, not at all, I assure you. When we heard who you were, we consented with pleasure. We have so much more room in this big house than we need. There is a very large family of us, Miss Murray, as you will discover, but now there are only my mother and my sister and I left at Rosemount." Her face grew sad. "But indeed I sometimes have thought recently," she added, growing stately again, "that my dear father would turn in his grave if he knew we were filling Rosemount with boarders."

She paused a moment, and the strange girl was wondering miserably if she should take her bag and move out to some other place, rather than risk disturbing her father's old friend in his last long sleep, when Miss Armstrong went on. "I hope you won't mind, Miss Murray, you are to be as one of the family, you know, and if you would be so good—" she hesitated and a slight flush rose in her face.

"Yes?" asked Helen wonderingly.

"If you would be so good as to not use the word *board*. I don't know why it should be so offensive to me," she added with a little laugh. "My ears are very sensitive, I suppose. But if you wouldn't mind saying, in the course of your conversation, that you are *staying* with the Rosemount Armstrongs, it would please me so much."

"Certainly, I shall remember," said Helen, much relieved.

"Thank you so much. And now if you would like to rest for a little after your journey you may. Supper will be served in the course of half-an-hour."

Helen felt a lump growing in her throat that made the thought of food choke her. But she dared not refuse. To remain alone in that big echoing room, was only to invite thoughts of home

and other far off and lost joys.

When Miss Armstrong had left her, and her trunk had come bumping up the back stairs and been deposited in the vast closet, she sat down on the black haircloth chair and looked hopelessly around the big dreary room. There rose before her a vision of her own room at the old home, the room that she and her sister Betty had shared. It had rose-bordered curtains and rose-festooned wall-paper and pink and white cushions. And it had a dear mother-face peeping in at the door to chide her gently if she sat too late writing those long letters to Dick.

The memory of it all came over her with such a rush that she felt she must throw herself upon that broad white bed and sob herself sick. But she sat still, holding her hands tightly clenched, and choking back the tears. She had work to do and she must be ready for that work. To give way in private meant inefficiency in public to-morrow. School-teaching was a new, untried field of labour for her, and if she went to bed and cried herself to sleep, as she wanted to do, she would have a headache for to-morrow and she would fail. And she must not fail, she told herself desperately; she dared not fail, for Mother was depending upon her success. And yet she had no idea how that success was to be gained. She knew only too well that she was not fitted for her task. She had never wanted to teach school, and had never dreamed she would need to. Her place had always been at home, and a big place she had filled as Mother's help and the minister's right hand. But her father had insisted upon her taking her teacher's certificate. "It's easy to carry about, Nellie," he was wont to say, "and may come useful some day."

So Helen had gone, with good-natured indulgence of Father's whim, and studied at a training school, with one eye on her books and the other watching for Dick to come up the street. And when she brought home her despised diploma, there was a diamond ring on the hand that placed it on her father's desk. That had been a year ago. And almost immediately after, her father had been taken from them. The old home went next. The boys and girls scattered to earn their own living. Mother had gone with Betty, who had married, and who lived away in the West. And then the last and best treasure had been taken, the diamond with its marvellous lights and colours, and with it had gone out all the light and colour of life.

She was just twenty-three, and she had been given the task of working out a new strange life unaided, with nothing ahead of her but work and loneliness.

At first she had given way to a numb despair, then necessity and the needs of the family aroused her. There was something for her to do, something that had to be done, and back of all the wreck of her life, dimmed by clouds of sorrow, there stood her father's God. In spite of all the despair and dismay she felt instinctively He must be somewhere, behind it all. She did not know as yet, that that assurance spelled hope. But she knew that there was work for her and there was Mother waiting until she should make her a home.

She sprang up, as her misery threatened to overwhelm her again, and began swiftly to change her dress and arrange her hair. She pulled back the stiff curtains of one of the tall windows and leaned out. A soft blue haze, the first glimpse of September's tender eyes, was settling on the distant hills. The sun was setting, and away up the street towards the west flamed a gold and crimson sky, and away down in the east flamed its gold and crimson reflection on the mirror of Lake Algonquin. From the garden below, the scent of the opening nicotine blossoms came up to her.

She was sitting there, trying to admire the beauty of it all, but her heart protesting against the feeling of utter loneliness it bred, when there came a sharp tap on the door. It opened the next moment and a young lady tripped in.

"Good evening, Miss Murray. I just bounced in to say welcome to Rosemount. I'm so glad you've come. I've just been dying to have a girl in the house of my own age."

She caught Helen's two hands in hers with genuine kindness.

She was a plump fair lady with fluffy yellow hair and big blue eyes. She was dressed in a pink flowered muslin trimmed with girlish frills and wore a big hat wreathed with nodding roses. Helen was puzzled. This wasn't Miss Annabel, then; for her mother had said the Misses Armstrong were both over forty.

"I'm Annabel Armstrong," she said, settling the question. Helen gave her a second look and saw that Miss Annabel carried signs of maturity in her face and form, albeit she carried them very blithely indeed. "And I can't tell you how glad I am you've come. You'll just adore Algonquin. It's the gayest place on earth, a dance or a tea or a bridge or some sort of kettle-drum every day. What a love of a dress! It's the very colour of your eyes, my dear. Come away now; you must meet Mother. She always takes supper in her own room now, and I must carry it to her. Our little maid is about as much use as a pussy-cat and if I'm not in the kitchen every ten minutes to tramp on her tail she'll go to sleep. Come along!"

She danced away down the hall, Helen following her, feeling extremely old and prim. Grandma Armstrong's bedroom was at the back of the house overlooking the orchard and kitchen-garden. She was sitting up in bed, a very handsome little old lady in cap and ribbons. She gave the strange girl's hand a gentle pressure.

"Here she is, Muzzy," cried Miss Annabel in an apologetic tone. "It's too bad you didn't see her sooner, but she was so busy."

"Indeed I generally notice that I am left to the last, when any new person comes to the house," said Grandma Armstrong in a grieved tone. "Well, my dear, I am pleased to see the Rev. Walter Murray's son in my house. You look like him—yes, very much, just the image of him in fact, only of course he was a man and wore a portmanteau when I knew him."

Grandma Armstrong's separate faculties were all alert and as keen as they had ever been in youth. But some strange lack of connection between her tongue and her memory, seemed to have befallen the old lady, so that they did not always agree, and she was wont to intersperse her otherwise quite intelligent conversation with words having no remotest connection with the context.

"A moustache, you mean, Muzzy dear," said her daughter. "Mother forgets you know," she added, in a hasty, low apology to Helen.

"Why do you interrupt me, Annabel? I said a moustache. I hope you sleep well here, my dear. I had that room of yours for some time, but I had to move back here, I could never get to sleep after they put up the Israelite at the corner. It shone right over my bed. Let me see now. You are the second daughter, are you not? Your father was a fine man, my dear. Yes, indeed. We knew him well as a student. He preached one summer in—where was that, Annabel? Alaska?"

"Muskoka, Mother."

"Oh, yes, Muskoka, and the Rev. Walter Hislop, your father, was there as a student."

"Murray, you mean, Mother."

"Don't interrupt me, Annabel. Your uncle preached there two summers, my dear, and I thought my daughter Annabel and he—"

"It was Elizabeth, Mother, not me! Good gracious, how old do you think I am?" demanded Miss Annabel, quite alarmed.

"Oh, Elizabeth, of course. I really thought she and your brother, the Rev. Mr. McIntosh, should have become engaged before the summer was over. But we had other plans for our daughter, and we thought it wiser for her to go to the sea-shore the next summer."

"Now, Mother," said Miss Annabel tactfully. "Miss Murray doesn't want to hear all that ancient history. She has to get her supper. She's tired and hungry."

Helen slept soundly that night. Two big windows of her room looked out to the west where, beyond the town, ran a high wooded ridge, and the low organ tones of the evening wind singing through the trees made her forget her grief and lulled her to sleep.

She set off to her work early in the morning, nervous and apprehensive. Her hostesses all wished her well. Miss Armstrong, in her quiet stately fashion hoped she would find her employment congenial, and Grandma expressed the desire that Miss Carstairs would enjoy her work at the cemetery, a remark which the worried young teacher felt was more appropriate than the kindly old lady guessed. Miss Annabel followed her to the gate, with instructions regarding the road to school. She plucked a big crimson dahlia from its bed and stuck it in the belt of Helen's blue dress.

"Good luck, dearie, and cheer up!" she cried, seeing the look in the sad blue eyes. "School teaching's heaps of fun, I feel sure. Don't worry about it. We're going to have great times in the evenings. There's always something on. Bye bye, and good luck," and she tripped up the garden path waving her hand gaily.

Helen had scarcely gone half a block under the elm boughs, when she heard her name called out in a musical roar from far up the street behind her. She had not been in Algonquin twenty-four hours, but she knew that voice. She was just a bit scandalised as she turned to see a man waving his cane, as he hurried to overtake her. But she had not yet learned that no one minded being hailed half-a-mile away by Lawyer Ed.

He was accompanied by a lady, a tall woman of such ample proportions, that she had some ado to keep up with Lawyer Ed's brisk step. She wore a broad old-fashioned hat tied under her round chin, and a gay flowered muslin dress that floated about her with an easy swaying motion. She wore, too, a pair of soft low-heeled slippers, that gave forth a soothing accompaniment to the rhythm of her movements. She was surrounded by a perfect bodyguard of children. They danced behind her and ahead of her, they clung to her hands and peeped from the flowing muslin draperies, while she moved among them, serene and smiling like a great flower surrounded by a cloud of buzzing little bees.

"Good morning, good morning!" shouted the chairman of the school board. "Abroad bright and early and ready for work! Well, well, well," he added admiringly, as he shook her hands violently, "if the Algonquin air hasn't commenced to do its work already! Now, my dear, brace up

and don't be frightened. It is my duty as chairman of the school board to introduce you to your stern principal. Miss Murray, I have the honour of presenting you to Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby, known in private life as Mrs. Adam; but if you are as nice as you look, you may one day be admitted to the inner circle of her friends, and then you will be allowed to call her Madame."

As the lady took her hand and turned upon her a smile in proportion to her size, Helen suddenly realised why she had seemed so familiar even at the first glance. She was exactly like the wonderful fairy who cared for the water-babies at the bottom of the sea. And the resemblance was further heightened by the presence of the babies themselves who came swarming about to settle all over her, and when shoved out of the way, only came swarming back.

"Bless me, what a mistake!" she cried. "It's you that's the Principal and I'm the assistant. I'm so thankful you're young, my dear. I can't stand old folks, and middle-aged people are my abhorrence. I told Edward Brians that if he put me down there all alone with a middle-aged woman,—a young gay thing like me,—I just wouldn't stand it."

"I don't think there are any old people in Algonquin, are there?" asked Helen.

They were moving on down the street now, and their going was something of a triumphal procession. At every turn some one joined them,—young or old, and from every side greetings were called after them, until the bewildered stranger felt as if she had become part of a circus parade. She was feeling almost light-hearted as the gay throng moved forward, when they passed their escort's office, and in the doorway stood the young Mr. McRae who reminded her so sadly of the past.

"Hooray, Rod," roared his chief. "A graun beginnin', ma braw John Hielanman! Come down here off that perch and do your respects to the March of Education!"

Roderick obeyed very willingly. He had been a pupil of Madame's in his primary days, notwithstanding her extreme youth, and she welcomed him home and hoped he would be as good a boy as he had been when she had him. Then Lawyer Ed introduced him to the new teacher. She shook hands, but she did not say they had met before, and Roderick tactfully ignored the fact also, for which he fancied she gave him a glance of gratitude. They moved on but soon the March of Education was again interrupted. Across the street, Doctor Archie Blair, with his black satchel in his hand and a volume of Burns beneath his arm, was preparing to climb into his buggy for a drive into the country. He stepped aside for a moment and crossed the street to tell Madame how glad he was to see her back from her holidays, for the town had been a howling wilderness without her.

"This is Miss Murray, the new teacher, I know," he added before Lawyer Ed could introduce him. "You will learn soon, Miss Murray, that if you want to find a stranger in Algonquin, especially a strange young lady, you have just to hunt up Lawyer Brians and there she is."

"And a very good place to be, Archie Blair," said Madame. "If every one looked after strangers as well as he does there wouldn't be many lonely people."

"Hear, hear, Madame," roared Lawyer Ed. "No one knows my virtues as you do. Did ye hear yon, Aerchie mon?"

"The trouble is, Miss Murray," said the doctor, without paying the slightest attention to the other two, "the trouble is that this gentleman doesn't give any one else a chance to do a good deed. He does everything himself. No one in Algonquin minds neglecting his duty, for he knows that Mr. Brians would be there ahead of him and get it done anyway, so where's the use of bothering? I'm a member of the school board, and I might be betraying my trust if I encouraged you to neglect your work, but I feel I ought to tell you that if any day you would like to take a few hours off, why, do so, Mr. Brians will teach for you."

There was a great deal more banter and fun, and the March of Education was resumed with small recruits in clean pinafores darting out of homes here and there to join it. It ended at last at the battered gate of the little schoolhouse. The East Ward was a small part of the town, consisting mostly of lake, so the population was not very large. There were but two grades, of which Mrs. Adam taught the younger.

The children scampered over the yard, and swarmed into the building. Lawyer Ed ran about, scattering pink "bull's-eyes" all over the floor and yard, calling, "Chukie, Chukie!" with the whole school at his heels like a flock of noisy chickens. And when he had the place in an uproar, he shouted good-bye and rushed away in a fit of laughter.

Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby sank heavily into a chair, with a relieved smile, and said, as Helen hung up her hat, and looked about apprehensively, "Now, my dear child, I remember my first day at school-teaching distinctly, and if yours is anything the same, you are scared to death. So if you want to know anything or need any help, you just come right along into my room, and we'll fix it up. And whatever you do, don't worry. We're going to have just a glorious time together, you and I."

And the new teacher went to her first day's work with a heart far less heavy than she would

have believed possible. Far ahead had begun to show the first faint glimmer of the light that was leading her through sorrow and pain to a higher and better life. And all unconsciously she had begun to follow its gleam.

## CHAPTER VI

### LAUNCHING HIS VESSEL

Roderick had been but two days in the office of Edward Brians, barrister, and already he had learned a great deal. Two important facts, not directly connected with the legal profession, had been impressing themselves upon him. The first was that if he were going to reach the goal of success that shone so alluringly ahead of him, he must give every effort and every minute of time to his work; and the second was that he was going to have a hard time concentrating upon it in the various interests of the little town that seemed to demand his attention.

And there was his chief setting him a bad example. The young man had spent part of his first morning wandering through the mass of documents and scraps of paper which Lawyer Ed called his book-keeping. Between items of a professional nature were memoranda or reports of session meetings, Highland Club meetings, political meetings, country tea-meetings, everything and anything except law. What there was of the latter was connected only with such clients as were of ample means. All the poor folk for miles around came to Lawyer Ed with their troubles and were advised, scolded, pulled or paid out of them, and never so much as a stroke of a pen to record the good deed. If they paid him, well and good; if they did not, so much the better. And the price of a ticket to the Holy Land and back—that trip which had not yet materialised—might have been many times written down, had Lawyer Ed known anything about book-keeping. But Lawyer Ed's policy in all his career, had been something the same as that of his friend Doctor Blair across the way—to keep his people of his practice well, rather than to cure them when they were ill. So if he could manage it none of his clients ever went into a law-court. It was good for the clients, but bad for such things as trips abroad. Roderick did not see that side of his chief's book-keeping. He did not know that the man could put through more work in an hour than most men could in a day, and saw only the meetings recorded which took so much of his time. And he said to himself that that was not the way to become great. Some day he intended to be one of the leading advocates of Canada. He was not conceited. His was only the boundless hopefulness of youth coupled with the assurance which experience had already given him, that whenever he set his mind to anything, he accomplished it, no matter how many difficulties stood in the way. So he was determined to concentrate all his efforts on his work, and as for serving humanity, he could do it best, he assured himself, by being a success in his profession.

He was just entering upon his second day when his advice was sought from an unexpected source and in connection with an entirely new subject. Lawyer Ed had gone out and Roderick was seated at his desk when some one entered the hall and tapped hesitatingly on the inner door. Roderick called an invitation to come in, and Mr. Alfred Wilbur, in perfect white ducks and white canvas shoes, stepped inside.

"So you've come to be Mr. Brians' partner, haven't you, Mr. McRae?" he enquired. Mr. Wilbur was a well-mannered young man and had never adopted the easy familiar way of naming people which was current in the town.

"Say rather his office-boy, for a while," said Roderick.

Mr. Wilbur protested. "Oh, now, Mr. McRae, you're just quite too modest. Every one's saying how well you did at college and school; and that you're going to make your mark—you know you are."

Roderick wondered why the young man should take such pains to be polite to him.

"Did you want to see Lawyer Ed?" he asked.

"No, no, thank you," he cried in alarm. "He's not in, is he? No, I just wanted to see you, Mr. McRae—not professionally you understand but—that is—personally,—on a very sacred matter."

His voice dropped to a whisper, he crossed his feet in front of him, then drew them under his chair, twirled his hat, smoothed down the back of his head vigorously, and looked in dismay at the floor.

"I hope I can do something for you," said Rod encouragingly, feeling sorry for his evident distress.

"Thank you so much!" cried the young man gratefully. "It's about—that is—I think, an old acquaintance of yours—Miss Murray, the new teacher in the East Ward. She *is* an old

acquaintance, isn't she?"

It was Roderick's turn to feel hot and look embarrassed. He answered his first client very shortly.

"No, she isn't."

"Oh! I thought—you went and spoke to her on the boat!"

"So I did."

"But you met her before surely?" asked the young man, aghast at the notion of Roderick's boldness.

"Yes."

"In Toronto?"

"Yes."

"Long ago?"

"Last autumn."

"Is her home there?"

"I believe so. It was then."

"Oh, you don't know her very well then?"

"No, I don't. And I don't know why on earth I've got to be put through a catechism about it."

"Oh, say! You really must think I'm awful!" cried the poor young man contritely. "I do beg your pardon, Mr. McRae. It really must have sounded shocking to you. But, well—I—did you ever meet a young—any one whom you knew—at first sight—was the one person in all the world for you?" His voice sank. The day was cool and breezy, but poor Afternoon Tea Willie's face was damp and hot and he wiped it carefully with his fine hem-stitched handkerchief, murmuring apologies.

"No, I never did," said Roderick quite violently, for no reason at all.

"I beg your pardon, I'm sure," murmured his visitor, vaguely alarmed. "You can't understand my feelings then. But that's really what I felt when I saw her. It was a revelation, one of those swift certain intuitions of the soul, and I—you don't mind my telling you this, do you, Mr. McRae?"

"Oh, no, not if you don't mind," said Roderick.

"It's so good of you," said poor Afternoon Tea Willie. "You were the only one I could come to, the only one who seemed to know her. She boards at Miss Armstrong's, but Miss Annabel—you know Miss Annabel? No? Well, I wouldn't for worlds say anything against a lady, but Miss Annabel doesn't seem to like me. I don't blame her, you know, but I don't like to go there. It—I seem to bother her dreadfully, so I thought—I knew you wouldn't mind introducing me some time, would you?"

"I really don't know Miss Murray well enough to do that," said Roderick decidedly. "And I wish you wouldn't say anything about our having met before. I don't think she remembers me very well. Ask Mr. Brians to introduce you."

"I did, but he refused."

"Perhaps he was only in fun, try him again—or Mrs. Adam. She teaches with her."

"Oh my! the very person." Mr. Wilbur sprang up. "Oh, I can't think why I never thought of her before. I'll call on Madame this afternoon. I can't thank you enough, Mr. McRae, for the kind suggestion." The young man hurried out, profusely expressing his gratitude. Afternoon Tea Willie had absolutely nothing in the world to do, but he was always in a hurry. Perhaps the reason was that the ladies of the town ordered him about so. He was the most obliging young man, and being always available, he was used to the utmost, and was driven like a galley slave from dawn to dark. As he went down the steps he turned back and looked up at Roderick rapturously.

"Say!" he whispered. "Did you ever see such eyes? Don't they make you feel just as if you were going down in an elevator?"

But Roderick turned quickly away, with an unreasonable and very unbusinesslike desire to kick his first client down the steps. He had almost closed the door behind him when a loud clear voice from the street called his name. It was just four o'clock, the hour when all the young ladies of Algonquin, dressed in their best, walked down to the post-office for the afternoon mail which came in a half-hour earlier. This afternoon post-office parade was a social function, for only



people of leisure and distinction were at liberty at that hour. The young gentlemen from the bank generally emerged about that time too, and came striding down to the post-office looking worried and flurried as became gentlemen with the finances of the whole town and half the country weighing them down. After they had all met at the post-office, they went up to the ice-cream and candy palace on Main Street, or out on the lake, or strolled off into the park.

It was a member of the post-office parade who was hailing Roderick so gaily. A pretty group was rustling past the office, all muslin frills and silk sashes and flowers of every colour, and the prettiest and best dressed of them all came running up the steps to his side, with a swish of silken skirts and a whiff of violet perfume.

It was Miss Leslie Graham, the girl he had helped out of the lake, not forlorn and bedraggled now, but immaculate and dainty, from the rose wreath on her big hat to the tip of her white kid shoe.

"Hello!" she cried gaily. "I thought you'd surely 'phone over to see whether I needed to make my will or not. You're not much of a lawyer."

Roderick laughed. She was so frank and boyish that she put him quite at his ease.

"Well,—not knowing I was the family advocate, I didn't like to," he said slyly.

She laughed delightedly. "You're going to be after this, I can tell you. Daddy's out of town and he doesn't know yet!"

"There's no need to worry him by telling."

"Oh, but there just is. I haven't told a soul yet, and I nearly had to commit murder to keep it from Mother. Fred's in a pink fit every minute for fear I'll let it out. I've got heaps of fun holding it over his head. It makes him good and obedient. Is Lawyer Ed in?"

"No. Do you wish to see him?"

"No, of course not. I just wondered if he wouldn't keep house, though, for a few minutes, while you came along and joined the bunch. We're all going to make Alf take us for ice-cream. We spied him leaving here. Can't you come?"

"Thank you, but I'm afraid I couldn't leave," said Roderick, rather taken aback by her frankness. That ideal woman, who sat dimly enthroned in the recesses of his heart, never offered her favours, they had to be sued for, and she was apt to sit in judgment on the girl who departed from her strict rule.

"Come on, Les!" called a voice from the lingering group she had left. "Here's Alf. He's going to treat us all. Ho! A-a-If!" The young ladies of Algonquin, had lived in such close proximity to each other from childhood that a playmate could always be summoned even from the other end of the town by a clarion call, and they had never seen any reason for changing their convenient method when long skirts and piled-up hair might have been supposed to demand a less artless manner. But then every one shouted across blocks, and besides, every one knew that Afternoon Tea Willie just dearly loved to be yelled at. He whirled about now, waved his hat, and came hurrying back, with the peculiar jerky irregular motion of his feet, that always marked his movements.

"Hurrah, Leslie!" called her companions again.

"Coming!" she cried. "So sorry you can't come," she added, turning to Roderick, "but we'll give you another invitation." She looked disappointed, and a little inclined to pout, but she waved her hand as she ran down the steps and joined the group of lace and flowers now fluttering down the side-walk towards the ice cream parlour.

"Leslie's made a new conquest," cried a tall girl with flashing black eyes. "He seemed frantically anxious to come with you, my dear. I don't see how you got rid of him."

"Who is he, Les?" cried another. "If it's a new young man come to this girl-ridden town you simply have got to pass him round and introduce him."

"Why, he's Lawyer Ed's new partner, you goosie," cried a dozen voices, for it was inexcusable for any young lady not to know all about Lawyer Ed's business.

"A lawyer, how perfectly lovely!" cried a plump little girl with pink cheeks and dancing eyes. "It's such a relief to see some one beside bank boys. I'm going to ask his advice about suing Afternoon Tea Willie for breach of promise. What's his name, Leslie?"

"Why, his name's Roderick McRae," cried the young lady with the black eyes. "I remember when he used to go to school in a grey homespun suit with the hay sticking all over it. He's the son of old Angus McRae who used to bring our cabbage and lettuce to the back door!"

"Mercy!" the plump little girl gave a shriek. "Where in the world did you pick him up, Leslie?"

The girl whirled about and faced her companions, her eyes blazing, her cheeks red. "I didn't pick him up at all!" she cried hotly. "He picked me up the other night, out of the lake over by Breezy Point, where Fred Hamilton upset me out of his canoe. And if Roderick McRae hadn't come along I'd have been drowned. So now!"

It had all come out in a rush. She had fully intended to shield Fred. But she could not see her preserver scoffed at by those Baldwin girls. Immediately there was a chorus of enquiries and exclamations. Afternoon Tea Willie was overcome with distress and apologised for not being there. Old Angus McRae's son immediately became a hero.

The little plump girl with the big blue eyes sighed enviously. "Oh dear! How lucky! I think it's a shame all the good things happen to you, Leslie; and he's so handsome!"

"I'm going to ask him to join our tennis club," said Leslie, looking round rather defiantly.

Leslie Graham, by virtue of the fact that her mother belonged to the reigning house of Armstrong, and her father was the richest man in Algonquin, was leader of the younger social set. But Miss Anna Baldwin of the black eyes was her most powerful rival. They were constant companions and very dear friends, and never agreed upon anything. So immediately upon Miss Graham's daring announcement that this new and very exclusive club should be entered by one not in their set, Miss Baldwin cried, "Oh, how perfectly sweet and democratic! Our milkman saved our house from burning down one morning last winter, don't you remember, Lou? We must make Mamma ask him to her next tea!"

Thereupon the group broke up into two sections, one loudly proclaiming its democratic principles, the other as vigorously upholding the necessity for drawing rigid social lines. And they all swept into the ice-cream palace, like a swarm of hot, angry bees, followed by Afternoon Tea Willie in great distress, apologising now to one side, now to the other.

Another call from his work came to Roderick the next afternoon when he paid his first visit to Doctor Leslie. The old Manse did not look just as hospitable as of old, there were no crowds on the veranda and in the orchard any more. For the foster mother of the congregation had left her children mourning, and gone to continue her good work in a brighter and better world.

Viney was still in the kitchen, however, doing all in her power to make the lonely minister comfortable. She had been away from the Manse for some years in the interval, but was now returned with a half-grown daughter to help her. Viney had left Mrs. Leslie to marry "Mahogany Bill," a mulatto from the negro settlement out in Oro. But Bill had been of no account, and after his not too sadly mourned demise, his wife, promoted to the dignified title of Mammy Viney, had returned with her little girl to the Algonquin Manse, and there she was still.

"And your father has you home at last, Roderick," said the minister, rubbing his hands with pleasure and surveying the young man's fine honest face with affection. "He has lived for this day. I hope you won't get so absorbed in your practice that you won't be able to run out to the farm often."

"Aunt Kirsty will see to that," laughed Roderick.

The minister beamed. "I'm afraid I shall get into her bad books then, for I am going to keep you here as often as possible. You are just the young man I want in the church, Roderick—one who will be a leader of the young men. Algonquin is changing," he added sadly. "Perhaps because it is growing rapidly. I am afraid there is a rather fast set of young men being developed here. It makes my heart ache to see fine young fellows like Fred Hamilton and Walter Armstrong learning to gamble, and yet that is just what is happening. There's a great work here for a strong young man with just your upbringing, my boy. We must save these lads from themselves—'Who knoweth,'" he added with a smile, "'but thou hast come to the Kingdom for such an hour.'"

There was a great deal more of the same earnest call to work, and Roderick went away conscious of a slight feeling of impatience. It was just what his father was always saying, but how was he to attend to his work, if he were to have all the responsibility of the young men of the town and all the people of Willow Lane upon him? He was inclined to think that every man should be responsible for himself. He was kind-hearted and generous when the impulse came, but he did not want to be reminded that his life's work was to be his brother's keeper. His work was to be a lawyer. He did not yet realise that in being his brother's keeper he would make of himself the best kind of lawyer.

The next evening, when he prepared to go home, Lawyer Ed declared he must just take his horse and drive him out to the farm and have a visit with Angus and a drink of Aunt Kirsty's butter-milk. So, early in the evening, they drove through the town down towards the Pine Road. Willow Lane still stood there. The old houses were more dilapidated than ever, and there were more now than there used to be. Doctor Blair's horse and buggy stood before one of them. Willow Lane was on low, swampy ground, and was the abode of fevers and diseases of all sorts.

As they whirled past it, Lawyer Ed waved his whip towards it in disgust. "That place is a disgrace to Algonquin," he blustered. "We boast of our town being the most healthful and beautiful in Ontario, and it's got the ugliest and the most unsanitary spot just right there that you'd find in Canada. If J. P. gets to be mayor next year he'll fix it up. He's having it drained

already. I hope you'll get interested in municipal affairs, Rod. I tell you it's great. I'm so glad I'll have more time for town affairs now that you're here. But you must get going there too. There's nothing so bad for a professional man as to get so tied down to his work that he can't see an inch beyond it. You can't help getting interested in this place. It's going ahead so. Now, the lake front there—"

Lawyer Ed was off on his pet scheme, the beautifying of that part of the lake front that was now made hideous by factory and mill and railroad track and rows of tumble-down boathouses.

And Roderick listened half-heartedly, interested only because it interested his friend. They passed along the Jericho Road, with its sweet-smelling pines; the soft mists of early autumn clothed Lake Algonquin in a veil of amethyst. The long heavy grass by the roadside, and masses of golden-rod shining dimly in the evening-light told that summer had finished her task. She was waiting the call to leave.

Lawyer Ed was not half through with the esplanade along the lake front when they reached Peter McDuff's home. It was a forlorn old weather-beaten house with thistles and mullen and sturdy burdocks growing close to the doorway. An old gnarled apple-tree, weary and discouraged looking, stood at one side of the house, its blackened branches touching the ground. At the other lay a broken plow, on top of a heap of rubbish. A sagging wood-pile and a sorry-looking pump completed the dreariness.

And yet there were signs of a better day. The dilapidated barn was well-built, the fences had once been strong and well put together, and around the house were the struggling remains of an old garden, with many a flower run wild among the thistles. The history of the home had followed that of its owner. Peter Fiddle had once been a highly respected man, with not a little education. His wife had been a good woman, and when their boy came, for a time, the father had given up his wild ways and his drinking and had settled down to work his little farm. But he never quite gave up the drink, though Angus McRae's hand held him back from it many and many a time. But Angus had been ill for a couple of years, and Peter had gone very far astray when the helping hand was removed.

He had gone steadily downward until his powers were wasted and his health ruined. His wife gave up the struggle, when young Peter was but a child, and closed her tired eyes on the dirt and misery of her ruined home. Then Angus McRae had regained his health and his grip on Peter, and since then, with many disappointments and backslidings, he had managed to bring him struggling back to a semblance of his old manhood. He was not redeemed yet. But old Angus never gave up hope.

Poor Young Peter had grown up dull of brain and heavy of foot, handicapped before birth by the drink. But he had clung doggedly to that one idea which Angus McRae had drilled into him, that he must, as he valued his life, avoid that dread thing which had ruined his father and killed his mother.

Lawyer Ed pulled up his horse before the house. Young Peter had not yet come in with the *Inverness*, but he looked about for Peter Fiddle. He had been sober for a much longer time than usual in this interval, and both he and Angus were keeping an anxious, hopeful eye upon him.

"I wonder where Peter is," he said.

For answer Roderick pointed down the road before them. A horse and wagon stood close to the road-side. They drove up to it, and there, stretched on the seat of his wagon, his horse cropping the grass by the way-side, lay poor old Peter, dead drunk.

"Well, well, well!" cried Lawyer Ed in mingled disgust and disappointment. "He's gone again, and your father had such hopes of him!" He gave the lines to Roderick and leaped out.

"Hi, Peter!" he shouted, shaking the man violently. "Wake up! It's time for breakfast, man!"

But Peter Fiddle made no more response than a log. And then a look of boyish mischief danced into Lawyer Ed's young eyes.

"Come here, Rod!" he cried. "Let's fix him up and see what he'll do when we get back."

Roderick alighted and helped unhitch the old horse from the wagon. They led him back to the house, watered him, put him into the old stable and fed him. When they returned, Peter still lay asleep on the wagon seat, and they drove off. Lawyer Ed in a fit of boyish mirth.

It was heavy news for old Angus when they sat around the supper table, eating Aunt Kirsty's apple pie and cream; but the good Samaritan was not discouraged. "Well, well," he said with a sigh, "he kept away from it longer this time than ever. He's improving. Eh, eh, poor body, poor Peter!"

"It would seem as if the work of the Good Samaritan is never done, Angus," said Lawyer Ed. "I suppose there will always be thieves on the Jericho Road."

"I was just wondering to-day," said Angus thoughtfully, "if, while we go on picking up the men

on the Jericho Road, we couldn't be doing something to keep the thieves from doing their evil work. There's Peter now. If we can't keep him away from the drink, don't you think we ought to try to keep the drink away from him?"

"Lawyer Ed'll have to get a local option by-law passed in Algonquin, Father," said Roderick.

"Eh, Lad," cried the old man, his face radiant, "it is your father would be the happy man to see that day. There is a piece of work for you two now."

"I'm ready," cried Lawyer Ed enthusiastically. "If I could only see that cursed traffic on the run it would be the joy of my life to encourage it with a good swift kick. We'll start a campaign right away. Won't we, Rod?"

"All right," cried Roderick, pleased at the look in his father's face. "You give your orders. I'm here to carry them out."

"There, Angus! You've got your policeman for the Jericho Road. We'll do it yet. If we get the liquor business down, as Grandma Armstrong says, we'll knock it conscientious."

Old Angus followed them to the gate when they drove away, his heart swelling with high hope. He would live to see all his ambitions realised in Roderick. He sat up very late that night and when he went to bed and remembered how the Lad had promised to help rid Peter of the drink curse, he could not sleep until he had sung the long-meter doxology. He sang it very softly, for Kirsty was asleep and it might be hard to explain to her if she were disturbed; nevertheless he sang it with an abounding joy and faith.

As Roderick and Lawyer Ed drove homeward, down the moon-lit length of the Pine Road; they were surprised to hear ahead of them, within a few rods of Peter Fiddle's house, the sound of singing. Very wavering and uncertain, now loud and high, now dropping to a low wail, came the slow splendid notes of Kilmarnock to the sublime words of the 103rd psalm.

The two in the buggy looked at each other. "Peter!" cried Lawyer Ed in dismay.

When Old Peter was only a little bit drunk he inclined to frivolity and gaiety, and was given to playing the fiddle and dancing, but when he was very drunk, he was very solemn, and intensely religious. He gave himself to the singing of psalms, and if propped up would preach a sermon worthy of Doctor Leslie himself.

A turn in the road brought him into sight. There, between the silver mirror of the moonlit lake and the dark scented green of the forest, insensible to the beauty of either, sat the man. He was perched perilously on the seat of his wagon and was swaying from side to side, swinging his arms about him and singing in a loud maudlin voice, the fine old psalm that he had learned long, long ago before he became less than a man.

Lawyer Ed pulled up before him.

"Oh Peter, Peter!" he cried, "is this you?"

Peter Fiddle stopped singing, with the righteously indignant air of one whose devotions have been interrupted by a rude barbarian.

"And who will you be," he demanded witheringly, "that dares to be speaking to the McDuff in such a fashion? Who will you be, indeed?"

"Come, come, Peter, none of that," said his friend soothingly. "I cannot think who you are. You surely can't be my old friend, Peter McDuff, sitting by the roadside this way. Who are you, anyway?"

Peter became suddenly grave. The question raised a terrible doubt in his mind. He looked about him with the wavering gaze of a man on board a heaving ship. His unsteady glance fell on the empty wagon shafts lying on the ground. He looked at them in bewilderment, then took off his old cap and scratched his head.

"How is this, I'd like to know?" demanded Lawyer Ed, pushing his advantage. "If you're not Peter McDuff, who are you? And where is the horse gone?"

Roderick climbed out of the buggy, smothering his laughter, and leaving the two to argue the question, he went after the truant horse which might help to establish his master's lost identity. Lawyer Ed dismounted and helped him hitch it, and apparently satisfied by its reappearance, Peter stretched himself on the seat and went soundly asleep again. He lay all undisturbed while they drove him in at his gate, and put his horse away once more. And he did not move even when they lifted him from his perch and, carrying him into the house, put him into his bed.

And just as they entered the town they met poor young Peter plodding slowly and heavily towards his dreary home.

"We must do something for those two, Rod," said Lawyer Ed, shaking his head pityingly. "We must get Local Option or something that'll help Peter."

But Roderick was thinking of what Miss Leslie Graham had said, and wondering if it might mean that he would be asked to handle the big affairs of Graham and Company.

## CHAPTER VII

### "MOVING TO MELODY"

The first Sunday that Angus McRae drove along the lake shore and up to the church with Lawyer Ed's partner sitting at his side, he was praying, all the way, to be delivered from the sin of pride. They left Aunt Kirsty at home as usual, with her Bible and her hymn-book, for the poor lady had grown so stout that she could not be lifted into buggy or boat or conveyance of any kind. They started early, but stopped so often on the road that they were none the earlier in arriving. For Angus must needs pause at the McDuff home, to see that young Peter was ready for church, and that old Peter was thoroughly sobered. And there was a huge bouquet of Aunt Kirsty's asters to be left at Billy Perkins's for the little girl who was sick. There were sounds of strife in Mike Cassidy's home too, and Angus dismounted and went in to reason with Mike and the wife on the incongruity of throwing the dishes at each other, when they had spent the morning at mass.

So when the Good Samaritan had attended to all on the Jericho Road there was not much time left, and the church bells were ringing when they drove under the green tunnel of Elm Street; the Anglican, high, resonant and silvery, the Presbyterian, with a slow, deep boom, and between the two, and harmonising with both, the mellow, even roll of the Methodist bell. The call of the bells was being given a generous obedience, for already the streets were crowded with people. From the hills to the north and the west, from the level plain to the south they came, on foot, and in buggies. Even the people who lived across the lake or away down the shore were there, some having crossed the water in boats or launches. This means of conveyance, however, was regarded with some disfavour, as it too perilously resembled Sunday boating. The matter had even been brought up in the session by Mr. McPherson, who declared he objected to it, for there was no good reason why Christian people could not walk on the earth the Almighty had provided for them, on the Sabbath day.

Roderick put away the horse into the shed, smiling tenderly when he found his father waiting at the gate for him. He wanted to walk around to the church door with his boy, so that they might meet his friends together. They were received in a manner worthy of the occasion, for the four elders who were ushering all left their posts and came forward to greet Angus McRae, knowing something of what a great day in his life this Sabbath was. J. P. Thornton and Jock McPherson ushered on one side of the church, Lawyer Ed and Captain McTavish on the other, a very fitting arrangement, which mingled the old and the new schools. Only Lawyer Ed could never be kept in his own place, but ran all over the church and ushered wheresoever he pleased.

The elders of Algonquin Presbyterian church were at their best when showing the people to their seats on a Sabbath morning. Each man did it in a truly characteristic manner. Captain Jimmie received the worshippers in a breezy fashion, as though the church were the *Inverness* and he were calling every one to come aboard and have a bit run on the lake and a cup-a-tea, whatever. Mr. McPherson shook hands warmly with the old folk, but kept the young people in their places, and well did every youngster know that did he not conduct himself in the sanctuary with becoming propriety, the cane the elder carried would likely come rapping down smartly on his unrighteous knuckles. J. P. Thornton's welcome was kindly but stately. He had grown stout and slightly pompous-looking during the passing years, and his fine, well-dressed figure lent quite an air of dignity to the whole church. But Lawyer Ed, ushering a stranger into the church, was a heart-warming sight. He seemed made for the part. He met one half-way down the steps with outstretched hands, marched him to the best seat in the place, even if he had to dislodge one of the leading families to do it, thrust a Bible and a hymn-book into his hand, and enquired if he were sure he would be comfortable, all in a manner that made the newcomer feel as if the Algonquin church had been erected, a minister and ciders appointed, and a congregation assembled all for the express purpose of edifying him on this particular Sabbath morning.

He captured Angus McRae and showed him to his seat this morning with a happy bustle, for his pride and joy in the Lad's return was only second to his own father's. Roderick sat beside his father in their old pew near the rear of the church, gazing about him happily at the familiar scene. The people were filling up the aisles, with a soft hushed rustle. There was Fred Hamilton and his father, and Dr. Archie Blair and his family. Dr. Blair was rarely too busy to get to church on a Sunday morning, though he made a loud pretence of being very irreligious. It was rumoured that he carried a volume of Burns to church in his pocket instead of a Bible, a tale which the Doctor enjoyed immensely and took care not to contradict. There was a silken rustle at Roderick's right hand, a breath of perfume, and Leslie Graham, in a wonderful rose silk dress and big plumed hat, came up the aisle, followed by her father and mother. The Grahams were the most fashionable people in the church, and Mr. Graham was the only man who wore a high silk hat. He had been the first to wear the frock coat, but while many had followed his example in this

regard, he was the only man who had, as yet, gone the length of the silk hat. Of course, Doctor Leslie had one, but every one felt that it was quite correct for a minister to wear such a thing. It was part of the clerical garb, and anyway he wore it only at weddings and funerals, showing it belonged to the office, rather than to the man. So Alexander Graham's millinery was looked upon with some disfavour. He was a quiet man though, sensitive and retiring, and not given to vain display, and people felt that the sin of the silk hat very likely lay at the door of his fashionable wife and daughter.

The Grahams were no sooner seated than Leslie turned her handsome head, and glancing across the church towards Roderick, gave him a brilliant smile. But the young man did not catch the gracious favour; he was looking just then at a group passing up the aisle to a seat almost in front of him; Grandma Armstrong moving very slowly on her eldest daughter's arm, Miss Annabel in a youthful blue silk dress, and behind them a girlish figure in a white gown with a wealth of shining hair gleaming from beneath her wide hat.

Helen Murray had come to church this first Sunday with some fear. Her father's voice spoke to her yet in every minister's tones, and the place and the hour were all calculated to bring up memories hard to bear in public. She was just seated between Grandma and Miss Annabel when the former pulled her sleeve and enquired if she did not think the new gladiators very pretty. The girl followed the old lady's eyes and saw they were indicating the shiny brass electroliers suspended from the ceiling. In happier days Helen had found laughter very easy. Her sense of humour had not been deadened by sorrow, it was only in abeyance, and now she felt it stirring into life. The little incident made her look around with interest. Certainly the Algonquin church was not a place calculated to make one indulge in melancholy. The Presbyterian congregation was a virile one, bright and friendly and full of energy, and with very few exceptions, every one was at least fairly well off. With the aid of a generous expenditure of money they had expressed their congregational life in the decoration of the church; so the place was comfortable and well lighted, and exceedingly bright in colouring. Around three sides ran a gallery with an ornamental railing, tinted pink. The walls were the same colour, except for a bright green dado beneath the gallery, and the vaulted ceiling was decorated with big bouquets of flowers in a shade of pink and green slightly deeper than the walls and the dado. The carpet and the cushions—every inch of the floor was carpeted and every pew cushioned—were a warm bright crimson to match the organ pipes. The high Gothic windows were of brilliant stained glass, which, when the morning sun shone, threw a riot of colour over the worshippers. And indeed everything was warm and bright and shining, from the glittering new electroliers suspended from the pink ceiling, to the crimson baize doors which swung inward so hospitably at one's approach.

The church had been slowly filling, the choir filed into their places, the organ stopped playing *Cavalleria Rusticana*, a hush fell over the place and Doctor Leslie, his white hair and black gown passing through the changing lights of the windows, came slowly out of the vestry and up to the pulpit. He was an old man now, but a vigorous one, and his sermons were still strong and full of the fire of his earlier years. He had never walked quite so smartly, nor spoken with quite his old vim since the day he had been left alone in the Manse. But through his bereavement his eye had grown a little kindlier, his handshake a little more sympathetic, his voice a little more tender.

As he stood up and opened the Book of Praise to announce the first hymn, his glance involuntarily travelled, as it always did at the beginning of the service, to where old Angus's white head shone in the amber light of the window, as though a halo of glory were about it. Old Angus had long ago learned to look for that glance, and returned it by a glow from his deep eyes. Whenever they sang the 112th psalm in Algonquin Presbyterian church,

*"How blest the man who fears the Lord,  
And makes His law his chief delight,"*

the minister looked down and thought how well the words described the sunny-faced old saint, and Angus looked up and felt how aptly they fitted his pastor.

Dr. Leslie had had Angus in his mind this morning when he chose the 111th psalm for their opening praise, knowing how the old man's heart would be lifted to his God this morning.

*"Praise ye the Lord; with my whole heart  
The Lord's praise I'll declare."*

They sang it to "Gainsborough," the favourite tune of the old folk, for it gave an opportunity for restful lingering on every word, and had in it all those much-loved trills and quavers that made up the true accompaniment of a Scottish psalm. They sang it spiritedly, as Algonquin Presbyterians always sang; the choir and the organ on one side, the congregation on the other, each striving to gain the greater volume and power. For many years the choir had won out, for Lawyer Ed was leader, and the whole congregation would have been no match for him alone. But lately he had handed the leadership over to a young man whom he had trained up from the Sunday-school, and gone down to the opposition, where he sometimes gave the organist and the choir all they could do to be heard. And this morning, in his happiness over Roderick's homecoming, he was at his best.

There was only one little rift in the harmony of the whole congregation. In spite of Mr. McPherson's objections, Lawyer Ed and J. P. Thornton had succeeded in putting the "Amen" at the end of the psalms, as well as the hymns, and when the objectionable word came this morning,

Jock sat down as he always did, heavily and noisily, exactly on the last word of the psalm proper, and pulled Mrs. Jock's silk wrap to make her give a like condemnation to the bit of popery. Lawyer Ed sat in the pew opposite Jock and heard the protesting creak of Jock's seat when he descended and, in a spirit of mischief, he turned round till he faced the McPherson and rolled out the "Amen" directly at its objector. It was shocking conduct for an elder, as J. P. said afterwards, but then every one knew that though he should become Moderator of the General Assembly, Lawyer Ed would never grow up.

The sermon was to young people. It was a call to them to give their lives in their morning to the true Master and Lord of life. Dr. Leslie took for his text the scene enacted on that great morning when two young fishermen had heard across the shining water that call which, once truly heard by the heart's ear, cannot be resisted, "Come ye after Me." There were young people in the church that morning who heard it as truly as the fisher lads that far gone morning on Galilee, and as truly obeyed it. Helen Murray listened, struggling with tears. She had grown up in a Christian home where the influence of father and mother were such that it was inevitable that she should early become a disciple of the Master they served. But she had faltered in her service since her griefs had come upon her in such a flood. She would never have allowed herself to grow selfish over her joys but sorrow had absorbed her. She did not realise, until this morning, that she was growing selfish over her trouble. The tender call came again—"Come ye after Me," sounding just as sweetly and impelling in the night of sorrow and stress as it ever did in the joyous morning.

Roderick McRae was listening to the sermon too, but he did not hear the Voice. For in his young, eager ears was ringing the siren song of success. He had gone to church regularly in his absence from home, because he knew that the weekly letter to his father would lose half its charm did the son not give an account of the sermon he had heard the Sabbath before. But much listening to sermons had bred in the young man the inattentive heart, even though the ear was doing its duty. Roderick accepted sermons and church-going good-naturedly, as a necessary, respectable formality of life. That it must have a bearing on all life or be utterly meaningless he did not realise. His plans for life had nothing to do with church, and the divine call fell upon his ears unheeded.

When the sermon was drawing to a close, Lawyer Ed scribbled something on a scrap of paper and when he rose to take the offering he passed it up to the minister. Lawyer Ed never in his life got through a sermon without writing at least one note. This one was a request for St. George's, Edinburgh, as the closing psalm. He knew it was not the one selected, but something in the stirring words of the sermon, coupled with his joy over his boy's return, had roused him so that nothing but the hallelujahs of that great anthem could express his feelings.

When Dr. Leslie arose at the close and announced, instead of the regular doxology, the 24th psalm, Harry Lauder, the leader of the choir, looked down at Lawyer Ed and smiled, and Lawyer Ed smiled back at him. The young man's name was really Harry Lawson, but as he had a beautiful tenor voice, and could sing a funny Scottish song far better, every one in Algonquin said, than the great Scotch singer himself, he had been honored by the slight but significant change in his name. And when Harry Lauder smiled down at Lawyer Ed at the announcement of St. George's, Edinburgh, every one knew what it meant. When Lawyer Ed had given up the choir, under the pressure of other duties, and put Mr. Lawson in his place, he delivered this ultimatum to his successor: "Now look here, youngster. I am not used to being led by any one, either in singing or in anything else, but I promise that as far as I can, I'll follow you in the church service. But there's one tune in which I'll follow no living man, no, nor congregation of massed bands, and that's St. George's, Edinburgh. I just can't help it, Harry; when the first note of that tune comes rolling out, I am neither to hold nor to bind. Now I don't want to have it spoiled by see-sawing, that would be blasphemous. So you just tell the organist that I have a weakness comes over me when that tune is sung, and tell him to listen, and follow me. And you do the same."

So every one knew that when St. George's, Edinburgh, was sung, Lawyer Ed became the leader of the choir and congregation pro tem. No one needed to be told, however, for none could help following him. And he had never thrown himself into it with more abandon than on this sunny morning with the Eternal Call sounding again in the ears of all who had truly heard the sermon.

*"Ye gates lift up your heads on high!"*

He was glorious on the first stanza, he was magnificent on the second. He climbed grandly up the heights of its crescendo:—

*"Ye doors that last for aye,  
Be lifted up that so the King of glory enter may,"*

in ever growing power and volume; up to the wonder of the question—

*"But who is He that is the King of glory?"*

up to the rapture of the response:—

*"The Lord of Hosts and none but He  
The King of Glory is."*

And then out he came upon the heights of the refrain, with all the universe conquered and at his feet. When the first Hallelujah burst from the congregation, mounting splendidly at his side, the leader closed his book. He flung it upon the seat, tore off his glasses, clasped his hands behind him, and let himself go. And with a mighty roar he swept congregation, choir, organ, everybody, up into a thunder of praise.

*"Hallelujah, Hallelujah. Amen, Amen."*

It might not have been considered finished by a musical critic, it may have lacked restraint and nicety of shading; but no one who heard the Algonquin congregation that morning singing "Ye Gates lift up your heads," led by Lawyer Edward Brians, could doubt that it was surely some such fine fresh rapture that rang through the aisles of Heaven on that creation day when the morning stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy.

Helen Murray bowed her head for the benediction, the stinging tears rushing to her eyes, but they were not tears of sorrow. For the moment she had forgotten there was such a thing as pain. She had lost it as she had been swept up to the glad peaks of song. For one trembling moment she had caught a glimpse of a new wonder, the whole world moving, through sorrow and pain and dull misunderstanding, surely and swiftly up to God. And for that instant her soul had leaped forward, too, to meet Him. She came down from the heights; no mortal could live there, seeing things that were not lawful to utter. But from that first Sunday in Algonquin church her outlook on her new life was changed. She had seen the end of her rainbow. It was back of mists and clouds and storms, but it was there! And she could never again be quite so sad.

The congregation slowly filed out of the pews and down the aisles, chatting in soft hushed voices, until the organist pulled out all the stops and played a lively air, and then the conversation rose to suit the accompaniment. Mr. McPherson had objected to the pipe-organ, to the hired organist from the city, and finally and most vigorously to the musical dispersion of the congregation. If the body must play for the church service, Jock conceded, well, he must; but why he must paw and trample and harry the noisy thing, when church was over and done with, was a mystery that no right thinking person could solve. The organist, when approached with the elder's objections, had answered with dignity that all the city churches did it, and Jock's case was hopelessly lost. For when Algonquin was told that in the city they did thus and so, then Algonquin would do that thing too if it had meant burning down the church. So the congregation went down the aisles, sailing merrily on a flood of gay music, and as they went, Miss Annabel introduced the new teacher to several of the young folk of the church, who asked her to join the Christian Endeavor and the Young Women's Society, and the Young People's Bible class and to come to the picnic to-morrow afternoon in the park and the moonlight sail on Friday evening, and assured her that she would like Algonquin, and wasn't it a very pretty place?

As they passed down the steps, a slim young man, dressed immaculately in the height of fashion, came tripping up to them and addressed Miss Annabel in the most abjectly polite manner.

"Good morning, Mr. Wilbur," said the lady coldly, "I am sure you must welcome Sunday. I suppose you are working so hard these days." It was very cruel of Miss Annabel, for poor Afternoon Tea Willie had not yet been able to get an introduction to the lady of his dreams, and he really did work very hard indeed, and his was the employment from which there was no respite even on Sundays. But she hurried Helen on without further notice of him. Roderick was watching the little play with some amusement as he stood waiting for his father, who had stopped to have a word with the minister. As he did so he was puzzled to see Fred Hamilton pass him without so much as a word. He was concluding that his old acquaintance had not seen him, when he heard a merry laugh at his elbow and there stood Miss Leslie Graham.

"Did you see poor Freddy?" she cried. "Oh, dear, dear, I told on him after all, and he's mad at everybody in the town, you included, evidently. Now here's Daddy. He's dying to meet you. Here, Dad, this is the man that did the deed."

Mr. Graham took Roderick's hand and held it while he thanked him, in a voice that trembled, for saving his daughter's life. Roderick was attempting to disclaim any heroism in the matter, when Mrs. Graham fell upon him with a rustle of silks, and fairly overwhelmed him with gratitude. Then two or three others came up and demanded to know what it was all about and Roderick was overcome with embarrassment and was thankful when his father appeared and he could make his escape.

Lawyer Ed came to the buggy to say good-bye to Angus and to enquire what was the collie-shankie at the kirk door, and when he heard, he slapped Roderick on the back. "Well, well, look here, my lad," he cried, "why, your fortune is as good as made. Sandy Graham has been mad at me for the space of twenty-five years or more about something or other—what was it now? Bless me if I haven't forgotten what. But he nearly left the church over it, and entirely left the law firm of Brians & Co." The bereaved head of the firm put back his head at the recollection, shut his eyes, and laughed long and heartily. "But you've got him back again all right, and I tell you this,



my lad, if you get his business your fortune is just about made. Only don't go and lose your heart to the handsome young lady while you need a steady head!"

They drove away, and while the father talked on the drive home of the sermon, the son answered absently; his thoughts were all with the piece of good luck which had come his way by such a mere chance.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **"FLOATED THE GLEAM"**

Ever since Leslie Graham was old enough to know what she wanted she had always managed to get it. She was the only child of wealthy parents, as Algonquin counted wealth. Her father was absorbed in business, and felt he had done his duty by his daughter when he gave her money enough to be the best dressed girl in the town. Her mother's creed in regard to bringing up children was to give the dears a good time when they were young, they would grow old soon enough. So Leslie's time and energies were bent to the two main tasks of life, unconsciously set her by her parents, to spend as much money as possible on clothes, and to have a good time.

She had been named, as many another girl of the congregation, Margaret Leslie, after the minister's wife; she was a member of the church; she had been brought up to attend Sunday-school and mission band, and to be helpful in all social functions of the congregation; and withal she was frankly and happily, and entirely pagan.

The earliest lesson life had taught her was that, if she wanted anything, screams generally produced the desired object. The second lesson was that, when screams failed, one must scramble down from one's high chair and go after the prize and wrest it from table or sideboard or high eminence, no matter how much hard climbing or bumps were entailed.

So when Roderick McRae became desirable in her eyes, in her usual straightforward manner, she frankly sought him out and demanded his attention. His sudden appearance on the evening of her loss of self-confidence, the appeal his rescue had made to her girlish imagination, and the charm of the forbidden that hung over Old Angus McRae's son made him a real Prince Charming. She was quite certain that he needed only to know that she liked him, to be immediately her slave. He seemed very shy and hard to convince that she cared, but that was natural, considering the wide difference in their social positions.

On the Monday morning after her father's arrival home, when he was ready to go down to the bank, she suddenly appeared, dressed in her prettiest white gown and announced her intention of accompanying him.

"Well, well, I feel highly flattered," he declared, as they walked down the garden path together. Then, as he opened the gate for her, he asked, with a knowing twinkle in his eye, for he was an astute business man, and accustomed to divining people's motives, "Now, what do you want to wheedle out of me this morning? You've been for a trip already, and it can't be a new dress."

She laughed and, as was her way, went straight to the point. "No, it's a new young man, Daddy. I want you to do something nice for Roderick McRae. Haven't you a big chunk of business you need a lawyer for?"

Her father frowned. "Tut, tut, if I've got to give some work to every young man that does you a favour, my business will be gone to the dogs in a month."

"A favour! Why, Father Graham, he saved my life!" cried the girl solemnly.

"Yes, dear, I realise that, and I'd like to do something for him. But Ed Brians, I can't stand. He wants to run everything in the town. He pretty nearly does, but he's not going to run my business. You mind that!"

Though Lawyer Ed had completely forgotten the cause of the trouble between them, Alexander Graham had not. Upon a certain date, years earlier, the belligerent young elder had tramped into a managers' meeting, denounced a money-saving scheme of Manager Graham's, and called the assembled brethren all misers and skinflints. The managers had succumbed, in the most friendly manner, all except Sandy Graham. He had resigned instead, and had tended his grievance carefully until, from a small shoot, in ten years it had grown up into a flourishing tree with deep and tenacious roots.

There was another cause of dissension, too. Alexander Graham had a brother named William, a lawyer, who lived in New York and was reputed fabulously wealthy. And he was an old and staunch friend of Lawyer Ed, who could not and would not be moved from his loyalty, no matter

how many grievances Sandy placed before him. Bill was forever putting business in the way of Edward Brians, and his brother's jealousy and ill-feeling grew stronger as the years passed.

Lawyer Ed paid not the slightest attention to Sandy Graham's enmity. He invariably treated the old friend with an overwhelming good-humour which only served to increase the irritation.

Leslie Graham knew all this, but she cared not a pin's worth for her father's quarrels. She was not going to have her plans spoiled by a mere parent.

"Now, Daddy dear!" she cried, knowing exactly how to manage him, "I should think you'd have wit enough to see that Lawyer Ed would hate you to give your business to his young partner far worse than to give it to Willoughby. There's that new lumber scheme. You can give Roderick that and tell him Lawyer Ed's not to know anything about it, eh?"

The man hesitated. He was at that moment on his way to the law firm of Willoughby and Baldwin to put into their hands the work of negotiating with the British North American R. R. Company regarding some timber limits in New Ontario. It was a complicated piece of business, needing careful handling. He had not much faith in Willoughby—he was too old, and less in Baldwin, who was too young. This young McRae, being the son of Angus McRae, would be honest, there was no doubt of that, and evidently he had ability. And while he hesitated, and his daughter argued and cajoled, they came to the door of Lawyer Ed's office. Roderick was standing there alone, having just seen his partner off down the street. Miss Leslie Graham took matters into her own hands with her usual charming audacity.

"Good morning, Mr. Roderick McRae," she cried. "Here's my respected parent can't make up his mind about a piece of backwoods he owns away back of beyond somewhere, so I just steered him down here. He was just saying on the way down that he would rather have the firm of Brians and McRae do his business than any one he knew of. Weren't you, Papa? Now you go in there with Roderick, and I shall call for you when I come back from my shopping. Bye, bye."

She shoved him up the steps and right in at the door, and skipped away, laughing over her shoulder at the trick she had played. Her father stood a moment looking after her, not knowing whether to be angry or amused. She turned and winked at him when she reached the bottom of the steps, and his anger vanished. He laughed indulgently, threw up his hands with a helpless gesture and followed Roderick into the office. And before he stated his business he spent a half-hour telling how much his daughter was to him and how grateful he was to Roderick for what he had done.

Roderick's eyes shone when the new work was laid before him. It was a big thing, bigger than had ever come the way of that little office in all the years it had done business in Algonquin. It fired his ambition to make good. The shrewd business man saw the look in the young lawyer's eye, and he did not regret the step Leslie had forced him to take.

"If you see that those rascals don't get the better of us, Mr. McRae," he said in parting, "I need not tell you that you will profit by it as well as ourselves."

Roderick thanked him for his trust. "When Mr. Brians comes in—" he commenced, but his client interrupted.

"I want it to be distinctly understood that this is your work entirely, Mr. McRae," he said. "Mr. Brians will understand."

Lawyer Ed did understand, and laughed long and loud over what he called Sandy Graham's extreme Scotchness. But he was vastly pleased that Roderick was to have a chance of showing what he could do, and that the wide business interests of Graham and Company were to be once more in their hands.

And now Roderick plunged into work with all his might. When the news spread that Graham and Co. had given a big transaction into the hands of Lawyer Ed's young partner, others followed. Lawyer Ed himself was a shrewd advocate, but every one knew that his business tendencies ran on certain lines. His chief concern had always been to settle family troubles, rather than to make money out of them. Many a puzzled farmer he had saved from losing in an unjust bargain when the opposite course would have meant money for himself. Many a family on the verge of disintegration over a will had been brought together and made happy, because their lawyer was more bent on their welfare than his own. Roderick intended fully to keep up the fine old standards of the firm as far as possible. But he was determined to be much more than the legal adviser of all the folk living around Algonquin who couldn't do business themselves.

He took his mid-day meal at the Algonquin House, the leading hotel, and won the favour of Mr. Crofter, the proprietor. And there came to the office of Brians and McRae one day, much to the senior partner's amazement, Mr. Crofter himself, with some mining concerns he had in the north. Mr. Crofter had never quite seen eye to eye with Lawyer Ed, since the latter had declared flatly and loudly, at a tea-meeting given by the Sons of Temperance, that a man who sold liquor over a bar was a curse to the community. But Mr. Crofter knew when he wanted his business well done. He distrusted almost every one in Algonquin, but he knew old Angus McRae's son would be incapable of dishonesty.

The second surprise came a few months later when the success of Crofter's deal had made the young lawyer's name. Alexander Graham took all his business out of the hands of the Willoughby firm, and gave it to Brians & McRae.

That evening Roderick was asked to the Grahams for dinner, as a further honour. He went with some trepidation, as it was his first venture into society. Mr. Graham was exceedingly genial, and Leslie was charming, but the lady of the house was rather distant. She could not help seeing Leslie's partiality towards Roderick and resented it. As her husband's lawyer, the young man was quite acceptable, but as a possible aspirant to his daughter's favour he would be entirely out of place. Fred Hamilton was the only other one present outside the family. The young man sat in sulky silence most of the evening, a circumstance which seemed to put his pretty hostess into a high good humour.

The invitation to the Grahams was the signal for other doors to open. Roderick was invited everywhere. And wherever he went there was Miss Leslie Graham, the belle of every occasion, and always ready to bestow her greatest favours upon him. He always looked about him at these gay gatherings of young people half-expecting to see the young lady he had met on the *Inverness*; but he was always disappointed, and wondered why she did not appear.

Helen Murray, herself, often wondered why she was not bidden to the many festivities of which she heard the gay Miss Annabel talk.

"You will probably be invited out a great deal, Miss Murray," Miss Armstrong cautioned her, "and I hope you will select very carefully the places you visit. You see you are practically one of our family, and though we respect all grades of society, you must realise that we have a position to maintain. And I hope you won't think me interfering, my dear; but if you would consult Annabel and me, as to accepting an invitation, I think it would be wise. We should like so much to have you of our set."

Helen obeyed, a little puzzled, but afraid to act against the judgment of her august hostess. So she found herself soon bidden to afternoon teas and receptions and all the affairs where the older set attended. She met no one of her own age, however, except Miss Annabel who called them all old frumps, and declared married folk were deadly dull, and she would never go near their parties again so long as she lived. And she fell into a state of nervous apprehension, when the approach of the next afternoon tea was rumoured abroad, lest she should not be invited. Poor Miss Annabel was being slowly but surely pushed on into the older set by the younger generation. She hated her position, but it was the only one left, and it was better than the dread desolation of no position at all.

Helen kept away from the whirl, finding her duties at school sufficient excuse. She often longed for some young life, however, and wondered why she did not meet the daughters of the ladies who were so kind to her when she went out under Miss Armstrong's wing.

She did not know as yet that the reason was two-fold. First, the younger set were a little more exclusive than the one in which the Misses Armstrong moved. Young Algonquin had but recently awakened to the fact that society was not society unless you built a fence about it and kept somebody—it didn't matter much who—out. The other and more potent reason was Helen's unfortunate sex. There were already far too many young ladies in Algonquin. A young man with exactly her claims to recognition would have been received with acclaim. But, except in holiday time, there was always a sad dearth of young men in Algonquin, if not an actual famine. So no wonder the young ladies rather resented the appearance of another girl to join their already too swollen ranks, and especially a girl so undeniably attractive as the new school teacher.

Quite unconscious of all this, Helen spent many a lonely evening at her window looking down at the gay crowds passing along the street towards the lake, and listening drearily to their happy voices floating under the leafy tunnel of the trees.

She dared not join the groups that would have welcomed her, the young folk who earned their living and who made the church a centre of social intercourse for the lonely. Miss Armstrong had politely given her to understand that she would not be welcome in Rosemount, if she associated with the girls who stood behind the counter, or worked in a dress-maker's shop.

She often saw Miss Leslie Graham as she darted into the house and out again, on a flying visit to her grandmother, but she had no opportunity of meeting her.

So in spite of her brave attempts to forget her grief in her work, and in spite of Madame's unflinching kindness and help, the girl was often very lonely. The big echoing house of Rosemount was always deserted of an evening. Grandma went to bed, and either Helen or the little maid was left on guard, while the two ladies went to a dinner-party or an evening at cards.

One soft languorous September evening, the loneliness promised to be unbearable, and she determined to go alone for a walk. Madame was always too tired for a tramp after school, and she knew no one else who would accompany her.

She spoke of it at the tea-table in the faint hope that Miss Annabel might suggest coming too, but was disappointed.

"Why that'll be lovely, dearie," she cried, "go and have a run in the park. It will do you good. I'd dearly love to go with you, but there's Mrs. Captain Willoughby's musicale. There won't be a soul there that isn't old enough to be in her dotage, but I promised that nothing short of sudden death would make me miss it."

"Annabel, I am surprised at you," said her sister reprovingly. "I wouldn't go far in the evening alone, Miss Murray," she added in her stately way. "It does not seem just—well—exactly proper, don't you know."

"Nonsense, Elinor. How's the poor child to help going alone, when there's no one to go with her?"

Helen had learned to look for these slight altercations at the table. While the sisters were apparently of one mind on all the larger issues of life, they had a habit of arguing and cavilling over the little things that often left their young boarder in a state of wonder.

She slipped away as soon as the meal was over, for the evenings were growing short and she wanted to see the lake in its sunset glory. The night was warm and all the young people were on the lake. The streets were deserted. But on the pretty vine-clad verandas, the heads of families sat sewing or reading and smoking, with the little ones tumbling about the grass. On one veranda a gramophone, the first in the town, screeched out a strain from a Grand Opera to the wonder and admiration of all the neighbours. Helen moved along the street more lonely than ever in the midst of all this home happiness. She passed a little cottage where a young man and woman were tying up a rose vine, beaten down by recent rains. Madame had told her they had been married just the week before. They looked very happy, laughing and whispering like a couple of nest-building robins, as they worked together to make their little home more beautiful. She had to hurry away from the pretty scene. Some one had promised her once that there should be a rose vine over their porch in the new home he had been planning for her.

She turned a corner and was alarmed by a great churning and puffing noise ahead, as though the *Inverness* had left her native element and come sailing up Main Street. But it was only Captain Willoughby in his new automobile. It was the first, and as yet the only machine in Algonquin, and its unhappy owner would have sold it to the lowest bidder could he have found any one foolish enough to bid at all. For so far, the captain had had no opportunity to learn to run it. His first excursions abroad had been attended with such disaster, such mad careering of horses, and plunging into ditches, such dismaying paralysis of the engine right in the middle of a neighbour's gateway, such inexplicable excursions onto the sidewalk and through plate glass windows, such harrowing overturning of baby-carriages, that Mrs. Captain Willoughby took an attack of nerves every time he went abroad, and the town fathers finally requested that the captain take out his Juggernaut car only at such hours as the streets were clear. So on quiet evenings such as this one, when there were not likely to be any horses abroad, Mrs. Willoughby telephoned all her friends and told them to take in the children for the captain was coming. And so, heralded, like the Lady Godiva, the trembling motorist went forth, while the streets immediately became as empty as those of Coventry, with rows of peeping Toms, safe inside their fences, jeering at the unhappy man's uneven progress. He whizzed past Helen at a terrible speed, grazing the side-walk and giving her almost as great a fright as he got himself, and went whirring up the hill.

She did not want to join the crowds in the park so she followed the familiar street past the school, and out along the Pine Road toward the lake shore. But when she found her way was leading her through Willow Lane, where all the dirty and poor people of Algonquin lived, she turned off into a path that crossed a field and led to the water. Helen had some little pupils from Willow Lane, and their appearance did not invite a closer acquaintance with their homes.

She did not know that she was passing near the back of Old Peter McDuff's farm, but she noticed that the fences were conveniently broken down, and left a path clear down to the water's edge.

Lake Algonquin lay before her in its evening glory, a glory veiled and softened by the amethyst veil the autumn was weaving. The water was as still and as clear as a mirror. To her left the town nestled in a soft purple mist, the gay voices from the park were softened and sweetened by the distance. Straight ahead of her lay Wawa island, an airy thing floating lightly on the water, and reflected perfectly in its depths.

At one end of its dark greenery autumn had hung out a banner to herald her coming—a scarlet sumach. A yellowing maple leaf fell at Helen's feet as she passed. Along the water's edge where the birches grew thick arose a great twittering and chattering. The long southern flight was already being discussed. Away out beyond the island a canoe drifted along on the golden water. Some one seated in it was picking a mandolin and singing, "Good-bye, Summer."

Helen slipped down the path where the birches and elms, entwined with the bitter-sweet, hung over the water. A little point jutted out with a big rock on the end of it. She took off her hat, seated herself upon the rock, and drank in the silence and peace of the calm evening.

A little launch went rap-rap-rap across the clear glass of the water, leaving a long trail of light behind it like a comet, and the sweet evening odours were mingled with the unsavoury scent

of gasoline. Helen had often sped joyfully over the bay at home in just such a noisy little craft, quite unconscious of being obnoxious to any one else. It was not the first time she had found her view-point was changing. She seemed to have been drifted ashore in a wreck, and to be sitting looking on at the life she had lived with wonder and sometimes with disapproval. The launch passed, the evening shadows deepened, but she still sat wrapped in the deeper shadows of her own sad thoughts.

She had no idea how long she had sat there when she was roused by the sudden appearance of a canoe right at her side. It had stolen up silently, propelled by the noiseless stroke of a practised paddler, and went past her like a ghost. The young man kneeling in the stern had something of the perfectly balanced play of muscle, and poise of lithe figure that belonged to the Indian. For in spite of his Anglo-Saxon blood, Roderick McRae was as much a product of this land of lake and forest as the Red Skin. He had almost passed her, when he looked up and saw her for the first time. He gave a start; it seemed too good to be true. But she bowed so distantly that his hesitating paddle dipped again. He went on slowly, too shy to intrude. He had taken but a few strokes when from away behind her on the darkening land, came a loud sound of singing. Peter Fiddle was drunk again. Feeling very grateful to Peter for the excuse, Roderick turned about, with an adroit twist of his paddle, and glided back till he was opposite her.

"Excuse me, Miss Murray," he stammered, feeling his old shyness return, "but—are you alone here?"

"Yes," said the girl a slight wonder in her voice at the question. "I came down for a walk and—" she turned and glanced behind her and gave an exclamation at the darkness of the woods. She had forgotten the magic power the water has of gathering and holding the sunset light long after darkness has wrapped the earth. "Oh, I had no idea it was so late!" she cried in dismay.

Roderick joyfully ran his canoe up close to the rock. The fear in her voice made him forget his embarrassment. "I don't wish to trouble you," he said, "but it isn't wise to go home that path through the woods alone." He hesitated. He did not like to tell her that Old Peter might come down there raging drunk, and that at the head of Willow Lane she might meet with another drunken row between Mike Cassidy and his wife. "Oh dear!" she cried, "how could I be so foolish? I never dreamed of its being so dark and I forgot—"

"If you will let me I'll take you home," said Roderick eagerly, "in my canoe."

He was immeasurably relieved at her answer.

"Let you?" she cried gratefully. "Why, I'll be ever so much obliged to you. I am sorry to be such a trouble. I don't see how I was so careless," she added in frank apology.

Roderick knew he ought to say it was no trouble, but a pleasure. But he was too shy and too happy. He succeeded only in mumbling, "Oh, not at all," or something equally vague.

He brought the canoe close to the rock and held out his hand. She stepped in very carefully, and with something the air of one venturing out on a very thin piece of ice.

"It's the first time I ever stepped into a canoe," she said a little tremulously. He steadied her with his hand, smiling a little at her graceful awkwardness. Then he showed her how to place herself in the little seat in the centre, with a cushion at her back. He did it clumsily enough for he was embarrassed and nervous in her presence. In all his years of paddling about the lake it was but the second time he had taken a young lady into his canoe, and the first one he had rescued out of the water, and this one off a lonely point of land. So he was not versed in the proper things to say to a lady when taking her for a paddle.

The canoe slipped silently out from the rock and slid along the darkening shore. Only the faintest suggestion of the sunset glow lay on the softly glimmering surface of the water. But they had gone only a few yards, when there came a new miracle to remake the scene. From behind the black bulk of the pine clad island peeped a great round harvest moon, and suddenly the whole world of land and water was painted anew in softer golden tints veiled in silver. The girl sat silent and awe-struck. Was there never to be an end to the wonders of this place? "Oh," she said in a whisper, "isn't it beautiful?"

Roderick looked, and was silent too.

Yes, it was very wonderful he thought, more wonderful to him than she dreamed. He felt as if he could paddle on forever over the shining lake with the magic colours of moon-rise and sunset meeting in the golden hair of the girl opposite him. They went on for a long time in silence. They passed into the shadow of the island with silver lances through the trees barring their path. The dewy scent of pine and cedar stole out from the dark shore. The silver light grew brighter, the whole lake was lit up with a soft white radiance.

"Have you always lived here?" she asked at last in a whisper, an unspoken fear in her voice lest a sound disturb the fair surroundings and they vanish, leaving them in a common, every day world of material things.

"Always," said Roderick in the same hushed tone, though for a different reason. "I was born

on the old farm back here."

"Then I wonder if you know how lovely it all is?"

"Perhaps not. But it is home to me, you know, and that gives an added charm."

"Yes," she said and checked a sigh. "And you've always paddled about here I suppose."

"I never remember when I learned. But I remember my first excursion alone. I was just six. Old Peter McDuff who lives on the next farm used to tell me fairy tales. And he told me there was a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, waiting for the man bold enough to go after it. I felt that I was the man, and I paddled off one evening when there was a rainbow in the sky. I got lost in the fog, and my father and a search-party found me drifting away out on the lake. And I didn't bring home the pot of gold."

"Nobody ever does," she said drearily. "And every one is hunting it." They were silent for a moment, the girl thinking of how she too had gone after a vanishing rainbow. Then the memory of that vision of the first Sunday morning in Algonquin church came to her. There was a rainbow somewhere, with the treasure at the foot; one that did not vanish either if one persisted in its pursuit.

She tried to say something of this to Roderick, fearing her sombre words had set him to recalling her secret.

"I suppose it is perfect happiness," he said. "If so, I never met any one who had found it, except—yes, I believe I know one."

"Who?" she asked eagerly.

"My father," answered Roderick gently.

"I have heard of him," she said, smiling at the glow of pride in the son's eyes. "And where did he discover it?"

Roderick laughed. "I suppose it's in the heart, after all; but my father is never so happy as when he is in the midst of misery. His pot of gold seems to lie down on Willow Lane."

"On Willow Lane? Why that's where all those dreadfully poor, dirty people live, isn't it?"

"Yes. They are an unsavoury bunch down there. That's where Mr. and Mrs. Cassidy throw the household furniture at each other, and Billy Perkins starves his family for drink, and where the celebrated Peter McDuff plays the fiddle every night at the tavern. He might have serenaded you, if you had gone back home by the road."

She smiled gratefully and her smile was very beautiful. But her thoughts were in Willow Lane. There were worse things there that Roderick did not mention, but she had heard of them. It was a strange and wonderful thing that the saintly-faced old man with the white hair, whom she had seen with Roderick at church, should find his happiness among such people.

Roderick had paddled as slowly as it was possible to move, but he could not prolong the little voyage any further. They were at the landing.

"I have made you come away back here," she said, "and now you will be so late getting home. I must let you go back at once. Good night, and thank you."

Roderick had been hoping that he might walk up to Rosemount with her, but felt he was dismissed. He wanted, too, to ask her if she would not come out on the lake again, but his shyness kept him silent.

As he helped her out, the yellow light of the wharf lamp fell upon her light dress and shone on the gold of her hair, and at the same moment a canoe slid silently out of the dimness beyond and glided across the track of the moon. In the stern knelt one of Algonquin's young men wielding a lazy paddle, and in the low seat opposite, with a filmy scarf about her dark hair, reclined Miss Leslie Graham. She sat up straight very suddenly, and stared at the girl who was stepping from the canoe. But she did not speak, and Roderick was too absorbed to notice who had passed. And the young man with the lazy paddle wondered all the way home what had happened to make the lively young lady so silent and absent-minded.

Helen Murray thought many times of what Roderick had told her about his father's interest in Willow Lane. She could not help wondering if others could find there the peace that shone in the old man's eyes. She was wondering if she should go down and visit the place, when, one day, Willow Lane came to her. It was a warm languorous October day, a day when all nature seemed at a standstill. Her work was done, she was resting under her soft coverlet of blue gossamer, preparing for her long sleep. Helen had had a hard day, for she had not yet learned her new strange task. The room was noisy, fifty little heads were bent over fifty different schemes for mischief, and fifty sibilant whispers delivered forbidden messages. The teacher was writing on the board, and turned suddenly at the sound of a heavy footstep in the hall. The door was open, letting in the breeze from the lake, and in it stood a big hairy man with a bushy black head and

wild blue eyes. Helen stood and stared at him half-frightened.

The fifty small heads suddenly whirled about and a hundred eyes stared at the visitor, but there was no fear in them. A giggling whisper ran like fire over the room. "It's Peter Fiddle!" The man shook his fist at them, and the teacher went with some apprehension towards the door.

"Can I do anything for you, sir?" she enquired, outwardly calm, but inwardly quaking. He took off his big straw hat and made her a profound bow.

"I'll be Peter McDuff," he said with a stately air, "an' I'll loss a pig."

"I—I don't think it's here," faltered Helen, dismayed at a visit from the notorious McDuff. "You might ask some other place," she suggested hopefully.

"I'll be wantin' the bairns to be lookin' for it," he said, making another bow. He turned to the children, now sitting, for the first time since their teacher had set eyes on them, absolutely still and attentive.

"If you see a pig wis a curly tail," he announced, "that's me!"

The whole school burst into a shout of laughter, and the man's face flamed with anger. He shook his fist at them again, moving a step into the room. "Ye impident young upstarts!" he shouted. "I'll be Peter McDuff!" he cried proudly. "And I'll be having you know they will not be laughing at the McDuff whatefer!"

"I—I'm sure they didn't mean to be rude, Mr. McDuff," ventured the frightened teacher.

"My name'll be Peter McDuff," he insisted, coming further into the room while she stepped back in terror. "I'll be sixty years of old, and I'll neffer be casting a tory vote! An' if you'll be gifing me a man my own beeg and my own heavy—" he brandished his fists fiercely.

"Peter!"

The McDuff turned. Behind him stood Angus McRae, his gentle face distressed. He laid his hand on Peter's shoulder with an air of quiet power. "Come away home with me, Peter man," he said soothingly. "We'll be finding the pig on the road."

Peter stumbled out grumbling, and Angus McRae, pausing a moment to deliver an apology to Helen, followed. Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby came along the hall rocking with laughter.

"You poor child!" she cried. "I heard him, and was coming to the rescue when I saw old Angus. I knew you'd be scared. But Peter wouldn't hurt a hair of a woman's head."

"That Mr. McRae seemed to have some strange power over him," whispered Helen, watching, with some apprehension, the two climb into an old wagon.

"So he has. And he's the only one that has. He keeps Peter in order when he's drunk and keeps him sober, when he can. Ah, dear me! dear me! There's a clever man all gone wrong. Angus McRae's been working with him for years. He lives out there past what they call Willow Lane. Ever been down there?"

"No, but I've heard of it often."

"It's that bit of street that runs from the end of the town where that old hotel is. I'm going down there after school to see about Minnie Perkins. Come along for a walk. Now, you children, go right back there, do you hear me?" For the primary grade had overflowed and was flooding the halls. And Madame swept them back and slammed her door.

When school was dismissed and the last noisy youngster had gone storming forth Helen went down the hall to her friend's room. Madame came swaying out carrying a bunch of gay spiked gladiolus, her draperies floating about her with cherubs peeping from their folds, like a saint in an old picture.

She dismissed her satellites firmly at the first corner, except those who lived beyond or on Willow Lane, a ceremony that necessitated a great deal of shooing and scolding.

The first eye-sore on Willow Lane was the old hotel, still standing there, forlorn and ugly, as though ashamed of all the evil it had wrought.

As the years passed there was always a new generation of loungers to sit and smoke and spit on its sagging veranda. From it ran the old high board fence plastered with ugly advertisements of soap or circus or patent medicine. It disfigured the whole street and shut off a possible glimpse of the lake. Away on the other side of it was a meadow where in spring-time the larks soared and sang, and beyond it the lake and the woods where the mocking bird and the bee made music. But here in Willow Lane was neither sound nor sight that was pleasant.

The street consisted of a single sorry-looking row of houses with narrow box-like yards shoved up close to the road, as though there were not acres and acres of open free meadow land

behind them. The hills upon which Algonquin was situated ceased abruptly here, and the land spread away in a flat plain along the lake shore. The ground was low and damp, and every house in Willow Lane that had the misfortune to possess a cellar was the abode of disease. A deep ditch ran parallel to the rickety board side-walk. There had just been a week of unceasing rain and it was full of green water.

"Oh dear!" said Helen, in distress. "I had no idea there was such a place as this in Algonquin."

"People have lived here for years and still seem to have no idea," said Madame. She paused and looked back. "Do you see that house 'way up on the hill yonder? The one with the tower sticking up between the trees? That's Alexander Graham's mansion. And he makes a good deal of his money out of the rents of these houses, and nobody seems to care very much. The people of the churches send down turkeys and plum puddings, and everything good at Christmas time, and seem to think that will do for another year. But the only man who tries to do anything all the time is Angus McRae. I suppose you know that Lawyer Ed calls him the Good Samaritan, and this the Jericho Road."

The first house in the dreary row was the turbulent home of Mr. Cassidy, the gentleman who commanded so much of Lawyer Ed's attention. Mrs. Cassidy was on the front veranda washing. It was a pastime she seldom indulged in, for there was never much water in the old leaky rain barrel at the corner of the house. For while Willow Lane had water, water everywhere, the inhabitants had not any drop in which to wash themselves. But the overflowing rain-barrels had tempted Judy to-day, and so her little figure was bobbing up and down over the washboard like a play Judy in a show. She was scrubbing her own clothes, but not her husband's, for Mr. Cassidy and his wife lived each an entirely independent life. They occupied different sections of the house even, and the lady saw to it that her husband's apartments were the coldest in winter and the hottest in summer. This arrangement had been held to, ever since the day that Mike thrashed Judy. It had not been without some provocation, it is true; for though very small, Mrs. Cassidy had a valiant spirit, and had many and varied ways of exasperating her husband's inflammable temper. But Lawyer Ed had appealed to Father Tracy, and that muscular shepherd of his flock had come down upon Willow Lane and thrashed Mike thoroughly and soundly. Since then there had been a sort of armed neutrality in the home of the Cassidys.

"Good day, Mrs. Cassidy," called Madame over the little fence. "It's a beautiful day after the rain."

"Aw, well now and is that you, Mrs. Adam?" enquired Judy, her little face peering out of the clouds of steam. "Sure it's yerself would be bringin' beautiful weather, aven if it was poorin'."

Her voice was soft, her manner ingratiating, there was no sign of the warrior spirit beneath.

"I hope the rain'll keep off till you get your clothes dry," said Madame pleasantly, but passing resolutely on, for Mrs. Cassidy showed sighs of a desire to come to the gate and have a friendly chat. "We must get out of her way. If she starts to talk we'll never escape," she whispered. "Just look at that will you!"

The second place was one where some pitiful attempts at beautifying had been made. The yard was swept clean and a little drain had been dug at the side to let the water run off. A few drowned flowers leaned over on their hard clay beds, and there was a neat curtain and a mosquito netting on each window. But right against the window that overlooked the Cassidys' yard, Mrs. Cassidy had piled all the old boards, boxes and rubbish she could find, to obstruct the view to the town, of her too ambitious neighbour. "Now, what do you think of that?" cried Madame. "Isn't she the malicious little soul?"

"Good day, Mrs. Kent, and how are you to-day?"

"Good day, Mrs. Adam," from a sharp-faced neat woman, sitting at the doorway of the barricaded house, knitting rapidly.

"It's a beautiful day, isn't it?" said Madame ingratiatingly.

"Lovely," responded the woman. "It's a great thing we had so much rain, we need a lot down here, we're that dry."

Madame chose to take the sarcasm as a joke, and laughed blithely.

But the woman did not smile. "She's had to work too hard, poor soul," whispered the visitor when they had passed. "She's clean and thrifty but she has to wash to support a crippled boy and a consumptive girl. No wonder she's sour."

They passed two or three more sorry-looking houses and finally paused before the gate of the home of Madame's little pupil. The bare grassless yard was filled with old boxes and rubbish. A big lumbering lad of about fourteen sprawled over the doorstep playing with a string. He looked up with vacant eyes, and clutched at the visitors' skirts, muttering and jabbering in idiot glee.

Madame put her hand tenderly on his small, ill-shaped head.



"Poor Eddie," she whispered, "poor boy."

She fumbled in her big black satchel and brought out a gay candy stick. He grabbed it with strange cries of joy. The sounds brought a ragged little ghost of a woman to the door, carrying a tiny bundle on her arm.

"Well, well, is that you, Madame?" she cried, smiling a broad toothless smile. "I thought it was you, an' Minnie she says, I believe that's my teacher, Ma."

Madame climbed the steep steps, Helen following. The room was dirty and untidy. A rusty stove and table, three chairs and an ill-smelling cupboard in the corner, with some gaudy glass dishes upon it, were the only furniture.

"And how are you, Mrs. Perkins? This is the new teacher, Miss Murray. When Minnie passes out of my room, she'll be under this lady's care. And how is my little girl this afternoon?"

Madame passed to the door of the tiny bedroom. The bed filled the whole space with just room enough to stand left between it and the wall. A little girl was lying on it, her hollow cheeks pink, her eyes bright. The sun poured in at the bare window and the room was hot and breathless. The swarming flies covered her face and arms. She brushed them away fretfully, and stretched out her hot hands for the flowers. "Oh, teacher," she cried, trying to strangle her cough, "I watched and I watched for you all day and I was scared you wasn't comin'."

Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby sat down on the edge of the dirty bed and put her cool hand on the little girl's burning forehead.

Helen placed herself rather gingerly on a proffered chair, and looked at the wee bundle in the woman's arms.

"Why, it's a baby," she whispered in awe. The mother's faded face lit up with pride. She held the little scrap of humanity towards the visitor. "'E's a grite little rascal, 'e is," she exclaimed fondly. "As smart as a weasel, an' 'im only a fo'tnight old last Sunday."

Helen was positively afraid to touch the little bundle, but the look of utter exhaustion on the woman's face overcame her repugnance. She held out her arms and the mother dropped the baby into them and sank upon a chair with a sigh of relief.

"Only a little over two weeks," gasped Helen, looking at the wee wrinkled face peeping from the bundle.

The mother's face beamed with joy and pride. She thought that the visitor's astonishment was for the wonderful baby, all unconscious of herself.

"Yes'm, just but a fo'tnight, and a little over. Oh 'e's a grite little tyke, 'e is. Ain't 'e, now?"

"Has Doctor Blair been to see Minnie?" asked Madame softly.

"Yes'm. Old Angus 'e was 'ere on Monday, and 'e sent 'im. 'E says it's 'er lungs." She looked at her visitors with child-like simplicity. "Is it very bad for Minnie to 'ave anything wrong with 'er lungs do you think, Mrs. Adam?"

Madame's gentle face was eloquent with pity. "Doctor Blair is a good, kind doctor," she said evasively. "He'll do his best for her. You do everything for her that he asks."

"Yes'm. Old Angus 'e was trying to tell me wot to do, but I ain't much of a 'and at sickness. Minnie she gets up and gets wot she wants but I tell 'er she ought to lie abed."

The little girl had fallen into a doze, under the soothing touch of her teacher's hand. Madame took off the veil from her hat and spread it over the child's face as a protection from the flies. She came back into the kitchen. The idiot boy came in and rolled about the floor muttering and whining.

"And how's Mr. Perkins?" asked Madame. "Is he keeping well?" It was her gentle way of asking if he was keeping sober. The woman's tired face lit up.

"Yes, ma'am. 'E is that. 'E's been keepin' fine since three weeks come Sunday. That was the night Old Angus took 'im to the Army an' got 'im saved. An' 'e's ben keepin' nicely saved ever since. We've been 'avin' butter," she added proudly. "Ever since 'e got 'imself converted. But we 'ad to 'ave the doctor for pore Minnie." Her thin little face quivered. "If Minnie'd only get better now, we'd be gettin' a good start, an' we'd all be 'appy."

"Mr. Perkins has work now, hasn't he?" said Madame comfortingly.

"Yes'm. It's not steady, but Old Angus 'e's goin' to get 'im another job. It's ben rather 'ard on my man," she added apologetically, "just a comin' out from the hold country. It's 'ard gettin' work at first. An' I wan't much use with 'im a comin'," she added, touching the bundle reverently.

"So this is the only Canadian baby you have," said Madame.

"Yes'm." The mother forgot her troubles and smiled and fawned on the bundle in delight.

"He's Johny Canuck, isn't he?" asked Madame, with a feeble attempt at gaiety.

"Oh, no, ma'am," cried the mother hastily. "'E's William 'Enery, after 'is paw. We ain't got 'im christened yet. But jist as soon's I can get 'im a dress the pawson,—'e's a foine man,—'e says 'e'll come an' do 'im, an' if my man jist keeps nicely saved, we'll be gettin' a dress. But it's been 'ard on my man. Eddie there 'e's not much 'elp, poor lad. But 'e goes out on the railroad track an' picks me up a bit o' coal. An' Old Angus 'e's been that good. Oh, we'd never a' got on without Old Angus. But if my Minnie 'adn't took sick—"

She wiped a tear on the baby's dirty dress. It was the quiet, dispassionate tear of a woman long accustomed to hardship. "I'll be all right when I get a bit stronger an' can work," she added hopefully.

The visitors rose to go. Madame held the woman's hand a long time, trying to explain, as though to a little child, how the sick girl must be treated. The case seemed so pitiful she was at a loss what to say. "I'm afraid I can't get back for a few days, Mrs. Perkins," she said.

"I'll come and see Minnie to-morrow," said Helen Murray suddenly. The morrow was her precious Saturday that brought a rest from the week's hard work, but the words seemed forced from her. The look of childish fear in the woman's face made some sort of promise necessary for her own peace of mind.

The woman looked up at her gratefully as she took the baby.

"It's awful good o' you, Miss," she cried, "and indeed I'll be thet grateful, if you'd just come and tell me the best thing to do for Minnie. I'm not much of a 'and in sickness." She looked at the two visitors wistfully. "It does a body good jist to 'ave a word with somebody that's sorry for you," she added.

Helen went away, her heart sore and sick with the woman's pain.

The idiot boy followed them to the gate, grinning and muttering. His mother called him from the doorway, and he shambled towards her. Glancing back, Helen saw his long, ungainly body folded in her little thin arms, while she patted him tenderly on the back.

As they stepped out on the rickety side-walk, a tall girl of about sixteen came and stood staring at them from the doorway of the next house. She had a bold, handsome face and her hair and untidy dress were arranged in an extravagant imitation of the latest fashion.

"Good day, Gladys," said Madame kindly, but the girl answered with only a curt nod. When the visitors had passed, she called shrilly to some one in the house behind her.

"Maw! Hurry out an' see the parade! Willow Lane's gettin' awful high-toned!" There was a loud cackle of laughter and Madame's shoulders shook with suppressed merriment. "That's Gladys Hurd," she said, shaking her head. "Poor Gladys, I'm afraid she's not a very good girl. She's not got a very good mother."

As they were turning off Willow Lane, the rattle of a buggy behind them made Madame turn.

"There he is again," she cried. "I suppose he's taken Peter home and found his pig for him. I don't believe I could bear the thought of all the misery on Willow Lane if I didn't know that Old Angus McRae was doing so much to lighten it."

Helen turned. Angus had pulled up in front of the Perkins' house and the idiot lad with queer cries of delight came stumbling out to meet him. The girl named Gladys ran out too, and the old man handed her a sheaf of glowing crimson dahlias. She buried her face in them and hugged them to her in a passion of admiration for their beauty.

"Look, look at Mrs. Cassidy will you?" cried Madame in delight.

Mrs. Cassidy had come to the door at the first sound of the wheels, and when she saw who was near, she darted out and swiftly and stealthily removed the obstruction from her neighbour's window. Then she went to the gate to greet Old Angus, suave and gentle of speech, and as innocent looking as the meek heap of boards now lying in a corner of her yard.

"Well, well, well," laughed Madame as they walked on. "Even if Old Angus would merely drive up and down Willow Lane I believe he would make the people better."

When Helen reached Rosemount she slipped in at the side door and up the back stair. It was the day the Misses Armstrong entertained the whist club, and a clatter of teacups and a hum of voices told her the guests were not yet gone. She removed her hat, and smoothed her hair absently; her thoughts were down on Willow Lane busy with the complex problem of the Perkins family. The windows were opened, and the sound of swishing skirts and laughing voices came up to her from the garden walk. A couple of well-dressed women were going out at the gate.

"Poor old things," cried one in a light merry voice. "They do get up the most comical

concoctions at their teas. And Miss Annabel in a ten-year-old dress! Will she ever grow up?"

"The poor dears can't afford anything better. They are just struggling along," answered her companion. "They had that house left them, and the old lady gets her allowance, but the daughters hadn't a cent left them, and they would both fall dead if they weren't invited to everything. But I don't know where they get money to dress at all."

"I suppose that is why they took that girl to board."

"Of course, poor old Elinor is so scared—" The voice died away and a sharp rap on her door took Helen from the window. She opened the door and there, to her surprise, stood Miss Leslie Graham, looking very handsome in the splendour of her rose silk gown. She smiled radiantly. "Good day, Miss Murray. I think you know who I am and I think it's time we met. I ran up here to get away from that jam of people. Those women take such an lasting age to get away. May I sit with you for a minute?"

Helen offered her a chair gladly. She had often seen Miss Graham, and her unfailing gay spirits had made her wish she could know her. The visitor flung her silver purse upon the bed, her gloves upon the table, her white parasol upon the bureau, and sank into the chair.

"Oh I'm dead," she groaned. "I've passed ten thousand cups of tea, and twenty thousand sandwiches. Don't you pity and despise people that don't know any better than to come to a thing indoors on a hot day?"

Helen smiled. "But you came," she said.

"But I had to. When any of my relations give a tea I am always tethered to a tray and a plate of biscuits." She stopped suddenly and looked at Helen keenly, with a stare that puzzled the girl. Then she jumped up and seated herself upon the bed, rumpling the counterpane. In the few minutes since she had entered the room she had made the place look as if a whirlwind had swept through it, and Helen felt a nervous fear of Miss Armstrong's walking in and witnessing her untidy condition.

"Do you like it here?" she enquired directly.

"Yes, I—think I do. Algonquin is so beautiful, but—"

"But you can't stand my poky aunts, and Grandma's jokes, eh?"

"Oh, no," cried Helen aghast. "Both the Misses Armstrong have been very kind and Mrs. Armstrong is delightful—but, of course, I get homesick." She stopped suddenly for that was a subject upon which she dared not dwell.

The other girl stared. "My goodness. I would love to know what homesickness is like, just for once. I've never been away from home except for a visit somewhere in the holidays, and then I was always having such a ripping time, that the thought of going home made me sick."

She sat for a little while, again looking steadily at Helen. "You certainly are pretty," she exclaimed. "There's no doubt about that."

"I beg your pardon!" said Helen amazed, and doubting if she had heard aright.

"Oh, nothing, never mind!" cried the other with a laugh. She tore off her costly hat and flung it on top of the table. Then she threw herself backwards on the bed staring at the ceiling. She made such a complete wreck of the starched pillow covers and the prim white bedspread that were the pride of Miss Armstrong's heart, that Helen shuddered.

"Well, I don't wonder at you getting homesick here. These ceilings are such a vast distance away they make you feel as if you were a hundred miles from everywhere. I remember sleeping in this room once, when there was an epidemic of scarlet fever or something among the Armstrong kids. All the well ones were dumped on our aunts, after the custom of the family, and I was sent off with a dozen others and we were marooned upstairs, like a gang of prisoners, the girls in this room and the boys in Grandma's. Six in a bed—more or less. I remember we used to lie awake in the early morning before Aunt Elinor would let us get up, and study the outburst of robins and grapes on the ceiling. And one day we got the boys in with their toy guns and tried to shoot the tails off the birds. Cousin Harry Armstrong hit one. Do you see the ghastly remains of that bird without the tail? That was the one. I never hit anything, but I tried hard enough. I am responsible for the bangs on the ceiling. Each one tells when I missed my aim."

Helen laughed all unawares. She was surprised at herself. It was so long since she had laughed she thought she had forgotten how.

"That robin proved to be the Albatross for us," continued Leslie Graham, sitting up again, "for Aunt Elinor found out about it, and we had no more good luck from that day till we went home." She sprang up.

"Dear me! here I am jabbering away, and Mother must be gone." She caught up her hat, dislodging a couple of books that went over on the floor. "Oh, dear, I've knocked something over."

She did not make any motion to pick them up, however. "Mother says I always leave a trail behind me."

She stood before the glass arranging her hat, a radiant figure. Helen looked at her wistfully. There was nothing this girl wanted, surely, that she could not have; and yet she seemed so restless and dissatisfied.

"Do you go out much?" she asked.

"Not very much," said Helen. "My school keeps me busy." She did not say that she knew so very few young people she had no one to go with.

Miss Graham turned to the mirror again. She seemed embarrassed. "The lake's lovely here for paddling. Only the season is nearly over. Have you been out on the water much?" She did not look at the girl as she asked the question.

"No," said Helen, and the other faced round and stared at her. "I don't know how to paddle and I am rather afraid of a canoe."

"Do you mean to say you've never been on the lake since you came here?" asked Leslie Graham, standing and staring with a hat-pin in her mouth.

"Oh, yes, I was—once," said Helen innocently. She did not think it necessary to tell all about Roderick's rescue of her from the point; for already she had heard the Misses Armstrong coupling his name with their niece's in tones of high disapproval. "I was once—but only once."

Leslie Graham's face grew radiant.

"Is that all?" she cried in a tone expressing decided relief.

She amazed Helen by suddenly darting towards her and putting her arm around her. "Why you poor little lonesome thing," she cried, "you must learn to paddle; I will teach you myself. Now, good-bye, I think we are going to be real good friends." She kissed Helen warmly and tripped out, singing a gay song, and leaving her late hostess standing amazed in the middle of her dishevelled room.

## CHAPTER IX

### "DEAF TO THE MELODY"

Autumn painted Algonquin in new and splendid tints. She coloured the maples that lined the streets a dazzling gold, with here and there at the corners, a scarlet tree for variety or one of rose pink or even deep purple. And when the leaves began to fall the whole world was a bewildering flutter of rainbows. The November rains came and washed the gorgeous picture away, and the artist went all over it again in soberer tints, soft greys and tender blues with a hint of coming frost in the deep tones of the sky.

October was almost over before the busy, bustling Lawyer Ed had a chance to think of the promise he had made in the summer to Old Angus, and he called J. P. Thornton and Archie Blair and Roderick together into his office one bright morning to enquire what could be done about getting a local option by-law for Algonquin submitted on the next municipal election day.

The general consensus of opinion was that they were too late for the coming election on New Year's; but that they must start an educational campaign immediately to stir up public opinion on the subject of temperance. And they would get their petition ready for the spring and march to victory a year from the coming January.

J. P. Thornton, who was the most energetic man on the town council, was busy getting a drain dug through Willow Lane to carry off the disease breeding stagnant waters that lay about the little houses. And he declared in a fine oratorical outburst, that if they started this temperance campaign early, and dug deep enough, by a year from the next election day, they would have such a trench projected through Algonquin as would carry away in a flood all the foul, death-breeding liquid that inundated their beautiful town, and pour it into the swamps of oblivion.

Lawyer Ed gave a cheer when he was through, and Archie Blair quoted Burns:

*"Now, Robinson, harrangue na mair,  
But steek your gab forever,  
Or try the wicked town of Ayr,  
For there they'll think you clever."*

For though, as a citizen, the doctor was convinced that a prohibitory liquor law would be a good thing for Algonquin, personally he was not inclined to look upon the beverage as foul death-breeding liquid.

Roderick McRae sat silently listening to the older man. He was wondering what Alexander Graham would say, when he found his lawyer arrayed on the side of the temperance forces. For he knew that his wealthy client had heavy investments in breweries, and also owned secretly, the bigger share of Algonquin's leading hotel and bar-room.

He was not long left in doubt. The ladies of the Presbyterian church gave a turkey and pumpkin pie supper on Thanksgiving eve, with a concert in the Sunday-school room after, all for the sum of twenty-five cents, the proceeds to go to a new red carpet and cushions for the choir gallery. Lawyer Ed was chairman at the concert, of course, and J. P. Thornton was the chief speaker. And though his address was on Imperialism, a subject through which he had grown quite famous, he branched off into temperance and publicly announced that the local option by-law would be submitted before long in Algonquin, and they had better get ready.

Lawyer Ed, who always made a short speech between each item on the programme, burst forth, almost before J. P. had sat down, with the further announcement, accompanied by a great deal of oratory, that the temperance forces would carry their banner to victory and mount over every difficulty even as his Highland ancestors had stormed the heights of Alma. For when Lawyer Ed got upon the platform, a strange transformation always came over him. His Hibernianism fell from him like a garment, and he was over the heather and away like any true born Scot.

The next day, Miss Leslie Graham, in a new autumn suit of ruby velvet and a big plumed hat, dropped in at the office of Brians and McRae and, after chattering merrily for half-an-hour with Roderick, said that her father wanted him to come up the following evening for dinner.

Roderick went, with, as usual, the faint hope that he might see Helen Murray there. He had not succeeded in meeting her, except casually on the street, since that magic night when he had paddled her home in the moonlight. But he was, as usual, disappointed. There was only the Graham family present. Miss Leslie was as gay and charming as ever, and her mother was slightly less stiff with him. But Mr. Graham was exceptionally kind and hospitable. Before returning to the drawing-room after dinner, he carried Roderick off to the library for a little private chat. There were a few matters of business to be discussed, and when they were finished, Mr. Graham said casually:

"I suppose you run the affairs of Brians and McRae yourself these days. I hear Ed's off after another will-o'-the-wisp as usual. Let me see, I believe it's a temperance bee he's got in his bonnet this time."

Roderick was silent. The contemptuous tone nettled him. He would not discuss Lawyer Ed with Alexander Graham, no matter what the consequence.

"Well, well," said the host, giving the fire a poke, and laughing good-naturedly. "Those fellows must do something to take up their time. But it's a pity to see them wasting it. For that thing won't go here in Algonquin, Rod. Take my word for it. And if it did, it would be a great pity, for such a law wouldn't be kept. Of course, if Ed Brians and Archie Blair and J. P. Thornton, and a few other fanatics like that, are bound to meddle with other people's consciences, I suppose we'll just have to let them do it. 'If it plazes her, it don't be hurtin' me,' as Mike Cassidy said when Judy hammered him with the broomstick. I hope they'll enjoy themselves."

Roderick looked up quickly. "It is not a mere pastime with my father. It is a thing of great moment to him," he said.

"Oh, well, of course," said Mr. Graham suavely. "I can understand that. Your father is a man who has devoted his life to drunks and outcasts, and he looks on temperance legislation as a refuge for them. I have no doubt he is quite sincere in the matter."

"I should just say he is," said Roderick rather explosively.

"That's quite true, Rod," said his patron, a little annoyed. "But your father, with many another good man, is making a great mistake when he believes people will be benefited by temperance legislation. Some folks seem to think that if you get local option in a town the millennium has come." He lit a cigar, and leaned back with an air of finality. "I tell you they're awfully mistaken. People want liquor and they'll get it as long as they want it, law or no law. And they're going to want it till the end of time. And if those folks insist upon forcing this by-law upon Algonquin, they will only succeed in giving the town a bad name. It's simply ruinous to a place from a business standpoint."

Roderick had no answer to make. He was inclined to believe that Graham was right. He wanted to believe it, for the burden of this thing was annoying him. He knew that Lawyer Ed would have met the statements with fiery contradictions, and J. P. Thornton would have answered with clear, convincing facts. But he had given very little thought to the subject, and could not remember any of the arguments. And he had certainly heard, many, many times that the temperance measure had been a failure in other towns.

He sat silent, his elbows on his knees, his hands locked together, looking into the glowing grate and wishing he didn't have to be bothered with it all. What had local option to do with his work, anyway?

And then he realised that his host was talking again. In the midst of his quiet insinuating remarks, there was a sharp tap on the door, and Leslie swept into the room, very handsome in her soft, trailing white dress.

"I'm just not going to let you two poke here any longer," she declared, giving her father's ear a pull. "You're spoiling all Rod's evening, Daddy, by talking business. His office is for that. Come right along into the drawing-room this minute, the Baldwin girls have come, and we're going to have some music."

The subject of local option was not referred to again that evening, but Roderick realised that, in some subtle way, how, he scarcely knew, his client had conveyed to him the unmistakable intelligence that should he identify himself with the temperance forces in any prominent way, the business of Graham and Company would have to be placed in other hands.

Roderick scarcely understood what had been said until he was walking home in the clear frosty air with time to think it over.

He was miserably uncomfortable the next day when he found his chief buried head and ears in temperance affairs.

"We'll have to wade into this with high-water boots, ma braw John Hielanman!" he cried radiantly. "Be jabbers! but I do love a fight, and a fine old Donnybrook fair we're goin' to have!" And he relapsed into a rich Irish brogue.

"Mr. Graham told me last night he'd like me to go north in a few weeks," said Roderick in a strained voice. "I may have to be gone for a month."

"On that Beaver Landing deal? Well now, that's a big thing, Rod!" Lawyer Ed was scribbling madly at his desk while he talked, and calling up some one on the telephone every three minutes. "You've got Sandy Graham all right. Hello, Central, are you asleep? I said I wanted J. P. Thornton and I still say it!"—"No you didn't, I tell you! Sandy'll kick over the traces when we get going on this campaign, though. Not in? Where in thunder is he? Tell him to call me the minute he gets back. Yes, that's a fact, Rod!" And he slammed the receiver down and took to scribbling furiously again. "Sandy'll put on his plug hat and his swallow-tail coat and hike like the limited express for Willoughby's office the minute he sees our names heading that petition!" He shut his eyes, and, leaning back, laughed in delighted anticipation of losing their most valuable client.

Roderick felt impatient. To him the affair was no laughing matter. To lose Graham's business was unthinkable, to keep out of this troublesome temperance campaign seemed impossible. One moment he felt he must come out right boldly for the cause, the next he called himself a fool, for letting such a doubtful thing stand in the way of his best interests.

But before the necessity for declaring himself came upon him, the temperance campaign suffered a severe check. The trouble arose in an unexpected quarter, not from the enemy, but in the ranks of the advancing army itself. The temperance ship ran against the rock that threatened to split it altogether, on the last Sunday in November. This day was celebrated as St. Andrew's Sunday, the day when the society of the Sons of Scotland, with bonnets on their heads, plaidies on their shoulders and heather in their button-holes, paraded to church in a body and had a sermon preached to them by a minister brought up from the city for the purpose of glorifying Scotland and edifying her sons. As nearly all the Presbyterian congregation of Algonquin was Scotch, every one else was as much edified as the Sons themselves; but there was one prominent exception and that was J. P. Thornton.

Mr. Thornton was an Englishman, born within the sound of Bow Bells, and, like a true Briton, intensely proud of the fact, and though he was as liberal in his general views as he was in politics, and had delivered many a fine speech on Imperialism, yet some stubborn latent prejudice arose in his heart and threatened to overflow every St. Andrew's Sunday.

It was not that he objected so much to the tartan-and-heather bedecked rows occupying the front pews of the church, on St. Andrew's Sunday. He was inclined to look upon them with some lofty amusement, saying that if they liked that sort of child's play it was no affair of his and they might have it. But it was the sermon that always put him into a fighting humour. For never a preacher stood up there on St. Andrew's Sunday but made some unfortunate reference to Bannockburn and Scots Wha Hae, and a great many other things calculated to rouse any Englishman's ire.

Mr. Thornton had never openly rebelled, however, and the St. Andrew's sermon came each year with only a few mild explosions following. But this year the celebration caused a serious disturbance, and as so often happened, it started with Lawyer Ed.

That lively Irish gentleman had already joined almost every organisation in the town, and there suddenly came to him a great desire to join the Sons of Scotland also. His mother was a Scottish lady of Highland birth, and he himself had a deep-rooted affection for anything or

anybody connected with the land o' cakes. So on the eve of this St. Andrew's celebration he joined the order and became a true Son of Scotland himself.

Mr. Thornton had gone away for a couple of weeks on a business trip and knew nothing of this new departure of his friend. He came home late on Saturday night before St. Andrew's Sunday, and went to church the next morning, all unsuspecting that at that moment Ed was falling into line down at the lodge room, his plaidie the brightest, his bonnet the trimmest and his heather sprig the biggest of all the procession.

The Scotchmen had turned out nearly a hundred strong this morning, for the minister from the city was a great man with a continental reputation. It was a beautifully clear, brilliant day, too, one of those days that only the much maligned November can bring, with dazzling cloudless skies and an exhilarating tang of frost-nipped leaves in the air. So the Scotchmen were all there, even old Angus McRae and his son, the young Highlander looking very handsome in his regalia.

Jock McPherson and the Captain of the *Inverness* were there too. Captain Jimmie was in his glory, but Mr. McPherson looked as if he were preparing to object to everything about him. Each recurring St. Andrew's Sunday found the Elder more and more inclined to think that this Sabbath parade was scarcely in keeping with the day. But he was a true Scot at heart, and no amount of orthodoxy could keep him out of it. He felt this morning, however, that matters had gone a bit too far, for the warm day had tempted Archie Blair, and he had come out in the kilt, his shameless bare-kneed example followed by Harry Lauder and three other foolish youths of the Highland club.

A few minutes before the hour for the service, when the bells had begun to roll out their invitations from the three church towers, the procession started. And the Methodists and Baptists and Anglicans kept themselves late for church by lingering on the side-walk to see it pass. It was worth watching; as very stately and solemn and slow it moved along the street and up to the church door.

Mr. McPherson moved rather stiffly, for Archie Blair was walking beside Lawyer Ed directly in front of him, and the very tilt of his bonnet and the swing of his kilt was a profanation of the day. Somehow, the doctor did not at all fit in with the Sabbath. He was a big straight man, long of limb, broad of shoulder and inclined to a generous rotundity, and he swaggered so splendidly when he walked, and held up his bonneted head with such a dashing air, that he gave the distinct impression that the bagpipes were skirling out a gay march as he swung past.

The sight of him on this Sabbath morning struck dismay to Jock's orthodox soul, clinging tenaciously to its ancient traditions. Lawyer Ed, too, seemed to have donned the spirit of irreverence with the bonnet, and was conducting himself as no elder of the kirk should have behaved even at a St. Andrew's banquet.

"Eh, losh Ed, mon," cried the doctor, loud enough for Jock to hear. "Ah wush we could hae a bit strathspey frae the pipes to march wi' to the kirk, foreby."

Lawyer Ed's face became forbidding.

"Eh, eh, and that to an elder? Div ye hear yon, Jock? It's the Heilan's comin' oot o' him!"

Jock could not resist a sudden temptation. That strange twist came over his face, which heralded a far-off joke. He spoke very slowly.

"It's what you micht be expecting from the likes o' him. It's written down in his history:

*"The Blairs they are a wicked race,  
They set theirsels in sad disgrace,  
They made the pipes and drums to play,  
Through Algonquin on the Sawbbath day."*

He had paraphrased a bit to suit the occasion, and the doctor laughed so appreciatively that the elder began to feel brighter.

But Jock should have known better than to have set an example of rhyming before Archie Blair. He turned and looked down at the elder, and the sight of him marching peaceably beside Captain Jimmie reminded him of an old doggerel ballad: "But man, there's worse than that written in your own history," he cried:

*"O-o-och, Fairshon swore a feud,  
Against ta clan McTavish,  
And marched into their land,  
To murder and to ravish,  
For he did resolve,  
To extirpate ta vipers,  
With four-and-twenty men  
And five-and-twenty pipers!"*

"Tut, tut, Doctor," cried Captain Jimmie, trying to hide a smile beneath his bonnet. "Be quate man, it's the Sabbath day."

"Well, here's a verse that's got a quotation from Scripture or at least an allusion to one. That's to be expected in the history of the McPhersons."

*"Fairshon had a son  
That married Noah's daughter,  
And nearly spoiled ta flood  
By drinking all ta water,  
Which he would have done  
I really do believe it  
Had ta mixture peen  
Only half Glenlevit!"*

Lawyer Ed was shaking with unseemly laughter.

"Ye'll hae to sing it a' when we eat the haggis the morn's night," he suggested.

"I don't understand how a reference to anything so unholy as the Glenlevit got into the annals of ta Fairshons, Jock," said Doctor Blair.

Now Jock McPherson was not averse to a drop of Glenlevit himself,—for his stomach's sake, of course, for the elder could not be unscriptural even in his eating and drinking. Archie Blair was not averse to it either, though he frankly admitted that it was very bad for his stomach, indeed, and for everybody else's stomach.

But in the opening temperance campaign the latter had come out avowedly on the side of local option, and was looked upon as one of the party's strongest speakers, while Jock had not yet declared himself. It was a delicate subject with Mr. McPherson, and he could not endure to be twitted about it.

He paused at the church steps and laid his hand on the doctor's velvet sleeve. He cleared his throat, always a dangerous sign.

"Yes," he said very slowly, "it will be a ferry fine song indeed, and if Edward would jist be putting big *Aye*-men on the tail of it to-morrow night, it will sound more feenished." The whole procession was waiting to enter the church, but Jock did not hurry. "As for the Glenlevit, the McPhersons were no more noted for liking their drop than many another clan I might mention. But they were honest about it." He paused again and then said even more deliberately: "And if you would like to be referring to the Scriptures again, you might be taking a look at your Bible when you get home, you will be finding some ferry good advice in Romans the 2nd chapter and 21st verse."

He turned away and marched solemnly into the church. The procession followed and it was then that J. P. Thornton, standing at his post, and wondering why Ed had not long ago appeared to receive the Scotchmen, beheld the amazing spectacle of his Irish friend and very brother, marching in their front rank, bonnet and plaid and all!

J. P. was too dignified to make a demonstration of his outraged feelings in church, but Miss Annabel Armstrong reported afterwards that when she passed him she heard him say something about Edward, that sounded like "You're too brutish"—or "too bruty" or something like that, and Miss Armstrong said it was exceedingly improper language for an elder to use in church.

J. P. was always in a state of mild irritation when he settled himself to hear the annual St. Andrew's sermon, but this morning he was decidedly indignant. By the time the Scotchmen had gone through two long psalms, with Lawyer Ed leading, he was hot and disgusted, and when the sermon came it was like acid poured upon an open wound.

The famous minister from the city made all the mistakes of his St. Andrew's predecessors and a great many more of his own. He lingered long at Bannockburn, he recited "Scots Wha Hae" in full, he quoted portions of the death of Wallace and altogether behaved in a way to leave the usually genial English listener with his temper red and raw and anxious for a fight.

Monday evening Lawyer Ed was to have driven out to McClintock's Corners with his friend, to speak at a tea meeting, and convince the farmers that Algonquin would be a much more desirable place as a market town with a prohibitory liquor law than it was at present.

But Lawyer Ed went to the St. Andrew's supper instead and ate haggis and listened to the pipes play "The Cock O' the North," and Archie Blair recite Burns and Jock McPherson make a speech on Scottish history.

That was more than J. P. could stand. He telephoned to Roderick early the next morning telling him to inform his chief that he, J. P., would go to no more temperance meetings with him. If Lawyer Ed wanted help in his campaign let him look for it among his brother Scotchmen. And



the receiver slammed before Roderick could enquire what he meant.

There were storms bursting in other quarters too. Doctor Blair had spent a good part of the time in church on Sunday morning in a laudable search for the Epistle to the Romans, and had surprised all his brethren by studying the 2nd chapter carefully. The result, however, was not what a searching of the Scriptures is supposed to produce. For he telephoned to Roderick the next morning that he could tell Ed, when he came in, that he, Archie Blair, would be hanged if he would waste any more time on local option if that was what people were saying about him. And Captain Jimmie dropped in immediately after to say that if something wasn't done to conciliate Jock McPherson he was afraid he would vote against local option altogether.

So the cause of temperance suffered a check. It proved to be not a very serious one, but it served Roderick. For it postponed the necessity of his declaring himself on either side, and he hoped that before the day arrived when he must join the issue, his affairs would be less complicated.

Diplomacy was one of Lawyer Ed's strong features, and he had almost completed a reconciliation between all the aggrieved parties when Roderick left for a business trip to the north. It was an important commission involving much money, and certain vague statements regarding its outcome made by Mr. Graham had fired the Lad's imagination.

"Now, I needn't warn you to do your best, Roderick," said the man when he bade him good-bye. "You'll do that, anyway. But there's more than money in this. There's an eye on you—"

He would say no more, but Leslie gave him another hint. He had found her strolling past the office as he ran out to post some letters, the day before his departure. He was absolutely without conceit, but he could not help noticing that somehow Miss Leslie Graham nearly always happened, by the strangest coincidence, to be on the street just as he was leaving the office.

He walked with her to the post-office and back, and then she declared her fingers were frozen and she would come into the office for ten minutes to warm them.

"So you're going to fix up things with the British North American Railroad for Daddy, are you?" she said, holding out her gloved fingers over the glowing coal-stove. "That means that you'll be getting your fingers into Uncle Will's business, too. His lawyer is up at Beaver Landing now."

"Whose lawyer?" asked Roderick, giving her a chair by the fire and standing before her feeling extremely uncomfortable.

"Uncle Will's. You know Uncle Will Graham? He's an American now, but he has all sorts of interests in Canada and he's—well, he's not exactly President of the B. N. A., but he's the whole thing in it. Uncle Will's coming home next summer, and I'm going to make him take me back to New York with him."

Roderick's ambitious heart gave a leap. Of course he knew about William Graham, the Algonquin man who had gone to the States and made a million or more.

His head was filled with rosy dreams as he walked out to the farm that evening to say good-bye. He was leaving for only a short time, but the old people were loath to see him go. Aunt Kirsty drew him up to the hot stove, bewailing the misfortune that was taking him away.

"Dear, dear, dear, and you will be going away up north into the bush," she said, clapping him on the back, "and you will jist be frozen with the cold indeed, and your poor arm will be bad again."

"Yes, and the wolves will probably eat me, and a tree will fall on me and I'll break through the ice and be drowned," wailed Roderick. And she shoved him away from her for a foolish gomeril, trying not to smile at him, and declaring it was little he cared that he was leaving her, indeed.

"I have not heard you say anything about the arm for a long time, Lad," said his father, who was watching him, with shining eyes, from his old rocking-chair.

"Oh, it's all right, Dad," he said lightly. "I haven't time to notice it."

He always put off the question thus when Aunt Kirsty was within hearing, but his father's loving eye noticed that the boy's hand sometimes sought the arm and held it, as though in pain.

"And you will not be here to help start the great fight," his father said wistfully, when he had heard all the latest news concerning the temperance campaign, even to the pending disaster. "But you will be finding a Jericho Road up in the bush, I'll have no doubt."

Roderick looked at the saintly old face and his heart smote him. He felt for a moment that to please his father would surely be worth more than all the success a man could attain in a lifetime.

"And did you get a job for poor Billy, Lad?" his father enquired.

"Billy? Oh, the Perkins fellow?" Roderick whistled in dismay. Poor Billy Perkins had not "kept

nicely saved," as his brave little wife had hoped, but had fallen among thieves in the hotel at the corner once more. Old Angus had rescued him, put him upon his feet again, and had commissioned his son to look for work for Billy, and his son had forgotten about it entirely in the pressure of his work.

"Oh, Dad, that's a shame," he cried contritely, "I had so much on my mind getting ready to go, I forgot. I'll tell Lawyer Ed about him, and perhaps he can look up something. I have to start early in the morning or I would yet."

"Well, well," said his father cheerfully. "There now, there is no need to worry, for they have got him a job, but it is away from home and I thought he'd do better here. The bit wife is lonely since the wee girl died. But Billy will jist have to go, and it will only be for the winter, anyway."

"What's he going to do?"

"It will be in the shanties. He is not strong enough for the bush, but he will be helping the cook, and the wages will be good. I'm hoping he will not be able to get near the drink. Indeed it was the little lassie herself that got him the job," he added, his eyes shining. "She's the great little lady, indeed."

"Who is, Father?" Roderick spoke absently, his eyes on the fire, his mind on Mr. William Graham and the B. N. A. Railroad.

"The young teacher lady. She will be down to see poor Mrs. Perkins every day or so since the wee one died. And the poor bit Gladys! Eh, she's jist making a woman out of her indeed."

Roderick's eyes came away from the fire. He was all interest. "Oh, is she? Does she visit the folks in Willow Lane? What is she doing for them?"

"Eh, indeed, what is she not doing?" cried his father. "It's jist an angel we've got in Willow Lane now, Lad. I don't know how she did it, and indeed Father Tracy says he doesn't know either, but she's got Judy to cook a hot dinner for Mike every day, and she's teaching Gladys at nights, and she's jist saved the poor Perkins bodies from starving. She showed the wee woman how to make bread, and oh, indeed, I couldn't be telling you all the good she does!"

Roderick listened absorbedly. So that was where she kept herself in the evenings. And that was why he could never meet her any place, no matter how many nights he frittered away at parties in the hope of seeing her.

"And how did she get this job for Billy?" he asked, just for the sake of hearing his father talk about her.

Old Angus smiled knowingly.

"Och, she has a way with her, and she can get anything she wants. It would be through Alfred Wilbur—the poor lad the boys will be calling such a foolish name."

"Yes, Afternoon Tea Willie. What's he after now?"

"Indeed I think he will be after Miss Murray," said the old man, his eyes twinkling. "He seems to be always following her about. And he managed to get young Fred Hamilton to take Billy up to the camp. Fred is going up to his father's shanties with a gang of men in about a week."

Roderick's heart sank. Here was a lost opportunity indeed. He had failed to help his father, and had missed such a splendid chance to help her.

"If you've got anybody else who needs a job, Dad, I'll try to do better next time," he said humbly.

"Oh, indeed, there will always be some one needing help," his father said radiantly. "Eh, eh, it will be a fine thing for me to know you are helping to care for the poor folk on the Jericho Road. Jist being neighbour to them. It's a great business, the law, for helping a man to be neighbour." The old man sat and gazed happily into the fire.

Roderick fidgeted. He was thinking that some of the work of a lawyer did not consist so much in rescuing the man who had fallen among thieves as falling upon him and stripping him of his raiment.

"Law is a complicated business, Dad," he said, with a sigh.

There were prayers after that, and a tender farewell and benediction from the old people, and Roderick went away, his heart strangely heavy. He was to be absent only a short time, perhaps not over two weeks, but he had a feeling that he was bidding his father a lifelong farewell—that he was taking a road that led away from that path in which the man had so carefully guided his young feet.

It was not entirely by accident that Roderick should be walking into Algonquin just as Helen Murray was coming out of the Hurd home. He had been very wily, for such an innocent young

man. A shadow on the blind, showing the outline of a trim little hat and fluffy hair, had sent him back into the shadows of the Pine Road to stand and shiver until the shadow left the window and the substance came out through the lighted doorway. Gladys came to the gate, her arm about her teacher's waist. They were talking softly. Gladys's voice was not so loud nor her look so bold as it once was. She ran back calling good-night, and the little figure of the teacher went on swiftly up the shaky frosty sidewalk. A few strides and Roderick was at her side. She was right under the electric light at the corner when he reached her and she turned swiftly with such a look of annoyance that he stopped aghast.

"Oh, I beg your pardon—" he stammered, but was immensely relieved when she interrupted smiling.

"Oh, is it you, Mr. McRae? I—didn't know—I thought it was—some one else," she stammered.

Roderick looked puzzled, but the next moment he understood. Just within the rays of the electric light, across the street, was Afternoon Tea Willie, waiting faithfully with chattering teeth and benumbed toes. He stood and stared at Roderick as they passed, and then slowly followed at a distance, the picture of abject desolation. Roderick found it almost impossible to keep from laughing, until he began to consider his own case. He had plunged headlong into her presence, and now he felt he ought to apologise. He tried to, but she stopped him charmingly.

"Oh, indeed, I wanted to see you, before you go away," she said, and Roderick felt immensely flattered that she knew so much about his affairs as to be aware that he was going away.

"Yes? What can I do for you?" he asked shyly.

"I wanted to ask about poor Billy Perkins. Mr. Wilbur got work for him, you know."

"Indeed, my father tells me it was you did the good deed," declared Roderick warmly.

"No, no, I only helped. But I am anxious about Billy." She spoke as though Roderick were as interested in the Perkins family as his father. "Is there any one up at Mr. Hamilton's camp, I wonder, who would keep an eye on him. He is all right if he's only watched, so that he can't get whiskey. There's young Mr. Hamilton, he's going, isn't he?"

"Yes." Roderick felt that if the young man mentioned watched Fred Hamilton and kept him from drink it was all that could be expected of him. However, he might try. "I'll speak to him," he said cordially, "and see if he can do anything for Billy. I see you've taken some of my father's family under your care," he added admiringly.

"Oh no. I'm just helping a little. I'm afraid I'm not prompted by such unselfish motives as your father is. I visit down here just for something to do and to keep from being lonely."

It was the first time she had made any reference to herself. Roderick seized the opportunity.

"You don't go out among the young people enough," he suggested. She did not answer for a moment. She could not tell him that she was very seldom invited in the circles where he moved. She had been doomed to disappointment in Miss Graham's friendship, for after her first generous outburst the young lady seemed to have forgotten all about her.

"I like to come here," she said at last. "I think it's more worth while. But don't talk any more about my affairs. Tell me something about yours. Are you going to be long in the woods?"

It was a delightful walk all the way up to Rosemount, for Roderick managed to get up courage to ask if he might go all the way, and even kept her at the gate a few minutes before he said good-bye, and he promised, quite of his own accord, to visit Camp Hamilton if it was not far from Beaver Landing, his headquarters, and when he returned he would report to her Billy's progress.

## CHAPTER X

### "THE LIGHT RETREATED"

About two weeks after Billy Perkins had gone north, Helen Murray went down to Willow Lane from school to see his family. She had been there only the evening before, and had found them doing well. The faded little mother had never been quite so courageous since Minnie's death, but Bill's new start had put them beyond the immediate possibility of want and given fresh hope. There had been two very cheery letters from him which Helen had read aloud, so the little wife was trying to be happy in her loneliness, and was looking forward hopefully to Billy's return in the spring.

But January had set in bitterly cold and there had been a heavy snow fall during the morning. Helen feared that Eddie might not have been able to get the wood in, so as soon as Madame and her flock had departed, she turned down towards Willow Lane. She had been in Algonquin only a little over three months but already the self-forgetting tasks she had set herself, were beginning to work their cure. She had not regained her old joyousness, and often she was still very sad and lonely; but there had come a calm light into her deep eyes, and an expression of sweet courage and strength to her face, that had not been there in the old careless happy days. She was growing very fast, these busy days, though she was quite unconscious of it in her complete absorption in other people's troubles.

She had left the Perkins family in such comfortable circumstances, the day before, that she was startled and dismayed to find everything in confusion. The neighbours were running in and out of the open door, the fire was out, the baby was crying, and the little mother lay on the bed prostrated.

"What is it?" cried Helen, stopping in the open doorway in dismay. "Oh, what's the matter?"

Mrs. Hurd and Judy Cassidy were moving helplessly about the room. At the sight of their friend the latter cried out, "Now praise the saints, here's the dear young lady. Come in, Miss Murray! Och, wurra, wurra, it's a black day for this house, indade!"

Gladys was sitting on the old lounge beside the stove awkwardly holding the baby.

"Oh, Miss Murray," she cried shrilly. "Somethin' awful's happened! Billy Perkins's gone to jail. He got drunk and he's been steal—"

Her mother shook the broom at her. "Hold your tongue," she said sharply. For Mrs. Perkins, her face grey with suffering, had arisen on the bed. "Oh, Teacher, is that you!" she cried, bursting into fresh tears. Helen went and sat on the edge of the bed, and took her hand. "What is it?" she whispered. "Perhaps it's not so bad!" she faltered, making a vague attempt to comfort.

But when the pitiful story came out it was bad enough. Mrs. Perkins told it between sobs, aided by interpolations from her neighbours. Billy had been working steadily up till last Saturday, quite happy because he could not get at the drink. But on Saturday he went into the village to buy some fresh meat from a farmer for the camp. And there was a Jericho Road up north too, it seemed, where thieves lay in wait for the unwary. And Billy fell among them. He went into the tavern just for a few minutes, leaving the meat on the sleigh outside, and when he came out it was gone. Billy had gone on towards the camp despairingly, in dread of losing his job, and praying all the way for some intervention of Providence to avert the result of his mistake. For in spite of many a fall before temptation, poor Billy, in a blind groping way, clung to the belief that there was a God watching him and caring for him. So he went on, praying desperately, and about half-way to camp there came an answer. Right by the roadside, as if dropped there by a miracle, lay a quarter of beef, sticking out of the snow. It was evidently a small cache some one had placed near the trail for a short time, and had Billy been in his normal senses he would never have touched it. But the drink was still benumbing his brain, and quickly digging out the miraculous find he loaded it upon his sleigh and hurried to camp.

But retribution swiftly followed. The stolen meat had belonged to the Graham camp, and it seemed it was a terrible crime to steal from a rich corporation, much worse than from a half-drunken man like poor Billy. The first thief was not arrested, but Billy was, and he was sent to jail. He would not be home for ever and ever so long and what was to become of them all, and what was to become of poor Billy?

The little wife, accustomed though she was to hardships and griefs, was overcome by this crushing blow. With all his faults and weaknesses, Billy was her husband and the stay and support of the family, and besides, she had a dread of jail and its accompanying disgrace. By the time the sad tale was finished, she was worn out with sobs, and sat still, looking straight ahead of her into the fireless stove. But the baby's cries roused her, and she took him in her arms, making a pitiful attempt to chirrup to him. The idiot boy, feeling dimly that something was wrong, came and rubbed his head against her like a faithful dog, whining grievously. She stroked his hair lovingly. "Pore Eddie," she said, "it'd be better if you an' me an' the biby, was with Minnie;" and then with sudden compunction, "but wot would pore Bill do without us?"

Helen told the sad story at the supper table at Rosemount, that evening, and asked for help. Miss Armstrong promised to send a basket of food down the next day, though she did not approve of the Perkins family. She had found that to help that sort of shiftless people only made them worse. Why, last Christmas, there was one family on Willow Lane who received five turkeys from the Presbyterians alone, and the Dorcas society was always sending clothes to that poor unfortunate Mrs. Perkins. Mrs. Captain Willoughby herself, who was the President, had seen the little Perkins girl wearing a dress just in tatters, that had been given to her in perfectly good condition only the week before. Wasn't the girl old enough to go out working?

"The little girl died last fall of tuberculosis," said Helen, in a low voice. "She was just ten."

Miss Annabel's big blue eyes suddenly filled. "Oh, the poor dear little thing. Minnie used to be in my Sunday-school class, and I wondered why she hadn't been there for so long. But we've been

so dreadfully busy this fall, I simply hadn't time to hunt her up. Elinor, we must send a jar of jelly to the poor woman, and I think I shall give her that last winter coat of mine. We'll ask Leslie for some, she simply doesn't know what to do with all her old clothes."

"Oh, please don't," said Helen in distress. She could not explain that which she had so lately learned herself, that what a woman like Mrs. Perkins needed was not old clothes nor even food, but a friend, and some knowledge of how to get clothes and food. "I don't think she really needs anything to wear just now. If we could get her some light work where she might take the baby, it would be so very much better for her."

Both ladies promised to see what could be done, but the Misses Armstrong, members in good standing of the Presbyterian church, kind hearted and fairly well off, had not a minute of time nor a cent of money to spend on people like Mrs. Perkins. The poor ladies were gradually discovering that the younger set, led by their own niece, and the moneyed people now becoming prominent in Algonquin, were slowly assuming the leadership in society. They were in danger of losing their proud position, and every nerve had to be strained to maintain it. What we have we'll hold, had become the despairing motto of the Misses Armstrong, and its realisation required eternal vigilance.

It was Alfred Tennyson who once more came to the family's aid, and Helen was forced reluctantly to accept his help. He ran up hill and down dale and called upon every lady in the town, till at last he succeeded in getting work for Mrs. Perkins. Mrs. Hepburn, Lawyer Ed's sister, said she might come to her and bring the baby, one day in the week. Mrs. T. P. Thornton and Mrs. Blair made like promises, and Dr. Leslie persuaded Mammy Viney to let her come to the manse to wash, while Viney Junior, in high glee, promised to take care of little William Henry.

Every day, when the little mother went off to her work, with her baby in her arms, Angus McRae drove up to Willow Lane and took Eddie down to the farm. And with endless patience and tenderness he managed to teach the lad a few simple tasks about the house and barn. Angus McRae's home was the refuge of the unfit, for young Peter did the chores in the winter when the *Inverness* was in the dock, and Old Peter came and stayed indefinitely when he was recovering from a drunken spree, and Aunt Kirsty declared that there was no place where a body could put her foot without stepping on one of Angus's wastrels.

Roderick came back the week after Billy's arrest. As he was the lawyer acting for Graham & Co. he could not be without some responsibility in Billy's sad affair, and Old Angus awaited his explanation anxiously. He knew there would be an explanation, for the old man was possessed of the perfect assurance that his son was quite as interested in the unfortunate folk that travelled the Jericho Roads of life as he was himself. But Roderick had some difficulty in showing that he was quite innocent.

He could not explain that this trip had been his probation time, and that if he had done his work with a slack hand there would be no hope of greater opportunities opening up before him. The big lumber firm of Graham & Co., operating in the north, was really under Alexander Graham's millionaire brother. And this man's lawyer from Montreal had been there. He was a great man in Roderick's eyes, the head of a firm of continental reputation. He had kept the young man at his side, and had made known to him the significant fact that, one day, if he transacted business with the keenness and faithfulness that seemed to characterise all his actions now, there might be a bigger place awaiting him. The man said very little that was definite, but the Lad's sleep had been disturbed by waking dreams of a great future. That his friend, Alexander Graham, was the mover in this he could not but believe, but he determined to let the people in authority see that he could depend on his own merits. So he had done his work with a rigid adherence to law and rule that commanded the older man's admiration. Roderick felt it was unfortunate that poor Billy should have come under his disciplining hand at this time, but such cases as his were of daily occurrence in the camp. There was no use trying to carry on a successful business and at the same time coddle a lot of drunks and unfits like Billy. He had been compelled to weed out a dozen such during his stay in the north. Billy was only one of many, but when he remembered that he must give a report of him to the two people whose opinion he valued far more than the approval of even the great firm of Elliot & Kent, or of William Graham of New York, he felt that here surely was the irony of fate.

"I did my best, Dad," he said, his warm heart smitten by the eager look in the old man's eyes. "But I had to protect my clients. There has been so much of that sort of stealing up there lately that stern measures had to be taken, and I was acting for the company." Old Angus was puzzled. Evidently law was a machine which, if you once started operating, you were no longer able to act as a responsible individual. He could not understand any circumstances that would make it impossible to help a man who had fallen by the way as Billy had, but then Roderick knew about law, and Roderick would certainly have done the best possible. His faith in the Lad was all unshaken.

But the young man was not so hopeful about Miss Murray's verdict. She had put Billy in his care, and it was but a sorry report he had to make of her trust. He was wondering if he dared call at Rosemount and explain his part in the case, when he met her in Willow Lane. It was a clear wintry evening, and the pines cast long blue shadows across the snowy road ahead. Roderick was hurrying home to take supper at the farm, and Helen was coming out of the rough little path that led from the Perkins' home. She was feeling tired and very sad. She had been reading a letter

from the husband in prison, a sorrowful pencilled scrawl, pathetically misspelled, but breathing out true sympathy for his wife and children, and the deepest repentance and self-blame. And at the end of every misconstrued sentence like a wailing refrain were the words, "I done wrong and I deserve all I got, but it's hard on you old girl, and I thought that Old Angus's son might have got me off."

Whether right or wrong, Helen felt a sting of resentment, as she looked up and saw Roderick swinging down the road towards her. He seemed so big and comfortable in his long winter overcoat, so strong and capable, and yet he had used his strength and skill against Billy. Her woman's heart refused to see any justice in the case. She did not return the radiant smile with which he greeted her. In spite of his fears, he could not but be glad at the sight of her, with the rosy glow of the sunset lighting up her sweet face and reflected in the gold of her hair.

"I was so sorry to have such news of Billy I was afraid to call," he said as humbly as though it was he who had stolen and been committed to prison.

"Oh, it's so sad I just can't bear it," she burst forth, the tears filling her eyes. "Oh, couldn't you have done something, Mr. McRae?"

Roderick was overcome with dismay. "I—I—did all I could," he stammered. "It was impossible to save him. He stole and he had to bear the penalty."

"But you were on the other side," she cried vaguely but indignantly. "I don't see how you could do it."

"But, Miss Murray!" cried Roderick, amazed at her unexpected vehemence. "I was acting for the company I represent. It's unreasonable, if you will pardon me for speaking so strongly, to expect I could sacrifice their interests and allow the law to be broken." He was really pleading his own case. There was a dread of her condemnation in his eyes which she could not mistake. But her heart was too sore for the Perkins family to feel any compunction for him.

"I don't understand law I know," she said sadly. "But I can't understand how your father's son could see that poor irresponsible creature sent to jail for the sake of a big rich company. His wife's heart is broken, that's all." She was losing her self-control once more, and she hastily bade him good-evening, and before Roderick could speak again she was gone.

The young man walked swiftly homeward; the blackness of the darkening pine forest was nothing to the gloom of his soul. He spent long hours of the night and many of the next day striving to state the case in a way that would justify himself in the girl's eyes. In his extremity he went to Lawyer Ed for comfort.

"What could I do?" he asked. "What would you have done in that case?"

Lawyer Ed scratched his head. "I really don't know what a fellow's to do now, Rod, that's the truth, when he's doing business for a skinflint like Sandy Graham. You just have to do as he wants or jump the job, that's a fact."

But Roderick did not need to be told that his chief would have jumped any job no matter how big, rather than hurt a poor weakling like Billy Perkins.

So those were dark days for Roderick in spite of all the brilliant prospects opening ahead of him. He could not tell which was harder to bear, his father's perfect faith in him, despite all evidence to the contrary, or the girl's look of reproach, despite all his attempts to set himself right in her eyes. He was learning, too, that not till he had lost her good opinion did he realise that he wanted it more than anything else in the world.

But there were compensations. When he finished his business he received a letter of congratulation from Mr. Kent, and a commission to do some important work for him. He found some solace, too, in the bright approving eyes of Leslie Graham. Her perfect confidence in him furnished a little balm to his wounded feelings. Certainly she was not so exacting, for she cared not at all about the Perkinses and all the other troublesome folk on the Jericho Road.

## CHAPTER XI

### "THE LANDSKIP DARKEN'D"

Roderick's work allowed him little chance for brooding over his worries, for Lawyer Ed left more and more to him as the days went on. Not that he did any less, but the temperance campaign was on again, all racial and religious prejudices forgotten, in the glory of the fight. Lawyer Ed was quite content that his young partner should let him do all the public speaking, and so neither side was offended at the young man's careful steering in a middle course.

Roderick himself hated it, but there seemed no other way, on the road he was determined to follow.

He was not too busy to watch Helen Murray, and serve her in every way possible. He tried to atone for his past neglect of the Perkins family by getting Billy a good position on his return, and was rewarded by being allowed to walk up to Rosemount with Helen the night Billy came home. He was so quietly persistent in his devotion to the girl, making no demands, but always standing ready to serve her, that she could not but see how matters were with him. But the revelation brought her no joy. Her heart was still full of bitter memories, and with all gentleness and kindness, she set about the task of showing Roderick that his attentions were unwelcome. It was not an easy task, for she was often very lonely and sometimes she forgot that she must not allow him to waylay her in Willow Lane and walk up to Rosemount with her. Again she punished herself for her laxity by being very severe with him and at such times Roderick allowed himself to seek comfort for his wounded feelings in Leslie Graham's company, for Leslie was always kind and charming.

One evening, Roderick and Fred Hamilton had been dining at the Grahams and had walked home with the Misses Baldwin. They were returning down the hill together, and Fred, who had been very sulky all evening, grew absolutely silent. Roderick tried several topics in vain and finally gave up the attempt at conversation and swung along whistling, his hands in his pockets.

At last the young man spoke.

"I'm going West this spring."

"Oh, are you?" said Roderick, glad to hear him say something. "You're lucky. That's where I'd like to be going."

"Yes, likely," sneered the other. "I guess any fellow can see what direction you're going all right."

"What do you mean?" asked Roderick, nettled at the tone.

"Oh, yes, as if you didn't know," growled his aggrieved rival. "You don't need to think I'm blind and deaf too, and a fool into the bargain."

Roderick stopped short in the middle of the snowy side-walk. "Look here," he said quietly, "if you don't speak up like a man, and tell me what you're hinting at I—well, I'll have to make you, that's all."

Fred had run foul of Roderick McRae at school and knew from painful experience that it was not safe to make him very angry.

"Well, you needn't get so hot about it," he said half apologetically. "I merely hinted that you—well, you can't help seeing it yourself—"

"Seeing what, you blockhead?"

"Seeing that she—that Leslie doesn't care two pins about anybody but you. She'd be glad if I went West to-morrow." The hot blood rushed into Roderick's face. He turned upon the young man, but they were passing under an electric light and the look of misery in Fred's face disarmed him. He burst into derisive laughter.

"Well, of all the idiots!" he exclaimed. "You ought to be horsewhipped for insulting a young lady so. Can't you see, you young madman, that she's just trying to show a little bit of polite gratitude? I know I don't deserve it, but she seems to be as grateful to me for helping you that night on the lake, and you must be a fool if you think anything else."

The young man walked on for a little in silence. Then he said, in quite a changed tone, "Are you sure, Rod?"

"Yes, of course," shouted Roderick, "you ought to be shut up in a mad house for thinking anything else."

"Well, she told everybody in the town last fall that I upset her, just to give you the glory," he said resentfully.

"Pshaw," cried Roderick disgustedly. "She did it for pure fun, and you ought to have taken it that way. You don't deserve her for a friend."

Fred seemed to be pondering this for a while, and finally he said, "Well, maybe you're right. Only I—well, you know how I feel about Leslie. She—we've been chums ever since we were kids, and you may be sure I don't like the idea of any other fellow cutting in ahead of me now."

"Well, wait till some fellow does before you jump on him again," said Roderick, so hotly that the other grew apologetic.

"I didn't mean to be such a jay, Rod. It's all right if you say so. I guess I was crazy. If you just

give me your word that you haven't intentions towards her, why, it'll be all right."

Roderick gave the assurance with all his heart, and Fred insisted upon shaking hands over it, and they parted on the best of terms.

But Roderick felt covered with shame when he found himself alone on the Pine Road. He could not deny to his heart that Fred's suspicions had some little reason in them, and the knowledge filled him with dismay. He was humiliated by the thought that he had accepted many favours from Leslie's father and been a welcome guest many, many times at her home, and he wondered miserably if Helen Murray held the same opinion as Fred.

He came back to his office the next morning determined to avoid Leslie Graham, no matter what the consequence.

She called him on the telephone, wrote dainty notes, and strolled past the office at the time when he was likely to be leaving, all to no avail. Roderick was buried in work, and slowly but surely the knowledge began to dawn upon the girl that she, with all her attractions, was being gently but firmly put aside.

And so the winter sped away on the swift wheels of busy days, and when spring came the local option petition began to circulate. And once more Roderick escaped the necessity of declaring himself.

The firm of Elliot and Kent, with whom he had worked in the North, wished to consult him, and he was summoned to Montreal for a week.

Lawyer Ed saw him off at the station fairly puffed up with pride over his boy's importance.

When Roderick returned, the petition was signed, and sent away, and Lawyer Ed was jubilating over the fact that they could have got far more names if they had wanted them. And Roderick comforted himself with the thought that his was not needed after all.

The excitement subsided for a time after this, the real hard preparation for voting day would not commence until the autumn, so J. P. Thornton was seized with the grand idea that the coming summer was surely the heaven-decreed occasion upon which to go off on that long-deferred holiday. The inspiration came to him one day when he had telephoned Lawyer Ed twice and called at his office three times to find him out each time.

"Is this the office of Brians and McRae or only McRae?" he asked when Roderick informed him for the third time that his chief was absent.

"Well, it isn't often like this," said the junior partner apologetically. "We'll get back to our old routine when my chief gets over his local option excitement."

"If you can run this business alone during a Local Option to-do, I see no reason why you couldn't while we take three months holidays, do you?"

"No, I do not," said Roderick heartily. "Can't you make Lawyer Ed go to the Holy Land this spring? I'll do anything to help him go. He needs a rest."

J. P. Thornton looked at the young man smiling reminiscently. He was recalling the night when two young men gave up that very trip and Lawyer Ed had laughingly declared he would go some day even if he had to wait till little Roderick grew up. "And little the boy knows," said Mr. Thornton to himself, "just how much Ed gave up that time."

"Well," he said aloud, "this is surely poetic justice."

"What is?" asked Roderick puzzled. But J. P. would not explain. "We'll just make him go," he declared. "You stand behind me, Rod, and don't let him get back to work, and I'll get him off."

It was not entirely the old boyish desire to go on the long-looked-for trip with his friend that was at the bottom of Mr. Thornton's anxiety to get away. He could not help seeing that Ed needed a rest and needed it very badly. Archie Blair aroused his fears further. For one evening Lawyer Ed did an altogether unprecedented thing and went home to bed early. Mrs. Hepburn, his sister, was so amazed over such a piece of conduct on her brother's part, that she called at the doctor's office the next day to ask if he thought there was anything wrong with Ed's heart.

Doctor Blair laughed long and loud over the question, putting the lady's fears at rest.

"No, I don't think any one in Algonquin would admit there was anything astray with Ed's heart, Mary," he said. "But his head might be vastly improved by putting a little common sense into it regarding eating and sleeping. He's been going too hard for about twenty-five years and he's tired, that's all. But J. P.'s going to get him off this time, all right, and the change is just what he needs."

He spoke to J. P. about it, and the two determined that they would make all preparations to start for the Holy Land in July and if Ed had to be bound and gagged until the steamer sailed, they would certainly see that he went.



Lawyer Ed consented with the greatest enthusiasm. Of course he would go. He really believed he had enough money saved up, and Roderick was doing everything, anyway, and he could just start off for a forty years wandering in the wilderness if J. P. would go with him.

The whole town became quite excited when Mrs. Hepburn announced at a tea given by Mrs. Captain Willoughby that her brother and J. P. Thornton were really and truly, even should Algonquin go up in flames the day before, going to sail from Montreal sometime in July for foreign parts. There was a great deal of running to and from the Thornton and Brians homes, and a tremendous amount of talking and advising. And the only topic of conversation for weeks, in the town, was the Holy Land, and the question which greeted a new-comer invariably was, "Did you hear that Lawyer Ed and J. P. have really decided to go?"

All this bustle of preparation and expectation did not deceive J. P. into a false position of security. He was by no means confident, and he kept a strict eye on Lawyer Ed to see that he did not launch some new scheme that would demand his personal attention till Christmas. For well he knew that until his friend was on board the steamer and beyond swimming distance from the land, he was not safe. Any day something might arise to make it seem quite impossible to go.

So he was thrown into quite a state of nervousness when, early in June, Algonquin began to prepare for a unique celebration. The first of July had been chosen as "Old Boys' Day," and all Algonquin's exiled sons had been invited to come back to the old home on that day and be made happy.

"Old Boys' Day" was an entirely new institution in Algonquin. Indeed she did not have many sons beyond middle age, but other Ontario towns were having these reunions, and Algonquin was never known to be behind her contemporaries, in the matter of having anything new, even though the newest thing was Old Boys.

So no wonder J. P. Thornton was anxious. For such a celebration was just the sort of thing in which Lawyer Ed gloried. Fortunately it was set a month before they were to sail, but J. P. knew that Ed would need all that time to recover from the perfect riot of friendship into which he would be sure to plunge on Old Boys' Day.

As the first of July approached, the whole town gave itself up to extravagant preparations and, as J. P. expected, Lawyer Ed, turned over his office to Roderick, put away railway timetables and guide books and headed every committee. There was a committee of ladies from all the churches to serve dinner to the Old Boys on their arrival. There was a decorating committee with instructions to cover the town with flags and bunting and banners, no matter what the cost. There was a committee for sports, on both land and water and, most important of all, a reception committee, half to go down to Barbay with Captain Jimmie and the town band to bring the Old Boys home by water, the only proper way to approach Algonquin, and the other half to meet them at the dock.

Of course all this upheaval and bustle did not take place without some slight discord. The first storm arose through a dispute as to where the big dinner should be held upon the arrival of the boat. The first suggestion was that it be held in the opera house. But unfortunately, many of the best people of Algonquin objected to holding anything there as a matter of principle.

It was the common case of a very good place having a bad name. Had the opera house been called the town hall, which it really was, no one would have found fault with it. But its name suggested actors and the theatre, and many of the good folk, Mr. McPherson at their head, just wouldn't countenance it at all.

Of course there was the other class who said Algonquin would be too dull to live in were it not for the winter attractions of the opera house which gave it such a bad name. In fact every one who had any pretensions towards knowing what was the correct thing in city life, went regularly to the plays, and declared they were just as high class as you would see in Toronto.

Indeed a new play was always announced as "The Greatest Attraction in Toronto Last Week," and companies had several times come all the way from New York just to appear in Algonquin. Then every winter there were the Topp Brothers who came and stayed a whole week in Crofter's Hotel, and gave a different play every night. There were all the best known dramas, "Lady Audley's Secret," and "East Lynne" and "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and once they even gave "Faust,"—without music, it is true, but a splendid reproduction nevertheless, with the biggest and tallest Topp brother as Mephisto, all in red satin and, every one said, just perfectly terrible.

So every one who knew anything at all about what was demanded of people moving in the best circles, pronounced the opera house the finest institution in the town and demanded that the Old Boys be taken to it upon their arrival and welcomed and fed. And all the other people said it was a sinful and worldly place, and declared they would have no Old Boys' banquet at all if it were to be served in that theatrical abomination.

The Presbyterian Sunday-school room was the next place in size, and, to smooth matters over, Lawyer Ed offered it for the dinner.

Then the Anglican and the Catholic and the Methodist ladies met and said it was just like the Presbyterians to want to have the banquet in their church, to make it appear to the Old Boys that

they were doing it all. And Mrs. Captain Willoughby, the smartest woman in Algonquin and the Convener of the dinner committee, said that if those gossipy old cranks wanted to have the banquet in the lock-up, why they might have it there for all she cared, but she wanted every one to know that it would be served in the Presbyterian School room or she would have nothing to do with it. That almost settled it for every one knew it was utterly impossible to get up such a huge affair without Mrs. Captain Willoughby at the head. But the very next night Jock McPherson brought up the matter in a session meeting and objected to having the dinner in the schoolroom, as it was not a religious gathering.

But Lawyer Ed met and overcame every difficulty. He laughed and cajoled the opera house party into giving way. He forced the programme committee to put Mr. McPherson down for one of the chief addresses of welcome at the banquet, and the objections ceased. He called up his friend Father Tracy on the telephone and bade him see that his flock did their duty in the matter, and he took the Methodist minister's wife and the Anglican clergyman's daughter and Mrs. Captain Willoughby all down town together for ice cream, and there was no more trouble.

"Women are ticklish things to handle, Rod," he said, wiping his perspiring forehead when all was harmony again. "The only wise way for a man to act is to get married and hand over all such manoeuvres to his wife. See that you get one as soon as possible."

"I've heard something somewhere regarding the advantage of example over precept," said Roderick gravely.

"Hold your tongue," said his chief severely. "If I wish to serve you as a terrible warning, to be avoided, instead of an example to be followed, you ought to be grateful in any case."

He strode away swinging his cane and whistling and Roderick watched him with affectionate eyes. He was wondering, as all the town wondered, except a couple of his nearest friends who knew, why Lawyer Ed had never married. And he was thinking of a pair of soft blue eyes that had not grown any kinder to him as the months had passed. He went back to his work, the solace for all his troubles. He was taking no part in the preparations for the Old Boys' celebration, and was looking forward to the date with small pleasure. For that was the day she would likely be leaving for her summer vacation. And who knew whether she would come back or not? So he watched Lawyer Ed's joyous preparations for the Old Boys' visit, without much interest, little thinking it was to be of more moment to him than to any one else in Algonquin.

Early in the morning of the first of July the rain came pouring down, but the clouds cleared away before ten o'clock, leaving the little town fresh and green and glowing after its bath. Everything was dressed in its best for the visitors. The gardens were in their brightest summer decorations. The June roses and peonies were not yet gone, and the syringa bushes and jessamine trees were all a-bloom. Main Street was lined with banners and overhung with gay bunting. Lake Algonquin smiled and twinkled and sparkled out her welcome. The fairy islands, the surrounding woods, everything, was at its freshest and greenest.

Early in the morning the *Inverness* with half of the entertainment committee, the town band, and such youngsters as Captain Jimmie could not eject from his decks, sailed away down to Barbay to bring the heroes home and, as the *Chronicle* said in a splendid editorial, the next morning, Algonquin's heart throbbed with pride as the goodly ship sailed into port with her precious cargo. The Barbay *Clarion*, Algonquin's and the *Chronicle's* bitter and hasty enemy, wearily remarked the next week that Algonquin always found something to be proud of anyway. But there could be no doubt Algonquin had reason on this first of July, for the *Inverness* carried homeward men whose names had brought honour to the little town.

There was J. P.'s son who edited the paper read by every Canadian from Halifax to Vancouver, except those who, wilfully blinded by political prejudice, read the organ of the opposite party. There was Tom Willoughby, the captain's brother, member for the Dominion House, who tore himself away from Ottawa, every one felt, at great risk to his country's weal, leaving the question of war in South Africa and reciprocity with Australia in abeyance, while he rushed across the country to do honour to the old home town. As the *Chronicle* said, the next morning, being a supporter of Tom's party, not even King Edward himself could have found fault with a loyalty that would take such risks for home and native land.

There was Sandy Graham's brother from New York, who had made, some said, a million in real estate deals in the West, and Lawyer Ed's own brother, who was a professor of note in a University "down East." There were business, and professional men, young workmen from near by cities and towns, statesmen and scholars. But of them all, none was such a hero, and none so eagerly awaited, as Harry Armstrong. For only the summer before, Harry had taken a Canadian lacrosse team around the world and had vanquished everything in Europe, Asia and Africa that dared to hold up a stick against them.

When the first far away note of the *Inverness'* whistle floated across the water from the Gates, the ladies at the Presbyterian church began putting the finishing touches to the tables and the dressing on the salads, and half of the reception committee that had remained at home drove down to the dock. They arranged themselves there in proper order, with Captain Willoughby, the Mayor, at the head, or rather almost at the head, for of course Lawyer Ed was a few steps in advance of him.

The dock was a new and important landing place. There was a big distinction between the dock and the wharf. The latter was the decrepit old wooden structure, torn and jarred by ice and storms, that stood at the foot of Main Street, where every one of the Old Boys had fished and fallen in and nearly drowned himself many a time. But the dock, as every one knew, was the fine new landing place, built of stone and cement, and stretching from the town park, away out, it almost seemed, as far as the Gates. The *Inverness* had had instruction to put in at the dock, not only to impress the Old Boys with the strides Algonquin had made, but as a delicate compliment to Tom Willoughby, through whose political influence it had been built.

All the cabs in town had been hired and all the buggies loaned, and they lined up along the park road waiting to take the guests up to the church. Lawyer Ed had suggested at first that the Mayor ride down in his automobile, but as all the horses in town had to be out at the same time, the experiment was voted too dangerous and the Mayor drove in a commonplace but safe cab.

Every one was at his proper station waiting when, with a blaze of colour and a burst of music, the *Inverness* curved around Wanda Island and swept into view. She was a brave sight surely! From every side floated banners and pennons, her deck rail and her flag-staff were covered with green boughs, Old Boys fairly swarmed the decks from stem to stern. And up in the bow, their instruments flashing in the sunlight, stood the band, playing loudly and gaily, "Home, Sweet Home."

No one ever quite knew who was to blame that things went amiss from that splendid moment. Captain Jimmie said it was the fault of Major Dobie, the leader of the band, and Major Dobie was equally certain it was the captain's fault. The Old Boys themselves were willing to take all the blame, and perhaps they were right, for they danced on the deck, and crowded about the wheel so that Captain Jimmie had no idea whither he was steering. However it was, instead of turning to starboard, as he had been instructed, and running in to the dock where the committee waited, Captain Jimmie swept to larboard around the buoy that marked his turning point, and made straight for his old hitching post at the wharf.

The Mayor and the Committee shouted and waved. Lawyer Ed stood up on the seat of a cab and roared out a command across the water that might have been heard at the Gates, but the band and the cheers of the Old Boys drowned his voice. Captain Jimmie pursued his mistaken course, never once stopping in the stream of Gaelic with which he was entertaining his Highland guests, and even the half of the Committee on board forgot where they were to land, in their joyous excitement.

Then Lawyer Ed fairly pitched Afternoon Tea Willie into a row-boat and sent him spinning across the water to head-off the *Inverness* and make her turn to the park. But the poor boy had been working like a slave since early morning at the Presbyterian church, and could not row fast enough. He was only half-way across when the whistle sounded to shut off steam. But just as the *Inverness* stopped with a bump, some one of the committee came to his senses, and rushed to the captain, pointing out the frantically waving hosts on the dock.

"Cosh! Bless my soul!" cried Captain Jimmie in dismay. He gave a wrench to the wheel, shouting orders to the Ancient Mariner to gee her around and go back, but he was too late. Before the gang-plank had been thrown out, or rope hitched, the Old Boys had leaped ashore. Captain Jimmie yelled at them to come back, but they paid no more heed than they would have done twenty-five years earlier and went swarming joyfully up Main Street.

But meanwhile a dozen of the reception committee had come tearing down the railroad track from the park and were shouting upon them to stop. Then the Mayor, Archie Blair, J. P. Thornton and Lawyer Ed having leaped into a cab, and driven furiously across the town, were now thundering down Main Street. They headed off the truant Old Boys, and drove them back to the wharf to be received decorously and listen to the welcoming address. As they had dashed past the Presbyterian church at a mad gallop, every one became alarmed and the news spread that a dreadful disaster had happened to the *Inverness*. But Afternoon Tea Willie came running up out of breath and wet with perspiration to tell them the real state of affairs. He was scolded soundly by Mrs. Captain Willoughby, and went about pouring out apologies all day after.

So the reception took place at the wharf after all, with every one in imminent danger of going through the rotten planks into the lake. It was a rather informal affair. J. P. Thornton and Archie Blair tried to preserve some dignity, but Lawyer Ed was in a towering rage and cared not for decorum. He shook his fist at the Old Boys and told them they were howling idiots and had lost what little manners they had learned in Algonquin. Then he stood up on the carriage seat, his face red, his eyes blazing, and called Captain Jimmie an old blind mole and an ostrich and everything else in the world foolish and unthinking. Captain Jimmie shouted back with a right good Highland spirit, from his vantage point on the deck and all the Old Boys cheered joyously, declaring this was the one thing needful to make them feel absolutely at home.

Finally the proper welcome was stammered out by the Mayor, who was even less at home making a speech than running his automobile, and they all got away and the procession started up towards the church.

On every side were shouts of welcome: "Hello, Bob!" "Hi, there, Jack, you home too?" "Well, well, if there isn't old Bill! No place like Algonquin, eh Bill?" etc., etc. Harry Armstrong was easily

the favourite, and was the recipient of many welcoming shouts.

Roderick stood at the door watching the procession go past to the church. He was amazed to see Lawyer Ed and his brother seated in the same carriage as Alexander Graham. There was a ponderous man with a double chin seated beside him, and going into a spasm of laughter every time Lawyer Ed spoke. Roderick looked at him with keen interest. This was William Graham, the man whose word was law with the firm of Elliot and Kent. He had come all the way from New York for this celebration entirely, he declared in his speech at the banquet, because Ed had wired him to come and he could not resist Ed. They had been great friends in boyhood days, and the big brother cared not a whit that Sandy had a grudge at Ed. If that were so, he declared, then all the more shame to Sandy. So he was seated between the Brians brothers, fairly radiating joy from his big fat person, when the procession passed Lawyer Ed's office. His chief waved his hat at Roderick and roared:

"Come awa ben the kirk, ma braw John Hielanman!" and then he turned to the portly gentleman at his side and said:

"That's Angus McRae's boy, Bill. He's my partner now."

"Angus McRae's son? You mean Roderick McRae?" The millionaire turned and stared at the young man keenly. He nodded to his brother.

"Looks like a likely lad all right," he said. "I want to see you about him, Ed, when all the fuss is over."

Roderick had such a pile of work on the desk before him, that he did not get up to the church until the luncheon was over and the last speaker but one on his feet. This was Jock McPherson, and when Roderick slipped into the crowds standing at the ends of the long glittering tables, the little man was explaining very slowly and solemnly that as the afternoon with its long programme was approaching he would not be keeping them. All his oratorical rivals had had their turn at the Old Boys and Mr. McPherson was just a bit nettled at being crowded into the last few minutes. J. P. Thornton and Archie Blair and Lawyer Ed had got themselves put on ahead of him and had taken all the time and said all the complimenting things to be said. Captain Willoughby was the chairman and, though it was agony for him to make a speech, he had tried in his halting way to make amends to Mr. McPherson. It was a pity that such an able speaker had been left so late, he had explained, but there were so many on the programme that some one had to come last, etc., etc. Jock arose after this very doubtful introduction, and spoke so deliberately that Lawyer Ed and J. P. exchanged significant glances, there was something coming. "It iss true Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen," he said slowly, "that there have been many fine speeches delivered this afternoon. And now what shall I say? For I feel that ufferything has already been said." He paused and gave the peculiar sniffing sound that told he had scented a joke from afar and was going to hunt it to earth. "Yes, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, there is no doubt that there is vurry little left to be said on any subject whatuffer. I feel vurry much like the meenister who went into the pulpit with his sermon. He had not looked at it since he had put it away the night before, and the mice had got at it and had eaten all the firstly, the secondly and the thirdly, and there was vurry little left—vurry little left, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen. But the meenister would jist be explaining his dilemma to the people. 'My dearly beloved brethren,' he said, said he, 'I am vurry sorry to inform you that the mice have got at my sermon, and have eaten firstly, secondly and thirdly, but as it cannot be helped, my dearly beloved brethren, we will jist be commencing *where the mice left off!*'"

Even the mice had to join in the laugh on themselves, and when Jock had given the few words of his fourthly which were left, every one, himself included, was in fine humour.

The last speaker was Alexander Graham's wealthy brother. William Graham had been the most successful, from one point of view, of all Algonquin's returning sons. He had got together enough wealth, folk said, to buy out Algonquin twice over. Beside, he had become quite famous in political life in his adopted country, and rumour had it that he might have been President of the United States had he not been born in Canada. William himself denied this, but he could not deny the honours his adopted country had showered upon him. His name was a power in Washington circles, and he had more than once, gone abroad on international matters of grave import.

Nevertheless, Algonquin received him with some embarrassment mingled with her joy and pride. Bill Graham, the Algonquin boy, was a welcome sight to every one, for he had always been popular. But, W. H. Graham, the great American, was quite another matter, and many of his warmest friends had an uncomfortable feeling that they were committing an act of disloyalty to Britain in thus making him publicly welcome. It was all right to make money out of the Yankees, and Bill was commended for his millions, but to join the enemy and help it work out its problems was a dangerous precedent to set before the youth of the town.

He made a very wise speech, saying very little about the States, and a great deal about his joy at getting home again, but when he sat down, the applause was not quite as enthusiastic as had been given the other home-comers and Lawyer Ed's warm heart was grieved. As they stood up to sing the National Anthem before dispersing, like true sons of Algonquin, J. P. whispered:

"Too bad about old Bill, can't we do something better for him?"

Lawyer Ed was just swinging the crowd into the thunder of "God Save our gracious King," but he heard, and a sudden inspiration thrilled him. He nodded reassuringly to J. P. and waved his arms to beat time, for Major Dobie and the band were getting far behind.

Just as the last words of the national anthem were uttered, with a flourish of his hand to the band to continue, and another towards Bill to show that the graceful tribute was intended for him, Lawyer Ed burst forth into "My country 'tis of thee—" The band caught up the strain again, another wave of the leader's hand, and the Old Boys joined and every one burst generously into the second line "Sweet land of liberty," with smiling eyes turned towards the American millionaire.

Graham smiled radiantly back. Down in his heart he cared not a Canadian copper cent for the American national anthem, but he did care a great deal for the love of his old friends, and he was touched and pleased.

But alas for the generous tribute to the American. No one knew a word of the song beyond the second line. Lawyer Ed started off with a splendid shout, "Land where the—" but got no further. The band and the drum thundered gallantly over the lapse, but the singing dwindled away. The leader cast one agonised glance towards the American but Bill sent back a hopeless negative, and cleared his throat and twitched his New York tie. The Old Boys began to grin, and Lawyer Ed began to grow hot at the fear of making a fiasco of what he had intended for a grand finale. But he kept doggedly on, for Lawyer Ed never in his life gave up anything he started out to do, and even if he had had no tune as well as no words he would have sung that song through to the bitter end. So far above the band and the drum his voice rang out splendidly, defying fate:

*"Land where the lee la lay,  
Land where the doo da day—"*

Then, hearing the laughter rising like a tide about him, he flung the American tribute to the winds, and roared out strong and distinct, the whole congress of Old Boys following in a burst of relief,

*"Long to reign over us,  
God save our King."*

The banquet broke up in a storm of laughter, the American millionaire's loudest of all.

"Oh, Ed," he cried, wiping his eyes, "stick to the old version. You're more loyal than you knew!"

Roderick was leaving the room with the crowd, when Leslie Graham, in a bewitching white cap and tiny apron, caught his arm.

"Don't run away!" she cried, "I was told to fetch you to Uncle Will, he wants to meet you. If he's going to make a Yankee out of you, see that you resist him strenuously."

"One American in your family is enough, isn't it, Les?" said Anna Baldwin, her big black eyes staring very innocently at Roderick.

Roderick blushed like a girl, but Leslie Graham laughed delightedly.

"Isn't Anna shocking?" she asked, glancing coyly at Roderick, as they moved back through the crowd. But he did not hear her, and she was surprised at a sudden light that sprang to his eyes. She looked in their direction, and saw Helen Murray in a blue gown and a white cap and apron. She was standing in the doorway leading to the kitchen.

Madame was talking to her and the girl's usually grave face was animated and lighted with a lovely smile. Leslie Graham looked at her then back swiftly to Roderick. There was a look in his eyes she had never seen there before. The old suspicion roused the night she had seen him help Miss Murray out of his canoe returned. Her gay chatter suddenly ceased. She presented Roderick to her uncle and quickly turned away and was lost in the crowd.

Roderick scarcely noticed that she had gone, he was wondering if the summer holidays were to be spent in Algonquin after all, and then he noticed that the man he had been anxious to meet was shaking his hand. "I'm glad to see Angus McRae's son!" the big man was saying. "Yes, yes, I'd know you by your father. And how is he? I must see him before I leave. Sandy's been telling me about your work here. And Ed too. Do you intend to settle in Algonquin?"

"I hope not, sir, not permanently at least."

"That's right. Algonquin's a fine place to have in the background of one's life, but it's rather small for any expansion. Did you know I've had an eye on you since you were up north last winter?"

"On me?" cried Roderick amazed.

"Yes, just on you." The portly figure shook with a good humoured amusement at the young man's modest amazement. "I heard about you from my brother and then from Kent. Let me see, I suppose there will be high doings all day to-day. What about to-morrow? Could I see you for a little talk to-morrow morning?"

Roderick set the hour for the appointment, silently wondering. His heart was throbbing with expectation, vague, wonderful. Some great event was surely pending. He went home that night, full of high expectations. When he made a great success of his life and came back to Algonquin, rich and with a name, he would go to her and show her he had been right, and she had been wrong.

## CHAPTER XII

### "THE MELODY DEADEN'D"

"And you don't mean to tell me you were such a fool as to say he might go?" J. P. Thornton, walking up the hill for the fourth time on the way home from a session meeting with Lawyer Ed, asked the question again in an extremity of indignation.

And Lawyer Ed answered as he had done each time before:

"I couldn't stand in the boy's way, Jack; I just couldn't."

They had argued the question for an hour, up and down the hills between their two homes, and had come to no agreement. That Roderick had had an offer to tempt any young man there was no doubt. A partnership in the firm of Elliot and Kent, solicitors for the British North American Transcontinental Railroad, was such a chance as came the way of few at his age.

And yet Mr. Thornton declared that he should have refused it unconditionally. Not so Lawyer Ed; his generous heart condoned the boy.

"It's the chance of a life-time, Jack," he declared. "It would be shameful to keep him out of it, and, mind you, he wouldn't say he would go until I urged it."

"Oh, blow him!" J. P. was a very dignified gentleman and did not revert to his boyhood's slang except under extreme provocation. "He shouldn't have allowed you to urge him. And what about the brilliant prospect you gave up once just because his father was in need?"

"Well, never mind that," said Lawyer Ed, hurriedly. "He doesn't know anything about that and he's not going to either."

"And it was Bill Graham who wanted you, and you wouldn't go. And now Bill's taking him away from you. He ought to be ashamed!"

"Bill thought he was doing me a kindness. He knew Rod's success is mine."

J. P. was silent from sheer exhaustion of all sane argument. He was grieved and bitterly disappointed for his friend's sake. Ed was in imperative need of a rest and just when life was looking a little easier to him, and the long-deferred holiday was within reach, Roderick was deserting.

If they could only have visited the Holy Land before he left, it would not have seemed so bad. But though Roderick had consented to remain until his chief returned, Lawyer Ed had felt he could not go, for he must busy himself gathering up the threads of his work which he had been dropping with such relief.

Roderick had not come to his final decision without much argument with himself. His head said Go, but he could not quite convince his heart that he was right in leaving Lawyer Ed so soon. He had argued the question with himself during many sleepless nights, but the lure of success had proved the stronger. And he was going late in the autumn to take up his new work.

To Old Angus the news was like the shutting out of the light of day. Roderick was going away. At first that was all he could comprehend. But he did not for one moment lose his sublime faith either in his boy or in his God. The Lord's hand was in it all, he told himself. He was leading the Lad out into larger service and his father must not stand in the way. He said not one word of his own loss, but was deeply concerned over Lawyer Ed's. He was worried lest the Lad's going might mean business difficulties for his friend.

"If the Father will be wanting the Lad, Edward," he said one golden autumn afternoon, when

Lawyer Ed stopped at the farm gate in passing, "then we must not be putting our little wills in His way. I would not be minding for myself, oh, no, not at all—" the old man's smile was more pathetic than tears. "The dear Lord will be giving me so many children on the Jericho Road, that He feels I can spare Roderick."

Eddie Perkins was stumbling about the lane trying to rake up the dead leaves into neat piles as Angus had instructed him. He came whimpering up with a bruised finger which he held up to the old man. Angus comforted him tenderly, telling him Eddie must be a man and not mind a little scratch. He looked down at this most helpless of his children and gently stroked the boy's misshapen head.

"Yes, He would be very kind, giving me so many of His little ones to care for, and He feels I can spare Roderick. The Lad is strong—" his voice faltered a moment, but he went on bravely.

"But it was you I was thinking of, Edward. I could not but be fearing that you were making a great sacrifice. There is your visit to the Holy Land—and the business. It will be hard for you, Edward?"

Lawyer Ed, seated in his mud-splashed buggy at the gate, turned quickly away, the anxiety in Old Angus's voice was almost too much for his tender heart. There was a wistful plea in it that he should vindicate Roderick from a shadow of suspicion. He jerked his horse's head violently and demanded angrily what in thunder it meant by trying to eat all the grass off the roadside like a fool of an old cow, and then he rose valiantly to the Lad's defence.

"Hut, tut, Angus!" he cried blusteringly. "Such nonsense! You know as well as I do that the Lad didn't want to leave. I fairly drove him away. Pshaw! never mind the Holy Land. We're all journeying to it together, anyway. And as for my business—somebody else'll turn up. I always felt Algonquin would be too small for Rod. You'll see he'll make a name for himself that'll make us all proud."

He did it splendidly, and Angus was comforted. He blamed himself for what he termed his lack of faith in the boy and in his Father. And many a night, as he sat late by his fire, trying to reason himself into cheerful resignation, he recalled Edward's words hopefully. Yes, he surely ought to be proud and glad that the Lad was going out into a wider service. He was leaving him alone, on his Jericho Road, here, but that was only because the Father needed him for a busier highway, where thieves were crueller and more numerous.

As the autumn passed and the time for leaving approached, the Lad ran out very often to the farm. His visits were a constantly increasing source of discomfort—both to heart and conscience. His father's gallant attempts at cheerfulness, and his sublime assurance that his son was going away to do a greater work for the Master stung Roderick to the quick. That Master, whom he had long ago left out of his life's plan, had said, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." And from even the little Roderick had seen of the affairs of Elliot and Kent, he knew only too well that to serve that firm and humanity at the same time would be impossible.

There were others who did not possess his father's faith in his purpose, and they spoke to him plainly on the matter. J. P. Thornton, remembering indignantly all that Lawyer Ed had once given up for Old Angus's sake, and further maddened by being forbidden to disclose it, expressed his disapproval of Roderick's leaving so soon, in strong incisive terms.

His remarks succeeded only in angering the young man, and making him more determined in his course. Doctor Leslie was the next to speak plainly on the matter, and his kindly, deep-searching words were harder to set aside. Roderick was passing the Manse one day when Mammy Viney hailed him.

"Honey, de minesta' want you," she called, in her soft rich tones. "An' you'se gwine away, an' leavin' you ole Auntie Kirsty," she said reproachfully, as he came up the steps and shook hands with her.

"But you wouldn't want me to stay and bother Aunt Kirsty in the kitchen all my life, now, would you, Mammy Viney? I thought men were a nuisance there."

"Men's jus' a trouble eberywhar," she said sternly. "Dat Mahogany Bill he was jus' like all de res', an' here you doin' de same, goin' off an' leabin' folks in de lurch, with all de hard work to do. I'se shame of you—dat I is!"

Roderick laughed good-naturedly, as he followed her into the house, but Mammy Viney tossed her head. "Eberybody say dat it pretty mean o' you, anyhow," she said with the air of one who could tell a great deal if she wished. "'Deed dey's sayin' dat you no business make Lawya Ed stay home!"

Roderick did not wait to hear any more of what Algonquin was saying about him. Mammy Viney rather enjoyed recounting such remarks, and never took one jot or one tittle from that which she passed along.

Doctor Leslie met him at the study door, with outstretched hands. "Now tell me all about this going away scheme," he said; and Roderick told him eagerly, about the brilliant prospects ahead

of him, and when he finished there was the implied question in the boy's eyes. Would he not be blind to his and every one's best interests to remain in Algonquin in the face of such inducements?

Doctor Leslie sat and looked out at the orchard trees, with their wealth of red and gold apples falling with soft thuds upon the grass. How often had that question come to him in his youth, and when he had examined his own heart and his reasons for obeying the call to go away, he had been compelled to remain.

He saw Roderick's position, and sympathised with the youthful longing to be away and to do great deeds; but he was afraid the way had not yet truly opened up into which Angus McRae's son could step. He had learned, in the year Roderick had spent in Algonquin, that the young man was not vitally interested in the things that are eternal. His outlook on life was not his father's. The minister felt impelled to speak plainly.

"I feel sure," he said slowly, turning his eyes from the garden, and letting them rest kindly upon the boy's frank face, "I feel sure, Roderick, that no young man who lacks ambition will be of much use to the world. But ambition is a dangerous guide alone. If you are anxious to make the best of your life, my boy, the Lord will open the way to great opportunities. But the time and the way will be plainly shown. If this is a door of greater opportunity, then enter it, and God give you great and large blessing. But if you are leaving with any doubts as to its being the right course, if you fear that there are other obligations you must yet fulfil, then I charge you to examine your heart carefully, lest you fight against God. It is no use trying to do that. One day or other His love will hedge us about. If it cannot draw us into the way it meets us on the Damascus Road and blinds us with its light. But some of us miss the best of life before that happens. Don't lose the way, Lad; your father instructed you well in it."

For days the warning followed Roderick, tormenting him. He dared not examine his motives carefully, lest he find them false. He was out on life's waters, paddling hard for the gleam of gold, and he had no time to stop and consider whither it was leading him. It might vanish while he lingered.

There was another person whose opinion he was anxious to get on this vexed question. He wondered every waking hour what she would think of his going. Perhaps she didn't think about it at all, he speculated miserably. He still continued to waylay her in Willow Lane, as he went to and from home, and one evening he ran upon his poor rival, Afternoon Tea Willie, doing the same sentinel duty.

Roderick had been home for supper and was returning to the office early to do some left over work, when he overtook him slowly walking towards Algonquin.

"Good evening, Mr. Roderick," he said in a melancholy tone. "May I walk into town with you?"

Roderick slackened his stride to suit the young man. He was rather impatient at having to endure his company, but he soon changed his mind, for Alfred was in a confidential mood.

"I might as well go home," he said gloomily. "She's gone."

"Who's gone?" asked Roderick perversely.

"Why, Miss Murray. She slipped away somehow, and I don't know how she did it. But I've waited down here for her for the last time." He choked for a moment, then continued firmly. "She's showed me plainly she doesn't want me, and I'm too proud to force my company upon her."

Roderick did not know what to say; he wanted to laugh, but it was impossible to keep just a little of the fellow-feeling that makes us wondrous kind from creeping into his heart.

"Well, it's too bad," he said at last. "But if she doesn't want you, of course there is only one thing for you to do."

"I have been faithful to her for a year," said the rejected lover. "I never before was attentive to any lady, no matter how charming, for that length of time, and she needn't have treated me that way."

The subject was the most interesting one in the world to Roderick, and he could not resist encouraging the young man to go on.

And poor Afternoon Tea Willie, unaccustomed to a sympathetic hearing, poured out all his long heartache.

"I am telling you this in strict confidence you know, Roderick," he said. "It is such a relief to tell some one and it seems right I should tell you the end of this sad romance, for you helped me and were kind to me at its very beginning." He paused for a moment, to reflect sadly on his disappointed hopes.

"You may be sure your confidence will never be betrayed," said Roderick, and murmuring his



gratitude the young man went on.

"It was Miss Annabel Armstrong who put her against me from the first, I feel sure, though I must never bear a grudge against a lady. But you know, Roderick (I know you will never betray a confidence), Miss Annabel hates me. I proposed to her once, shortly after I came to Algonquin. It was just a mad infatuation on my part, not love at all. I did not know then what real love was. But Miss Annabel—well, she is a lady—but I, I really couldn't tell you what she said to me when I offered her all a man could, my heart and my hand and all my property. It was awful! I really sometimes wake up in the night yet and think about it. And she never forgave me. And I don't know why." He paused and drew a deep breath at the remembrance.

"And I know she poisoned Miss Murray's mind against me—but I shan't hold a grudge against a lady. Now, Miss Murray herself was so gentle and kind when she refused me—what? I—I didn't mean any harm." For his sympathetic listener had turned upon him.

"How dared you do such a thing?" Roderick cried indignantly.

"I just couldn't help it," wailed Alfred. "You couldn't yourself now, Roderick;" and Roderick was forced to confess inwardly that likely he couldn't.

"Well, never mind, go on," he said, all unabashed that he was taking advantage of the poor young man merely to be able to hear something about her.

"I just couldn't help it. But I only asked her twice and the first time she refused so nicely, I thought perhaps she'd change her mind. I never heard any one refuse a—person—so—so sweetly and kindly. But this last time was unmistakable, and I feel as if it were all over. I am not going to be trampled upon any more."

"That's right," said Roderick. "Just brace up and never mind; you'll soon get over it."

The young man shook his head. "I shall never be the same," he said. "But I have pride. I am not going to let her see that she has made a wreck of my life. But I thought she might have had more sympathy when she had had a sorrow like that herself."

Roderick felt his resentment rising. He did not mind listening to poor Alfred's love stories, but he did not want to hear hers discussed. But before he could interrupt, Alfred was saying something that held his attention and made him long for more.

"But she is all over that now. She told me herself."

"All over what?" Roderick could not hold the question back.

"Caring about the young man she was engaged to. There was a young man named Richard Wells in Toronto, you know, and they were engaged. When she was away for her holidays last summer, I was so lonesome I just couldn't stand it, so I wrote to my cousin Flossy Wilbur and asked her to find out how she was or her address or something. And Flossy wrote such a comforting letter and said she was staying with her married brother, Norman Murray—he lives on Harrington Street, and Floss lives just a couple of blocks away on a beautiful avenue—"

"What were you saying about Wells?" Roderick interrupted.

"Flossy knows him and told me all about it. I had a letter just last week. He met another girl he liked better—no, that couldn't be true, nobody who once saw her could care for any one else, I am sure. But this other girl was rich, and so he broke the engagement. If I ever meet that man!" Afternoon Tea Willie stood on the side-walk, the electric light shining through the autumn leaves making a golden radiance about his white face. "If I ever meet that man I—I shall certainly treat him with the coldest contempt, Roderick. I wouldn't speak to him!"

"But you said she didn't care," suggested Roderick impatiently.

"Not now. But Flossy said her poor little heart must have been broken at first, though she did not show it. She came up to Algonquin right away. I saw her on board the *Inverness* the day she came and I knew then—"

"How do you know she doesn't care about Wells?"

"Oh, when Flossy wrote me that last week, I went to see her at the school—I don't dare go to Rosemount—and I asked her to forgive me for proposing to her. I told her, or at least I hinted at the tragedy in her life, and I said I wanted to beg her pardon on my knees for troubling her as I had done,—and that I couldn't forgive myself. Oh, she just acted like an angel—there is no other word to describe her. She asked me at first how I found out and then she said so sweetly and gently, that she thanked me for my consideration. And then, just because she was so good—I did it again! I really didn't mean it, but before I knew what I was doing, I was asking her again if there was any hope for me. And, oh dear! oh dear! she said 'no' again. Gave me not the least hope. I was so overcome—you don't know how a man feels about such things, Roderick. I was so overcome I burst out and said I felt just as if I would have given all I possessed to meet that Wells man. I said I could just treat him with the coldest contempt if I ever met him on the street. And

she answered so sweetly that I must not worry on her account. She said she had cared once, but that was all over, and that she was glad now that it had been so. And she added—and I don't see how any one with such eyes could be so cruel—she said I must never, never speak of such a subject to her again, and that if I ever did she would not let me even come near her. So it's all over with me. I am not going to follow her about any more. I have still been coming down to Willow Lane, but I am coming no more after to-night. This is the end!"

They had reached the office door and paused. Roderick's sympathy seemed to have suddenly vanished. In the very face of the other young man's despair, he turned upon him ruthlessly.

"That's a wise resolution, Alf," he said distinctly. "And I'm going to advise you strongly to stick to it. You keep the width of the town between you and Miss Murray from now on, do you understand?"

"What—whatever do you mean?" stammered the boy, aghast at the cruelty of one who had seemed a friend.

"Just what I say. On your own showing, you've been tormenting her; and—I—well, I won't have it—that's all. I feel sure you have the good sense to stick to your resolution," his tone was a trifle kinder, "and for your own sake I hope you do. If not, look out!" He made a significant gesture, that made the other jump out of his way in terror. "And look here, Alf," he added. "If you tell any soul in Algonquin that Miss Murray was engaged to any one I'll—I'll murder you. Do you hear?"

He ran up the steps and into the office. And the cruellest part of it all to poor Afternoon Tea Willie, as the door slammed in his face leaving him alone in the darkness, was that he could hear his false friend whistling merrily.

Roderick felt like whistling in the days that followed. He had found out something he had been longing to know for over a year. He did not have to stay away from her now. And the very next evening he marched straight up to Rosemount and asked to see Miss Murray. She was out, much to his disappointment, but the next Sunday he met her as they were leaving the church. And she expressed her regret so kindly that he was once more filled with hope. He had stood watching for her while his father paused for a word with Dr. Leslie, but as usual he had been joined by Alexander Graham and his daughter. There was a subtle air of triumph about the man, ever since Roderick had decided to go to Montreal, an air almost of proprietorship especially noticeable when Lawyer Ed was about.

"Good morning, Rod," he said genially. "All packed yet?"

"Not quite," said Roderick shortly. He winced, for the thought of the actual parting with his father was a subject upon which he did not care to speak.

"I don't believe you are a bit sorry you are going," said Leslie, shaking the heavy plumes of her velvet hat at him, and pouting, for never a regret had he expressed to her.

"I actually believe you're glad. And I don't blame you. I'd be just jumping for joy if I were going. It's a dreadfully dull little place here, in the winter especially."

He looked at her in surprise. It was so unlike her to express discontent. She had always seemed so happy. "Why, I thought you couldn't be ever induced to live any other place," he cried in surprise.

"The idea! I wish somebody'd try me!" she flashed out the answer, with just the faintest emphasis on a significant word.

Roderick looked down at her again in wonder, to see her eyes droop, her colour deepen. They passed down the church steps, side by side; her father dropped behind with Dr. Blair, and they were left alone together. Roderick, always shy in a young woman's presence, was overcome with a vague feeling of dismay, which he did not at all understand and which rendered him speechless.

He was relieved when Miss Annabel Armstrong, with a girlish skip, came suddenly to her niece's side. "Good morning, Mr. Roderick McRae. Good morning, niicy dear! Come here a moment and walk with me, Leslie darling. I want to ask you something." She slipped her arm into the girl's and drew her back. "Here, Mr. McRae, you walk by Miss Murray, just for a moment, please."

She shoved Helen forward into Leslie's place, and pulling her niece close, whispered fiercely.

"You are a young idiot, Leslie Graham! I heard Mrs. Captain Willoughby and the Baldwin girls laughing and talking about you just this minute as they came out of church. I am just deadly ashamed. How can we ever keep our position in society if you act so? Anna Baldwin said you were simply throwing yourself at that young McRae's head—and his father a common farmer! And his *Aunt!*"

The girl jerked her arm from Miss Annabel's grasp, her eyes and cheeks blazing. "Anna Baldwin is crazy about him herself!" she cried violently. "And she's made a fool of herself more

times than I can tell! And his father is far better than your father ever was, or mine either!" She stopped as some one looked at her in passing. "I shall just do exactly as I please, Aunt Annabel Armstrong," she added determinedly. "It's just like an old maid to be always interfering in other people's affairs!"

Miss Annabel turned white with anger. She was proud of her niece, and yet she almost disliked her. Leslie, young and gay and successful, the inheritor of everything for which her aunt had scrimped and striven and hungered all her life and never attained, was a constant source of irritation and discontent to Miss Annabel. Her heart and hopes were as young as Leslie's, and she was forced to find herself pushed aside into the place of age, while this radiant girl walked all unheeding into everything that her girlhood should have been. And this intimation concerning her age and estate was unbearable. She grew intensely quiet.

"Leslie," she said, "you may heed me or not as you wish. But if you had eyes in your head, you would see for yourself that that young man doesn't care the snap of his finger for you and all your money. He's madly in love with Helen Murray. He's always hanging about Rosemount!" she added, growing reckless. "He was there only last night. Just look at him now!"

The startled eyes of the girl obeyed. Roderick was walking beside Helen Murray, and looking down at her with the joy of her presence shining in his face. He was not schooled in hiding his feelings, and his eyes told his secret so plainly that Leslie Graham could not but read.

She said not another word. They had reached a corner and she suddenly left her aunt and walked swiftly homeward alone. She had had a revelation. For a long time she had suspected and feared. Now she knew. In all her gay thoughtless life she had never wanted anything very badly that she had not been able to get. Now, the one thing she wanted most, the thing which had all unconsciously become the supreme desire of her life, she had learned in one flash was already another's. She was as certain of it as though Roderick had proclaimed his feelings from the church pulpit. Her thoughts ran swiftly back over the months of their acquaintance and picked up here and there little items of remembrance that should have shown her earlier the true state of things. She was forced to confess that not once had he shown her any slightest preference, except as her father's daughter. And yet she had refused to look and listen. And then, upon knowledge, came shame and humiliation and rage at finding she had boldly proffered herself and was found undesirable. It was the birth of her woman's heart. The happy, careless girl's heart was dying, and the new life did not come without much anguish of soul.

As soon as she could escape from the dinner table she fled to her room to face this dread thing which had come upon her. All undisciplined and unused to pain, through her mother's careless indulgence, entirely pagan, too, for her religious experience had been but one of form, the girl met this crisis in her life alone.

At first the smarting sense of her humiliation predominated and her heart cried for recompense. She would show him what would happen if he dared set her aside. Well she knew she could injure Roderick's chances for success if she set her mind to the task; for was it not her influence that had helped to give him those chances?

The force of her anger drove her to action. She threw on her plumed hat and her velvet coat, and slipping out unseen, walked swiftly out of the town and up the lake shore. Every little breeze from the waters sent a shower of golden leaves dropping about her. But the air was still in the woods. It was a perfect autumn day, a true Sabbath day in Nature's world, with everything in a beautiful state of rest after labour. The bronze oaks, the yellow elms and the crimson maples along the shore, now and then dropped a jewel too heavy to be held into the coloured waters beneath. The tower of the little Indian church across the lake pointed a silver finger up out of a soft blue haze. The whole world seemed at peace, in contrast to the tumult within the girl's untrained heart.

She seated herself on a fallen log beside the water, the warm, hazy sunshine falling through the golden branches upon her. And sitting there, she felt the spirit of the serene day steal over hers. Wiser and nobler thoughts came to her sorely tried young heart. Some strong unknown Spirit rose up within her and demanded that she do what was right. It was her only guide, she could not reason with it, but she blindly obeyed. There would be long days of pain and hard struggle ahead of her, she well knew, but the Spirit heeded them not at all. She must do what was right. She must act the strong, the womanly part, let the future bring what it would.

And she went back from the soft rustling peace of the woods, not a careless, selfishly happy girl any more, but a strong, steady-purposed woman.

Roderick was so busy and happy during the ensuing week that he had almost forgotten the existence of Miss Leslie Graham, when she was brought to his dismayed senses by the sound of her voice over the telephone.

"Tra-la-la-la, Mr. Roderick McRae," she sang out in her merriest voice. "Why don't you come round and say good-bye to your friends? Are you going to fold your tent like the Arabs and silently steal away?"

Roderick began to stammer out an explanation, but she cut him off gaily.

"Don't apologise, you are going to be punished for your sins," she called laughingly. "For you can't come now. I am off to-day to Toronto with Aunt Annabel. We took a sudden notion we wanted to go to the city. We're going to spend a whole month in a riotous purchasing of autumn hats. So, as I am a good meek and forgiving person and as you'll be gone before we get back I just thought I'd say 'Bon Voyage' to you before I leave."

She talked so fast that Roderick had scarcely any chance to reply. He tried to stammer out his thanks to her for her kindness, but she laughingly interrupted him. It was quite too bad they couldn't say good-bye, Daddy would do that for her. But Mamma was coming to Toronto with them. They were both dreadfully sorry and Mamma sent her best regards. They all hoped he'd have a lovely time, and come home very rich; and before he could answer, she had called a gay "Good-bye and good-luck," and had rung off.

Roderick was conscious of a slight feeling of surprise, and a decided feeling of relief.

"She's a great girl," he said to himself admiringly. "She's just a splendid good friend and a brick, and I'll write and tell her so!"

And he had no idea of how very much she merited his praise.

As the time for leaving approached, Roderick grew busier every day. It was hard to get Lawyer Ed in the office long enough to settle things. He was striving to take up the burden of his old work again cheerfully, but the new civic and social and church duties he had assumed in the year were hard to drop. Then the Local Option campaign was at its height and demanded his attention.

To Roderick, and to most of the town people, he seemed to be shouldering all his old burdens with his usual energy and light-heartedness, but J. P. missed a familiar note of joyousness in his tone, and Archie Blair noticed that Ed did not go up the steps of his office in one leap now as he had always done, but walked up like other people. But to the casual observer, Lawyer Ed was the same. He was here, there and everywhere, making sure that this one and that was going to vote the right way. And Roderick, watching him, remembered how anxious he had been over the effect the campaign would have upon his business. And now that he was not required to enter it, he often longed to plunge in and help his friend to victory.

On the whole, the campaign helped Lawyer Ed materially, in the hard days preceding the parting with his boy. After all, there was nothing so dear to his Irish heart as a fight, and the rounding up of his troops before the battle kept him busy and happy. And everything was pointing to victory. Father Tracy had promised to see to it that his flock voted the right way, and Jock McPherson had declared himself on the side of the temperance cause. Whatever Lawyer Ed may have had to do with influencing his fellow Irishmen, he could take no credit for Jock's conversion. He had set out to interview the McPherson one night after a session meeting, but fortunately J. P. Thornton prevented his impetuous friend making the mistake of approaching the elder on that difficult subject. Jock was still feeling a little dour over the temperance question and the wise Englishman knew that whichever side of the cause was presented first that was the side to which the McPherson was most likely to object.

"Leave him to the other fellows, Ed," advised his friend. "They are almost certain to work their own destruction."

He was right; for not a week later Lawyer Ed came up the steps of the Thornton home, staggering with laughter, to report that Jock was as staunch on the temperance question as Dr. Leslie himself, and to explain how it came about.

As J. P. had prophesied, Jock had come over to their side because a particularly offensive person interested in the liquor business, had claimed him as a friend. It had happened on the Saturday afternoon before. Jock was down town, standing on the sidewalk in front of Crofter's hotel discussing the bad state of the roads with a farmer friend, when Mr. Crofter came forth, and after introducing the subject of Local Option in a friendly fashion, said:

"Well, sir, I'm glad to see one good Presbyterian who hasn't gone off his head over this tomfoolery." Here he made the fatal mistake of slapping Mr. McPherson on the shoulder. "It does me good to see a man who isn't a fanatic, but can take a glass and leave it alone, and give every other fellow the same privilege."

"Yus." Jock drew in his breath with a peculiar snuffing sound that would have warned any one who knew him well that there was danger in the air. "Yus," he repeated the word very slowly, "and take another glass, and leave it alone."

"What did you say?" enquired Mr. Crofter, a little puzzled. "I don't think I quite caught you, Mr. McPherson."

"I would be thinking," said Jock with dreadful deliberation, "that it must be a grand sight, but I nuffer saw one."

"Never saw what?"

"A man that could take a glass and leave it alone. He always took it."

Mr. Crofter went back into the hotel with something of the feeling of a baseball player who has made a mighty swing with his bat and missed.

And Jock informed Dr. Leslie the next day that he had intended all along to vote for Local Option, but had omitted to say so earlier. The case of Father Tracy had brought even greater joy. One day Mike Cassidy came raging into Lawyer Ed's office with the tale of another fight with his enemies the Duffys, and the information that he was going to court with it this time if he died for it. Roderick was out, and on the pretence that he must consult his young partner, Lawyer Ed managed to get Mike to consider the matter for an hour, and in the interval he went to see Father Tracy.

The Catholic priest and the Presbyterian elder were good friends, for his reverence was a jolly Irishman, very proud of his title of the "Protestant Priest." It was whispered that he was not in favour in ecclesiastical circles, but little cared he, for he was in the highest favour with everybody in Algonquin, especially those in need, and the hero of every boy who could wave a lacrosse stick.

"Good mornin', Father O'Flynn," cried Lawyer Ed, as, swinging his cane, he was ushered into the priest's sanctum. "Sure and I suppose it's yer owld job ye're at—

*"Checkin' the crazy ones, urgin' the aisy ones,  
Helpin' the lazy ones on wid a stick."*

"It is that, then," said Father Tracy, his blue eyes dancing. "And here's wan o' the crazy ones. Sit ye down, man, till I finish this note, and I'll be checkin' ye all right. I'll not be a minute."

Lawyer Ed of course could not sit down, but wandered about the room examining the pictures on the wall, a few photographs of popes and cardinals.

"Sure this is a terrible place for a heretic like me to be in, Father," he exclaimed. "Oi'm getting clane narvous. If it wasn't called a Presbytry, I'd niver dare venture. It's got a good name. By the way, I don't see John Knox here," he added, anxiously examining the cardinals again.

Father Tracy's pen signed his name with a flourish. "You'll see John Knox soon enough if ye don't mend your ways, Edward Brians," he said. "Now, what do ye want of me this morning?" But the two Irishmen could not let such a good joke pass unnoticed; when they had laughed over it duly, the business was stated.

"He'll go to no law," said the shepherd of this wayward sheep. "I'll see him to-night, and it's grateful I am to you, Edward, for your interest. I hear the boys are getting together to see about a junior league. Algonquin ought to get the championship this year—"

But Lawyer Ed knew better than to let Father Tracy get off onto the subject of lacrosse. "I wish Algonquin would take the championship vote for Local Option next January, Father," he said tentatively. He waited, but Father Tracy said nothing. He was not so much noted for his leanings towards teetotalism as towards lacrosse.

"It would keep Mike Cassidy straight," ventured the visitor again.

"I can keep Mike Cassidy straight without the aid of any such heretic props," said Father Tracy, looking decidedly grim.

Lawyer Ed burst out laughing. "'Pon me word you're right," he exclaimed. "Man, I wish sometimes that our Protestant priests had the power that you have. But I'm not here to urge you, mind that. I'm not such a fool as to go down to the Rainy Rapids and try to turn them back with a pebble. But I just thought I might as well ask you what your opinion was, when I was here. A great many people of your flock tell me they will vote just as the Father tells them." He glanced back at his host as he moved to the door.

"Yes, and they'd better," said the Father. "So you'd like to know what to say to them, eh?"

"I certainly would." He waited anxiously.

Father Tracy stood watching him go down the steps, his portly figure filling up the doorway, his good-natured face beaming. "And if it's news ye're after I suppose ye'll rest neither day nor night till ye get it."

"Not likely."

"Well—" Father Tracy was enjoying the other's anxiety and was as deliberate as Jock McPherson—"well, if you meet any of my stray sheep that look as if they were goin' to vote for the whiskey, ye can tell them for me that I'd say mass for a dead dog before I'd meddle wid their lost souls."

Lawyer Ed went down the street, half a block at a stride, in the direction of J. P.'s office.

Archie Blair's horse and buggy were standing in front of a house next to the Catholic church. The temptation, combined with his desperate hurry, was too much. He leaped in and, without so much as "By your leave," he tore down the street and never drew rein until he fairly fell out of the vehicle in front of J. P.'s office. He burst in with the glorious news: "I've got four hundred new votes promised me for local option. Hurrah! That's better than going to the Holy Land any day in the year!"

But when the day came at last that was to take Roderick from him, even Lawyer Ed's love of battle failed him. It was a dreary day, with Nature in accord with his gloom. A chill wind had blown all night from the north, lashing Lake Algonquin into foam and making the pines along the Jericho Road moan sadly. Early in the day the snow began to drive down from the north and by afternoon the roads were drifted.

Roderick was to leave on the afternoon train for Toronto, and there take the night express for Montreal and he came into Algonquin in the morning, to bid his friends good-bye. The sudden change in the weather had, as usual, been accompanied by the return of the old pain in his arm. It had been more frequent this autumn, but he had paid little heed to it. But to-day it added just the last burden required to make him thoroughly miserable. Lawyer Ed was stamping about, complaining loudly of the cold, blowing his nose, and talking about everything and anything but Roderick's pending departure. The Lad's drooping spirits went lower at the sight of him.

As he went about saying farewell he realised that he had not known how many friends he had made. Alexander Graham was full of expressions of congratulation and good-will.

"You must make good, Rod, my boy," he said. "We'll be watching you, you know, and of course the blame will fall on me if you don't. But I have no fears." He laughed in a patronising way that made Roderick feel very small indeed.

"I'm so sorry you couldn't come up again. The wife and Leslie took a sudden notion that they must go to Toronto for a month—or Leslie took it rather, and made her mother and aunt go with her. I'm sorry they are not here—but they are in Toronto and you might—" he paused knowingly,—"I guess I don't need to tell you where they are staying. Miss Leslie probably left her address." He laughed in such an insinuating way that Roderick's face grew crimson.

"No, Miss Graham did not give me her address," he said, so stiffly that the man looked at him in wonder, then laughed again. This was some of Leslie's nonsense, as usual, just to tease him. She had forced a little lover's quarrel probably and gone without saying good-bye. But he knew Leslie could make it all right just when she chose.

He parted from Roderick in quite a fatherly manner, but the young man went away feeling more uncomfortable and downhearted than ever.

There was one person who seemed frankly glad to see him go. Mr. Fred Hamilton did not actually express his joy, but he looked it, and Roderick felt something of the same feeling when they said good-bye. Dr. Leslie and several other old friends came next. Archie Blair had gone to the city to a medical congress, and he missed him. But he had bidden almost every one else in Algonquin farewell when at last he sent his trunk to the station, and taking Lawyer Ed's horse and cutter, drove out to the farm for the severest ordeal of that hard day.

As he passed the school, the children came storming out to their afternoon recess, pelting each other with snowballs. Roderick hesitated a moment before the gate, but the wild onslaught of some fifty shrieking youngsters frightened the horse, and it dashed away down the road, so he decided to leave his farewell with her to the last.

The bleak wind was sweeping down from the lake and the old board fence and the frail houses on Willow Lane creaked before it. The water roared up on the beach as he passed along the Pine Road, and the snow drove into his eyes and half blinded him. The McDuff home was deserted. There was no track to the door through the snow, no smoke from the old broken chimney. Peter Fiddle was either out at the farm or down in the warm tavern on Willow Lane singing and playing.

The dull pain in Roderick's arm had increased to a steady ache that did not help to make the soreness of his heart any easier. The bare trees along the way; creaked and moaned, cold grey clouds gathered and spread across the sky.

Hitherto Roderick had felt nothing but impatience at the thought of staying in Algonquin all his life to watch Old Peter and Eddie Perkins and Mike Cassidy and their like, but now that the day had come for him to leave, it seemed as though everything was calling upon him to stay, every finger post pointing towards home. Doctor Leslie's farewell, a warning to again consider. Lawyer Ed's patient, cheery acceptance of the situation, J. P. Thornton's open disapproval, Helen Murray's smile the other evening at the door of Rosemount, his father's love and confidence in him, all pulled him back with strong hands. The rainbow gold shone but dimly that day, and he would fain have turned his back upon it for the sure chance of a life like his father's in Algonquin.

He found Old Angus watching for him at the window. His brave attempts at cheerfulness

made Roderick's trial doubly hard. He bustled about, even trying to hum a tune, his old battle song, "My Love, be on thy guard."

"I'll be back before you know I'm gone, Auntie," said the Lad, when Aunt Kirsty appeared and burst into tears at the sight of him. He tried to laugh as he said it, but he made but a feeble attempt. They sat by the fire, the Lad trying to talk naturally of his trip, his father making pathetic attempts to help him, and Aunt Kirsty crying silently over her knitting. At last, as Roderick glanced at the clock. Old Angus took out the tattered Bible from the cup-board drawer. It had always been the farewell ceremony in all the Lad's coming and going, the reading of a few words of comfort and courage and a final prayer. Old Angus read, as he so often did when his son was leaving, the one hundred and thirty-ninth psalm, the great assurance that no matter how far one might go from home and loved ones, one might never go away from the presence of God.

"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 uphold me."

The prayer was simple and direct, as were all Old Angus's communions with his Father. He had come to-day to a place where the way was very puzzling, and Roderick, knowing him so well, understood why he prayed for himself, that he might not be troubled with the why of it all, but that he might know that God was guiding them all aright. But there was an anguished note in his voice new to the Lad, and one that made the pain in his heart grow almost unbearable. He had heard that sound in his father's voice once before; and was puzzled to remember when. And then there came vividly to his heart's ear, the cry that had rung out over the dark waters to him the night the little boy was lost. "Roderick, my son, where are you?" The father's heart was uttering that cry now, and the son's heart heard it. There were tears in the eyes of both men when they arose from their knees.

Aunt Kirsty came to him for her farewell with a big bundle in her arms. It was done up carefully in a newspaper and tied with yarn, and contained a huge lunch, composed of all the good things she had been able to cook in a day's baking. Roderick felt as if he could not eat anything between home and Montreal, but he took the bulky parcel gratefully and tenderly. She put her arms about him, the tears streaming down her face, then fled from the room as fast as her ample size would permit, and gave vent to her grief in loud sobs and wails. Old Angus followed his son out to the cutter in the shed. He stumbled a little. He seemed to have suddenly become aged and decrepit. It was not the physical parting that was weighing him down so heavily. Had Roderick been called to go as a missionary to some far-off land, as his father had so often dreamed in his younger days that he might, Old Angus would have sent him away with none of the foreboding which filled his heart to-day when he saw his boy leave to take a high position in the work of the world.

Roderick caught the blanket off the horse, and as he did so his arm gave a sudden, sharp twinge. His face twisted.

"Is it the old pain in your arm, Roderick, my son?" his father asked anxiously.

"It's nothing," said the Lad lightly. "It'll be all right to-morrow."

"You should see a doctor," admonished his father. "There will be great doctors in Montreal."

"Perhaps I shall," said the boy. "Now, Father, don't stand there in the cold!" He caught the old man's hand in both his. "Father!" he cried sharply. "I—oh—I feel I shouldn't leave you!"

"Hoots, toots, Lad!" The man clapped him upon the back comfortingly. "You must not be saying that whatever. Indeed it's a poor father I would be to want you always by me. No, no, you must go, but Roderick—"

"Yes, Father."

The old man's face was pale and intense. "You will not be leaving the Heavenly Father. Oh mind, mind and hold to Him!"

Roderick pressed his hand, and felt for the first time something of the utter bitterness of that road to success. "I'll try, Father," he faltered. "Oh, I will!"

He sprang into the cutter and took the lines, the old man put his hands for a moment on the Lad's bowed head praying for a blessing upon him, and then the horse dashed out of the gate and away down the lane. At the turn Roderick looked back. His father was standing on the snowy threshold where he had left him, waving his cap. A yellow gleam of wintry sunlight through ragged clouds lit up his face, the wind fluttered his old coat and his silver hair, and, standing there in his loneliness, he was making a desperate attempt at a smile that had more anguish in it than a rain of tears.

Roderick drove swiftly down the snowy road, his eyes blinded. For one moment he hated success and money and fame and would have thrown them all away to be able to go back to his father. Well he knew the parting was more, far more than a temporal leave-taking. It was a departure from the old paths where his father had taught him to walk.

As he sped along, his head down, he did not see a figure on the road ahead of him. He was almost upon it when he suddenly jerked his horse out of the way. It was Old Peter. Evidently he had drunk just enough to make him tremendously polite. He stepped to the side of the road and bowed profoundly.

Roderick made an attempt to pull up his horse and say good-bye. A sudden impulse to take Peter home to his father seized him. Old Angus would be so comforted to think that his boy's last act was giving a helping hand on the Jericho Road. But his horse was impatient, and Peter had already turned in at his own gate and was plunging through the snow to his house. A bottle was sticking out of his pocket. Evidently he intended to make a night of it. The sight of it made the young man change his mind. There was no use, as he had so often said, bothering with Peter Fiddle. He was determined to drink himself to death and he would.

Roderick let his horse go and went spinning down the road. Then he realised that he had given his arm a wrench, when he had pulled his horse out of Peter's way. The pain in it grew intense for a few moments. He resolved that as soon as he was settled at his new work he would have it attended to. It was the relic of his old rainbow expedition and though it had annoyed him only at intervals it had never ceased to remind him that there was trouble there for him some future day.

He had another hard parting to face, but one with hope in it for the future. When he tied his horse at the school gate and went in he was wondering how he would tell Helen how much the farewell meant to him. For he was determined that she must know. The school was quiet, for the hour for dismissing had not come. As he entered the hall, Madame came swaying out of Miss Murray's room with a group of cherubs peeping from behind her. "Now you, Johnnie Pickett," she was saying, "you just come and tell me if anybody's bad and I'll fix them." Then she saw Roderick, and greeted him with a rapturous smile.

"There's a dear boy," she cried, "to come and say good-bye to your old teacher. Now, you Johnnie Pickett, what are you following me out here for? Aren't you to watch the room for Miss Murray? Go on back. Well, and you are really going this afternoon?" she said, turning to her visitor again. "And how is your father standing it? What's the matter now?"

A small youngster with blazing eyes shot from the room and launched himself upon her.

"Please, teacher," he cried, his voice shrill with wrath, "them kids, they won't mind me at all. Dutchy Scott's makin' faces, and the girls is talkin', an' Pie-face Hurd he's calling names. He said I was a nigger!" His blue eyes and white hair belied the accusation, but his voice rose to a scream at the indignity. Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby marched the deposed monitor hack to the room to restore order, explaining volubly that it was quite as wicked a crime to call a boy Pie-face as for that boy to call one a nigger.

"I've got Miss Murray's room in charge," she said, returning to Roderick smiling and breathless. "Go on back there, now! I see you looking out there, you, Jimmie Hurd. Just wait till I catch you!"

"She isn't sick, is she?" asked Roderick dismayed.

"No. Oh, no! She went with a crowd of young folks to a tea-meeting at Arrow Head. They started early, and I made her run home an hour before the time to bundle up. Now, Johnnie Pickett, leave that chalk alone! You don't need to think I don't see you—"

Roderick went on his journey miserably disappointed. She had gone on a sleigh ride and she must have known, indeed she did know, he intended to call and say good-bye to her. Each farewell had been harder than the last and now this absence of farewell was the hardest of all. There was one more—Lawyer Ed's. Like Old Angus, he was making an attempt at cheerfulness that was heartbreaking. He tramped about, singing loudly, scolding every one who came near him, and proclaiming his joy over the Lad's going in a manner that drove poor Roderick's sore heart to desperation. He drove with him to the station, carried his bag on board, loaded him with books and magazines and bade him a joyful farewell, with not a word of regret. But he gave way as the train moved out and Roderick saw him hastily wipe his eyes and as he looked back for one last glimpse of his beloved figure, the Lad saw Lawyer Ed move slowly away, showing for the first time in his life the signs of approaching age.

That night Old Angus sat late over his kitchen fire. He was mentally following the Lad. He was in Toronto now; later, on the way to Montreal, lying asleep in his berth probably. Old Angus's faith forbade his doubting that God's hand was in his boy's departure. But the remembrance of all his joyous plans on the day the Lad started in Algonquin persisted in coming up to haunt him. He sat far into the night trying to reason himself back into his former cheerfulness. The storm had risen anew, and gusts of wind came tearing up from the lake, lashing the trees and shaking the old house. The snow beat with a soft, quick pad-pad upon the window-pane. Occasionally the jingle of bells came to him muffled in the snow. Finally, he heard a new sound, some one singing. It was probably a sleigh-load of young folk returning from a country tea-meeting, he reflected. Then he suddenly sat up straight. Something familiar in the fitful sounds made him slip out to the door and listen. The wind was lulled for a moment, and he could dimly discern a figure going along the road. And he could hear a voice raised loud and discordant in the 103rd psalm! Old



Angus came back into the house swiftly. He caught up his coat and cap. Peter had fallen among thieves once more! And he would probably be left by the road-side to freeze were he not rescued. He hastily lit a lantern and carefully closed up the stove. Then, softly opening the door, he hurried out into the storm.

He found the lane and the road beyond badly drifted, but he plunged along, his swaying lantern making a faint yellow star in the swirling white mists of the storm. He reached the road. Peter's voice came to him fitfully on the wind. He had probably started out to come to him and had lost his bearings. There was nothing to do but follow and bring him back. He plunged into the road and staggered forward in the direction of the voice.

The snow had stopped falling but the wind that was driving it into drifts was growing bitterly cold. Old Angus needed all his strength to battle with it, as he forced his way forward, sinking sometimes almost to his waist. He struggled on. Peter was somewhere there ahead, perhaps fallen to freeze by the roadside, and the Good Samaritan must not give in till he found him. But his own strength was going fast. In his thought for Peter he had forgotten that he was not able to battle with such a wind. He fell again and again, and each time he rose it was with an added sense of weakness. He kept calling to Peter, but the roar of the lake on the one hand and the answering roar of the pines on the other drowned his voice. He was almost exhausted when he stumbled over a dark object half buried in snow in the middle of the road. He staggered to his feet and turned his lantern upon it. It was Peter, lain down in a drunken stupor to die of cold.

"Peter! Peter!" Angus McRae tried to speak his name, but his benumbed lips refused to make an articulate sound. He dropped the lantern beside him and tried to raise the prostrate figure. As he did so he felt the light of the lantern grow dim. It faded away, and the Good Samaritan and the man who had fallen among thieves lay side by side in the snow.

## CHAPTER XIII

### "THE MASTER WHISPERED"

When Roderick stepped on board the night train for Montreal he was surprised and pleased to find Doctor Archie Blair bustling into the opposite compartment. That delightful person, with a suit-case, a pile of medical journals, a copy of Burns, and a new book of poems, had left Algonquin the day before, and was now setting out on a tremendous journey all the way to Halifax, to attend a great medical congress. He welcomed his young fellow-townsmen hilariously, pulled him into his seat, jammed him into a corner, and scowling fiercely, with his fists brandished in the young man's face and his eyes flashing, he spent an hour demonstrating to Roderick that he had just discovered a young Canadian singer of the spirit if not the power of his great Scottish bard. The other occupants of the sleeping-car watched the violent big man with the terrible eye, nervously expecting him every moment to spring upon his young victim and throttle him. But to those who were within earshot, the sternest thing he said was,

*"Then gently scan thy brother man,  
Still gentler sister woman,  
Though they may gang a keenin' wrang,  
To step aside is human."*

The charm of the doctor's conversation, drove away much of Roderick's homesickness and despondency, but it could not make him forget the pain in his arm, which was hourly growing more insistent.

"And so you're leaving Algonquin for good," said Archie Blair at last, when the black porter sent them to the smoker while he made up their berths. "Well, there's a great future ahead of you in that firm. Not many young fellows have such a chance as that. I wish Ed could have gone away before you left, though, to Jericho, or Sodom and Gomorrah, or wherever it is he and J. P. Thornton are heading for."

Archie Blair, as every one in Algonquin knew, lived as near to the rules of life set forth in the Bible as any man in the town. But he delighted in being known as a wicked and irreligious person, and always made a fine pretence at being at sea when speaking of anything Scriptural.

"Yes, sir, it's rather hard on old Ed; and there's J. P. too. He's been waiting for Ed ever since the Holy Land was discovered, as faithfully as Ruth waited for Jacob or whoever it was. I can't remember when those two chaps weren't planning to take that trip, and it looks as if they'd get to the New Jerusalem first. Cracky, now, I believe you were the one that stopped their first trip and here you're interrupting another one!" He laughed delightedly.

"I?" inquired Roderick. "How was that?"

"Oh, Ed wouldn't say so. He'd be sure it was the hand of Providence. It was the time you went off hunting the rainbow and got lost, don't you remember? and your father got sick on the head of it. Ed stayed home that time."

"But it was Jock McPherson who came to poor father's rescue that time," said Roderick. "Lawyer Ed told me himself."

Doctor Blair made a grimace.

"Roderick McRae," he said, after a moment, "I have a fatal weakness. I suppose it's the poet in me. I like to think it is. I'm forever pouring out the thoughts of my inmost heart which I really ought to keep to myself. That was the way with Bobby ye mind:

*'Is there a whim-inspired fool  
Owre fast for thought, owe hot for rule.'*

And here I've been telling tales I should keep tae ma'sel!"

"Well, you've got to finish, now that you've started," cried Roderick. "Do you mean to tell me that Lawyer Ed—"

"No, I don't mean to tell you anything, but I've done it, and I might as well make a full confession. Of course it was Lawyer Ed did it. He always does things like that, he's got them scattered all over the country."

"But—why didn't I know?" cried Roderick sharply. "And what did he do?"

"Because he didn't want it. I'm the only person in Algonquin that knows, except J. P., of course. J. P. knows the innermost thoughts that pass through Ed's mind. There's another secret between us three." He smiled half-sadly. "I suppose, though, your father knows this one—that Ed was to have married J. P.'s only sister. She was tall and willowy and just like a flower, and she died a week before the wedding day. They buried her in her white satin wedding dress with her veil and orange blossoms." Archie Blair's voice had sunk to a tender whisper. "I saw her in her coffin, with a white lily in her hand."

He was silent so long that Roderick brought him back to the starting point. "But you haven't told me yet how he helped Father."

So Archie Blair began at the beginning and told him all, happily unconscious of how he was harrowing Roderick's feelings in the telling. It was the old story of his father's mortgage, his own hunt for the rainbow, which, the doctor declared, argued that he should have been a poet, his father's illness, and Lawyer Ed's postponement of his trip, and greatest of all, his setting aside of the chance to leave Algonquin as partner with his old chum, William Graham, now millionaire.

"Your father sort of brought Ed up, you know, Rod, made him walk the straight and narrow way as he has done with many a man. I want to take my hat off every time I see that father of yours." He saw the distress in Roderick's face and was rather disconcerted. "Your father paid him every cent with interest, of course, Lad, you know that," he added hurriedly. "But there are some things can't be paid in money. Well, well—where did I start? Oh, at Jerusalem, and I've wandered from Dan to Beersheba and haven't got anywhere yet. Well, that was how Ed got started on the habit of staying home from the Holy Land, and he doesn't seem to be able to get out of it. You know it's a good thing. I'm always sorry Wordsworth ever went to Yarrow. It's a hundred times better to keep your dream-country a dream.

*'Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!  
It must, or we shall rue it.'*

And if he ever goes, it'll never be what he thinks. His dreams of Galilee and the Rose of Sharon and Mount Carmel will vanish when he sees the poor reality. You see, in his Palestine, the Lord is always there." He dropped his voice—

*"And in those little lanes of Nazareth  
Each morn His holy feet would come and go."*

Roderick was not listening. He sat with downcast eyes and burning cheek. Lawyer Ed had done all this for his father, for him,—and this was his reward! The man had given up his chance in life for his father and then the son had come and done this abominable thing. Surely the gleam of the rainbow-gold was beginning to mock him already. And yet, as he sat there, overcome with humiliation, his mind was busy arranging swift compromises, as it had always done. He would pay Lawyer Ed, oh, five fold, and send him away for a year's travel. And yet when all his generous schemes had been exhausted, he knew they were not what Lawyer Ed wanted. It was the love and devotion of his friend's son he preferred above all worldly gain.

He came to a knowledge of his surroundings, called back by a sudden exclamation from the doctor.

"I believe you're sick, Rod! You look like an advanced and violent case of sea-sickness."

Roderick became conscious that his arm was paining him severely and said so. He could have said quite truthfully that the pain in his heart was quite as bad.

"That old arm," cried Archie Blair in distress. "I tell you, Lad, you've got to have that thing looked after. Here, get to bed and I'll have a look at it when you're undressed."

He came into Roderick's berth later and with rough kindness handled the swollen, aching limb. "I always told you something would come of this," he grumbled. "And like everybody, you won't listen till it's too late. There's some serious trouble there, Rod, or I'm very badly mistaken. Now, look here, you promise me on your word and honour you'll go straight to a doctor when you get to Montreal—to Doctor Nicholls. Here, I'll give you his address. Now, will you promise to go to-morrow morning, or must I stop off and miss my train to Halifax to see you do it?"

Roderick promised and lay down in his berth, but not to sleep. The pain in his arm was severe enough to keep him awake, but it was no worse than his heartache. It was a tender heart, not yet calloused by constant pursuit of selfish aims. That state would certainly be arrived at, on the road he was travelling, but he was still young and his very soul was longing to go back to his father and Lawyer Ed. Again and again he tried to comfort himself with the promise that he would make up to them for all they had done, oh, many times over, and in the end, they would both realise that the course he had pursued was for the best.

As he made this firm resolution, for the tenth time, the train drew up at a little station in the woods. Roderick looked out at the steam hissing from beneath his window and the dim light in the little station. He recognised it as the junction, where a branch line ran from the main road, across the country, through forest and by lake shore, straight to Algonquin. The home train was approaching now. He could hear its rumbling wheels and its clanging bell far down the curving track, and the next moment, with a flare of light upon the snow, it came tearing up out of the forest and roared into the little station. Its brilliant windows flashed past his dazzled eyes. It stopped with a great exhaled breath of relief and stood panting and puffing after its long run. Roderick knew that if he chose he could slip out, leap on that train and go speeding away up through the forest and be in Algonquin before morning. He felt for a moment an almost irresistible impulse to do it, to fling away everything and go back. But he would look like a fool, and the people would laugh at him, and quite rightly. He could not go back now.

There was a gentle movement, and slowly and smoothly he began to glide past those home-going lights. In a moment more he was speeding eastward into the white night.

When he reached Montreal he went immediately to the hotel. He was to meet Mr. Graham and the head of the firm there that evening, when everything regarding his immediate duties was to be settled. He registered, and found a room awaiting him, a luxurious room, finer than any he could afford. It was the beginning of his new life. He went down to breakfast, but could eat nothing, for the pain in his arm. He was not at all averse to obeying Dr. Blair's injunction, and as soon as he went back to his room, he telephoned the doctor whose address he had been given. He felt a strange dizziness and, fearing to go out, he asked if the doctor would call. When Roderick gave the name of the firm he represented, there was an immediate rise in the temperature at the other end of the telephone. Evidently the young lady in charge of Doctor Nicholls's office knew her business. All uncertainty as to the physician's movements immediately vanished.

Doctor Nicholls would call in the course of half an hour if convenient to Mr. McRae, he was just about to visit the Bellevue House in any case.

Roderick felt again the advantages of his new position. The sensation of power was very pleasant, but it could not keep his arm from aching. The pain grew steadily worse, until at last he lay on the bed waiting impatiently.

In a short time there came a tap on the door. Thinking it was the doctor, Roderick sprang up relieved. But it was only the boy in buttons with a telegram. He signed the paper indifferently. Even the most urgent business of Elliot & Kent could not arouse his interest, he was feeling so sick and miserable and down-hearted. He opened the yellow paper slowly, and then sprang up with a cry that made the boy stop in the hall and listen. Roderick stood in the middle of the room reading the terse message again and again:

"Father ill. Come at once." E. L. Brians.

He leaped to the telephone, then dropped the receiver at the sight of a railway guide he had left upon the table. The first train he could take for home left at fifteen minutes past three in the afternoon. And it was not yet ten o'clock! He sat down on the bed, a dread fear possessing his soul. Wild surmises rushed through his mind. What could have happened? It was not twenty-four hours since he had seen his father standing in the doorway waving him farewell, the sunlight on his face and that gallant, anguished attempt at a smile! Roderick groaned aloud as he remembered. He took up the telegram again, striving to extract from its cruelly brief words some inkling of what had preceded it, some hope for the future.

A second tap at the door sent him to open it with a bound. Before him stood a professional looking man, well-dressed and well-groomed, with a small leather bag.

"Are you my patient?" he asked briskly.

"Patient?" Roderick stared at him stupidly.

"Yes; Mr. McRae, I believe? I am Doctor Nicholls."

"Oh," said Roderick. "I had forgotten all about it. Yes, come in." He stepped back and the physician eyed him curiously. He looked desperately ill, sure enough.

Roderick answered briefly and absently all the doctor's questions. Beside this awful thing which threatened him, his arm seemed so trivial, that he was impatient at the attention he was compelled to give it. Evidently the physician was of another opinion as to its importance. His face was imperturbable, but after a careful examination he said very gravely:

"You'll have to have this attended to immediately, Mr. McRae. Immediately. It's a case, if my judgment is correct, that has been delayed much too long already. Could you come to the hospital—this morning?"

"I have to leave here on the three-fifteen this afternoon," said Roderick. "I have just received a telegram that my father is very ill—I can't have anything done to-day."

"Ah, quite sad indeed. Not serious I hope?"

"I don't know," said Roderick dully.

"I must urge you especially to come to-day. We have Dr. Berger here, from New York. He is going to the congress at Halifax. You have heard of him, of course. He is coming to see some patients of mine this morning, and I should like him to see you too. Indeed, I feel I must urge you, Mr. McRae. You are trifling with your health, perhaps your life," he went on, puzzled by Roderick's indifference. "It is imperative that something be done at once. How about coming with me now? It leaves plenty of time for your train."

Roderick considered a moment. He could not meet Mr. Graham now in any case. He must leave a message for him that he had been called back to Algonquin and telegraph home for more specific news. That was all he could do until train time, so he decided he might as well obey the doctor.

When he had despatched a telegram and written a message for Mr. Graham he followed the doctor to his car. The professional man seemed eagerly delighted, as though Roderick were merely a wonderful new specimen he had found and upon which he intended to experiment. He chattered away happily on the way to the hospital.

"Yes, Berger will be very much interested. Yours is really a rare case, from a medical standpoint, Mr. McRae. Quite unique. You said you believed it was injured when you were only six years old?"

He seemed almost pleased, but Roderick did not care. The pain in his arm and that fiercer pain raging in his heart made him indifferent. "My father! My father!" he was repeating to himself in anguished inquiry. What had happened to his father? Perhaps he was dying, while his son lingered far away from him. And what an age he had to wait for that train, and what another age to wait till it crawled back to Algonquin! He remembered with wonder the strange wild impulse he had had the night before to leap across into the home-bound train and go back. He speculated upon what might have happened, until his brain reeled. And when would he get another telegram? And why had not Lawyer Ed told him more? He asked himself these futile questions over and over in wild impatience. The fever of the night before had returned, his head was hot, and ached as if it would burst.

He obeyed the doctor's orders mechanically. His mind was focussed on the time for the train to leave and in the interval he did not care what they did with him. So he let himself be put into a bare little white room, heavy with the smell of disinfectants, while a nurse in a blue uniform and a young house surgeon in white and a silent footed orderly moved about him.

The nurse's blue dress reminded him of another blue gown, one for which he used to watch at the office window on summer mornings. He followed it with his eyes, as the great surgeon took him in hand and examined and questioned him. He answered mechanically, his parched lips uttering things with which his fevered brain seemed to have no interest.

He listened in a detached way, as though the doctor were speaking of some one else as, with many technical terms, he diagnosed the case. Doctor Nicholls was there, and two young house surgeons, all eagerly listening, but the patient's mind was away in the old farm house on the shore of Lake Algonquin desperately seeking relief from its suspense.

He scarcely noticed when they left the room, but he came to himself completely when they returned, and Dr. Nicholls announced to him briskly and almost joyfully that Dr. Berger's ultimatum was an immediate operation.

"No, you won't," said the patient with sudden vigour. "I have to leave this afternoon for home

on the three-fifteen."

The great man looked down at him. "Young man," he said quietly, and there was a still strength in his manner that carried conviction, "you will do as you please of course, but if you don't take my advice and have that limb attended to immediately, you'll go to your long home, and not much later than 3.15 either. Yours is a most critical case. If you refuse you are committing suicide. Now, Doctor Nicholls, I have just half-an-hour to see your other patients."

He walked out of the room. And Roderick sat up in the bed and stared after them stupefied. A young house-surgeon, who had been regarding the patient with eyes holding more than professional interest, came to his side. He tried to speak cheerfully.

"It's a most unusual thing to operate in such a hurry, but it's better for a patient, I think. It's all over quickly you know, and no long weary waiting."

"But my father!" cried Roderick. "My father is critically ill. I've got to go home! I've got to, I tell you! I can have this done—later—at home."

The fever flush deepened to a hot crimson. He got to his feet, then staggered back, dizzy with pain. The young physician laid him on the bed. "Look here, now, you mustn't get worked up like that, Roderick," he said.

Roderick looked up at him. The young man had come into the room with Dr. Berger, but not till this moment had he noticed him. He stared, and a light, brighter even than the fever had brought, leaped into his eyes.

"Wells!" he cried. "Is it Dick Wells?"

"Dick Wells, it is," said the other, smiling, pleased that he had created such a complete diversion. He took the patient's left hand and shook it with a cordiality that was not returned.

"I haven't seen you since old 'Varsity days, Rod. And 'pon my word I didn't know you for a minute. We'll see you through this all right; don't worry."

Roderick was staring at him in a disconcerting way.

"Where have you been since you graduated?" he asked.

That harsh unsmiling manner was not at all like the Roderick McRae he had known in college, but the young man laid the change to his fevered condition.

"Here, in Montreal. Next year I hope to go to Europe." He made a sign to the nurse who entered, and quietly began preparing the arm for its operation. Roderick did not pay any attention to even her blue uniform this time, his eyes were fixed with a fierce intentness upon the young doctor's face. Wells had always been known as a very handsome fellow, but his appearance had not improved; he had grown stouter and coarser. He was still good-looking, however, and his manner had the old easy kindness Roderick remembered. He was just going to ask him another abrupt question, when the young doctor slipped his finger over the patient's pulse, and began talking quietly and soothingly.

"And you went back to your old home town, didn't you? Let me see—" his casual air did not deceive his alert listener—"Algonquin's your home, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"You've been practising law there, haven't you?" He took out his watch and looked at it.

"Yes,—in Algonquin."

A smile passed over the young physician's face, as of pleasant reminiscence. "Algonquin," he repeated—"pretty name. You don't happen to know—er—a Miss Murray there, do you? A teacher."

"Yes," said Roderick, "I've met her," and held his breath for the next words.

"I've met her too—several times." He laughed, glancing at Roderick in a shamefaced manner. "I think when you go home, if you'll take me, I'll go along as travelling physician. I'd like most awfully well to see that town of yours."

Roderick involuntarily jerked his wrist from the other's grasp. Had he not done so, the doctor would have been amazed at the leap of the already bounding pulse.

"I thought—rumour had it at college—that your affections were in process of transition when you graduated." Roderick looked straight at him. It was impossible to keep from his voice something of the bitterness rising in his heart. He was risking his own secret. But he felt he must know.

Dick Wells' eyes dropped to his watch again. He was silent for a moment. The nurse left the

room and he immediately spoke in a low tone.

"It a fellow plays the fool once in life," he said, "that's no reason why he should take it up as a steady profession. I've dropped it for good and all. And if you behave yourself and have this operation right away I'll come and take Christmas dinner—no, that's holiday time—I'll come and prescribe for you shortly after New Year's!" He laughed joyfully. "I hope you'll welcome me," he said, half-shyly. "For I've reason to believe I'm going to be welcomed in other quarters."

"Dr. Wells, you are wanted in the corridor," said the nurse, returning.

He left the room, and Roderick lay back and stared at the ceiling. He caught the word amputation, and he knew they were talking about his arm. They were going to cut it off, then. The knowledge did not seem to add anything to the overwhelming weight which had fallen upon him, and was crushing him. The whole structure of his life was tumbling about him, and he lay caught helpless in its fall. His new position was gone, for well he knew the company could not wait—indeed, would not wait—for so insignificant a servant as he. His father—perhaps his father was gone. And now the rosy hope that had steadily and surely arisen in his heart, since the day he had seen Helen Murray on board the *Inverness*, until it had lighted up his whole life, had suddenly vanished in darkness. His fighting spirit rose against these odds. He shoved the deft hands of the nurse aside and sat up.

"I'm going home," he said hoarsely. Then the nurse, and the little white table by the bedside with the bottles on it, and the white uniformed man standing outside the doorway, swung up to the ceiling and became an indistinct blur. He recovered almost immediately. The nurse slipped a little thermometer under his tongue, and put a cool finger on his pulse.

"I must go home," mumbled Roderick. "Where's Dr. Wells?"

"Dr. Wells is wanted in the operating room," she said soothingly. "You will be glad to know he is going to assist. I understand you are old friends." She looked at him anxiously. He was in the worst possible condition mentally for an operation.

"If you'd just brace up, you know," she said encouragingly. "If you would get hold of yourself." She had prepared many a patient for the operating table, and had seen few so exercised as this one. "You must be courageous," she said. "The operation may not be serious. And it will be over soon."

Roderick looked at her uncomprehendingly. He cared not at all for the operation itself, but it was the trap that had caught him, and he was writhing to be free.

Her next words put a new face on it.

"If you have any message to send to your friends," she said gently, "I should be glad to have it attended to. Have you any—property or anything that should be settled. We hope this operation will be simple; but if not—you should be prepared, Mr. McRae."

"There's nothing," said Roderick. "Nothing."

Everything in the world was slipping from him. The props of life had given way one by one, and now perhaps life itself was going. He lay there on the small cot-bed, watching the nurse and orderly hurry to and fro, and looked squarely at the situation. It was desperate. Always he had taken hold of difficulties and wrenched them out of his path and gone proudly on his way. But here he was helpless. For the first time in his strong, successful youth he realised that which his father had striven all his years to teach him, man's utter impotence before God. He was bound hand and foot, helpless, just as the door of success had flung open at his touch. He had paddled out bravely into the open sea of life after the rainbow gold, only to find it vanish and leave him lost in a world of mists and shadows. He remembered Dr. Leslie's words: "If His love cannot draw us into the way, it meets us on the Damascus road and blinds us with its light."

He lay there for what seemed an interminable time. He was clinging to one faint hope. Lawyer Ed would surely answer his telegram. But the nurse returned with the word that there had been no message, and that the doctors were preparing. He was to go down to the operating room in ten minutes.

It seemed as if with that word the last feeble support gave way, and then Roderick McRae's soul went down to the black brink of despair. He was utterly alone, without help or friend. Everything, his success, his health, his father, his love, had been snatched from him in one moment.

There was even no God for him. He had been so long dependent entirely upon himself, that God had become a meaningless word. And now, if God were real, His cruel Hand was behind that fearful black mist that was closing about him shutting him off from hope. He lay like a log, staring at the white ceiling of the little hospital room. The nurse and the orderly were bidding him brace up and were shaking their heads over him. He paid no more attention to them than to the strong odour of drugs or the soft click-click of heels on the hardwood floor of the corridor. Some subtle trick of memory had taken him back to the one other time of despair in his experience. He was back again in that night, years ago, when he was lost on the lake, drifting

away in the darkness to unknown terrors; and just as he had cried out that night, his whole soul rose in one desperate demand upon his Father for help.

"Oh, God!" he groaned, starting up, "oh, God, help me!"

And then it happened; the great wonder. The light from his Father's boat! The sound of his Father's voice! Just as, long ago, lost in mists and darkness, a prey to every terror, his father's voice, calling down the shaft of light, had caught him up from despair to the heights of joy, so it was now. Suddenly, without reason, there fell upon the young man's writhing soul a great calm. He lay back on his pillow, perfectly still, his whole being held in awe of what had happened. For there, in the common light of day, within the bare walls of the hospital room, not visible to the human eye, but plain to the eye of the soul, staring beyond the things that are seen for a gleam of hope, a Presence was quietly standing. Serene, omnipotent, all-calming, the gracious One stood, close to his side, and fear and pain fled before Him.

Roderick was conscious of no feeling of surprise or wonder. He felt only a great serenity, and an absolute safety. He asked no questions, felt no desire to ask any. There had been another young man once, who had met this same One in a like headlong career, planned by his own strong right hand, and he had cried out in fear, "Who art thou, Lord?" But Roderick knew just as well as he had known his father's voice that night coming out of the mists and darkness. His Eternal Father was at his side. That was all he knew now. It was all he cared to know. He lay there in perfect peace and, close to his side, silent and strong, stood the Presence.

The orderly pushed up the little wheeled conveyance to the bedside, the nurse took his wrist in her hand again. She beamed happily. "Good for you," she said, as she placed her hand upon his forehead. "Why, you're splendid. You've got your nerve all right," and she stared in amazement when Roderick smiled at her. He did not answer, though, he was listening to something. All the old promises he had learned at his father's knee and that had meant nothing to him for so long, were flooding over his peaceful soul, coming serenely and softly from the Presence standing by his pillow.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee... Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness."

"Now, sir," said the orderly, "we'll just move you onto this truck." But Roderick rose up strongly. "Why can't I walk down?" he asked. The nurse stared and again felt the patient's pulse for some explanation of this transformation. The quiet steady beat in the wrist was the strangest part of it all.

"Well," she cried admiringly, "I never saw anything like you. You're perfectly able to walk; but you'd better save your strength. Just lie down on this. You'll be all over your operation in no time!" Roderick obeyed, and the orderly wheeled him away to the elevator; and along the bare hospital corridor moved with him that strong Presence. And he went with a perfect faith and as little fear as if he had been going along the Pine Road to his home. What did it matter as to the result, or what did it matter that his father back in Algonquin did not know? He and his father were safe, upheld by the everlasting arms. It was well, no matter what the outcome. When he reached the operating room the Presence was there, just as real as the muffled doctors standing ready to do their work, and when he was stretched upon the table taking the anaesthetic, he felt as peaceful as on that night when he sank asleep in his father's arms and was borne safely homeward.

It seemed that the next moment he awoke in the room he had so recently left. Dr. Nicholls was at his side. "A normal pulse," he said, smiling into Rod's enquiring face. "You're a wonder. What do you think of that, nurse?"

"I expected that," she said, smiling.

"You've behaved so well," continued the doctor, "that I believe you're able to receive two pieces of good news."

"My father," whispered Roderick. The doctor nodded happily. "A telegram came half-an-hour ago. It reads, 'Out of danger, no need to come, will write. E. Brians.'" Roderick felt the tears slipping over his cheek. The nurse wiped them away. He was remembering it all now. The Presence had been with his father too.

"You haven't asked about my other news," said the doctor.

Roderick looked at him enquiringly. He was thinking of Helen, and had forgotten all about the operation.

"Berger saved your arm. And it will be as fit as ever in a few months. It was the most delicate kind of operation, and one of the finest he ever did. I shall tell you more about it later, you must be quiet now. But I must give you Dr. Berger's message. He had to leave for Halifax, but he said he wished he could congratulate you on your nerve. I don't know what you did to get hold of yourself in such a hurry, but you saved your own life. Now, I've told you enough. You must

neither speak nor be spoken to until I see you again."

He smiled again, radiant with the true scientist's joy over such a triumph of skill as Roderick's arm presented, and left the room.

And Roderick, who knew so much more about it all than mere science could ever teach, closed his eyes and lay still, his whole soul raising to its new-found God one inarticulate note of thanksgiving.

## CHAPTER XIV

### "FOLLOW THE GLEAM"

It was the first trip of the season and the *Inverness* was crowded from stem to stern. The picnic was given by the Sons of Scotland, so every Presbyterian in the town was there. But there were many more, for Lawyer Ed had gone out into the highways and byways of other denominations and nationalities and had compelled Methodists and Anglicans and Baptists and folk of every creed to come over to the Island and hear the bagpipes and see Archie Blair toss the caber.

"Your father's got to come, Rod," he said, the evening before the picnic. "So don't you dare show your nose here without him to-morrow."

But Old Angus laughingly refused his son's pleading. "Tuts, tuts," he said reprovingly, "it's the foolish boy that Edward is. He is younger than you, Lad. Indeed I'll not be going, and I think you should jist stay at home yourself, my son. The night air will be damp and you will not be jist too strong yet."

Roderick laughed. "Father, you will soon be as bad as Aunt Kirsty. I do believe she is bitterly disappointed that I didn't remain an invalid for a year, so that she might coddle me. I wouldn't miss this picnic for all Algonquin. It will be my first festivity since I was sick, and I want you to be in it."

The old man looked up into his son's face, his eyes shining. This new Roderick who had come back to him, maimed and weakened, right from the very gates of death was even more to him than the old Roderick. Not that his love had grown, nor his faith, that was impossible. But while he had always had high hopes that the Lad would one day fulfil all his fondest dreams, now he saw those dreams being fulfilled right before his eyes. There was a strong sentinel on the Jericho Road now, and the Good Samaritan could scarcely bear to part with him even for a day.

But he shook his head happily. No, no; Peter was coming over in the morning to look at the north field, and they would just row out as far as Wanda Island and hear the pipes, when the *Inverness* went past, and they would come back and stay at home with Aunt Kirsty like a pair of sensible old bodies.

Roderick managed to catch Lawyer Ed in the office for a few moments in the morning and reported his failure. His chief called him many hard names, as he rushed out to catch a passer-by and make him come to the picnic, and Roderick locked the office door and went down to the wharf. There lay the *Inverness*, her gunwale sinking to the water's edge under her joyous freight, banners flying from every place a banner could be flown, and the band, and Harry Lauder's piper brother making the town and the lake and the woods beyond ring with music.

Immediately after Roderick's disappointing message had been delivered, Lawyer Ed rushed down Main Street and spied Afternoon Tea Willie driving the Baldwin girls down town to buy some almond cream to take to the picnic, in case of sunburn. And in his usual high-handed way, he had hailed them, sent the girls home on foot, and the young man spinning out to the McRae farm with stern commands not to dare return without Old Angus.

So when Roderick was standing on the wharf talking to Dr. Archie Blair, all resplendent in his kilt he was amazed to see coming down Main Street, the smartest buggy in the town, and in it Alf. Wilbur, driving his father, and more amazing still, by his side sat old Peter, with his fiddle in a case across his knee. They drew up at the edge of the wharf with a splendid flourish, and Afternoon Tea Willie with his innate good manners, sprang out to help the two old men alight with as great deference as if they had been a couple of charming young ladies just come to town.

Roderick sprang forward and caught his father's hand as he stepped out, laughing in sheer delight. His eyes were misty with deep feeling. In the first quick glance he had turned upon the faces of the two old men, smiling in a half-ashamed, half-pleased way, like a couple of boys caught running away from school; Roderick had been struck with their strange resemblance. His father's refined face and his white hair had once made an absolute contrast to poor Old Peter's



bloated countenance, but with the last half-year, Old Peter's face and form had been undergoing a change. Not since that terrible winter night when he had almost caused the death of his best friend had he fallen. It had been a hard fight sometimes, but the great victory won by the temperance folk on New Year's Day had been a victory for Peter. On the first of May the bar-rooms of Algonquin had closed. And now Peter walked the streets unafraid. And with his new courage and hope, his manhood had returned and he was slowly and surely growing like the man whose life-long devotion had brought him salvation.

Doctor Blair saw them and came swinging up to make the old men welcome. Then Doctor Leslie sighted them and came forward in delighted amazement, and Captain Jimmie spied them from the wheel house and called out joyfully, "Hoots, toots, Angus! And is that you, Peter Lad?" And the Ancient Mariner left off smoking, and, pouring out a stream of Gaelic above the roar of the pipes, came right out on the wharf to make sure his eyes had not deceived him.

Roderick guided the two to seats up on the deck near to the captain's pilot house, finding the way thither a veritable triumphal procession.

The crowds were still coming down Main Street; nervous mothers with babies bouncing wildly in their little buggies, embarrassed fathers with great sagging baskets and hysterical children with their newly starched attire already wildly rumpled.

Roderick scanned each new group eagerly, wondering if Helen Murray would come. He had seen little of her since his return. A long illness following the critical operation had kept him at home, and when at last he was able to go out again and take up his work he found that gossip had it that Miss Murray, the pretty girl who taught in the East Ward school had had a young man to visit her. Miss Annabel had been quite excited over him, for he was very handsome and was a successful surgeon, and Miss Armstrong had pronounced him a splendid match for any girl. Roderick had been spared a visit from Dick Wells, and had wondered that the young man had not kept his promise. He had longed and yet dreaded to see him. He had been able to learn nothing about the visit except what gossip said, and to-day he was full of hope and fear, as he watched. His fears were stronger, but he was young and he could not keep from hoping.

The *Inverness*, as every one in Algonquin knew, gave ample warning of her leave-taking. At exactly half-an-hour before the hour set for sailing, she always blew one long blast from her whistle. At fifteen minutes to the hour she blew two shorter toots, and just on the eve of departure three blasts loud and sharp. This final warning, which Doctor Blair had profanely named the last trump, had been sounded, and Roderick began to look anxious for she had not yet appeared nor Mrs. Adams either. But he had gone sailing on picnics via the *Inverness* too many times to be seriously alarmed. The door of the little wheel-house where the captain had now taken his stand, commanded a view of Main Street rising up from the water, and no native of Algonquin could do him the injustice to suppose that he would sail away while any one was waving to him from the hill.

A half dozen women were signalling him now, and the captain blew a reassuring blast. And then round the corner from Elm Street, moving leisurely, came a stout swaying figure, with floating draperies. Children clung to her hands, children hung by her skirts, children ran after her and children danced before her. And long before she reached the water's edge could be heard her admonitions, "Now, you, Johnnie Pickett, don't you dare to walk down there in the dirt. Maddie Willis, just you tie that hat on your head again, you'll get a sunstroke, you know you will. Jimmie Hurd, you leave that poor little dog alone—"

Roderick looked eagerly beyond the lady, and there she was, at the rear of the procession, bringing up the stragglers. She was wearing a dress of that dull blue he liked to see her wear, the blue that was just a shade paler than her eyes, and she wore a big white shady hat. As she came nearer he could see she was laughing at Johnnie Pickett's wicked antics. Her face had lost all its old sadness. Roderick's heart was filled with a great foreboding. Had Dick Wells' visit brought that new colour to her cheek and the sparkle to her eyes? He wanted to go down and help her and her flock on board, for Gladys Hurd and Mrs. Perkins and Eddie and the baby were with her, and a half-dozen little folk were asking each a half-dozen questions of her at one moment. But he stood back shyly watching her from a distance, as Dr. Blair and Harry Lauder and the rest of the Highland Club helped them on board, the Piper meanwhile circling around Madame much to her disgust.

When they were all on board and the *Inverness* had again given the three short shrieks which announced she was really and truly starting, Roderick suddenly realised that Lawyer Ed was not on board. Now a Scotchman's picnic without Lawyer Ed was an absurd and unthinkable thing, beside which Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark would have seemed perfectly reasonable and natural. He ran to the captain, but there were several ahead of him with the dire news. For the *Inverness* had no sooner begun to move from the wharf than the awful truth had dawned upon a dozen folk at once. They had rushed from three directions and attacked the captain and Young Peter and the Ancient Mariner and demanded of them what they meant by such outrageous conduct. Very much abashed by her mistake the *Inverness* came surging back, the captain taking refuge in the Gaelic to express his dismay. They were just in time, for there he was tearing down the street in his buggy, Miss Annabel Armstrong and Mrs. Captain Willoughby squeezed in beside him and the horse going at such a breakneck pace that the dust and stones flew up on every side and there was danger that they would drive right into the lake. They

stopped just on the brink. Lawyer Ed leaped out, flung the lines to a lounge on the dock bidding him take the horse back to the stable, helped the ladies alight, and had rushed them on board before the gang-plank could be put in place. The crowd cheered, and he waved his hat and shouted with laughter, over the narrow escape; but the ladies looked a little ruffled. They had not intended to come to the picnic; the day of private launches and motor-cars was dawning over Algonquin, and these public picnics were not in favour among the best people, therefore Mrs. Captain Willoughby had felt that she did not care to go, and the Misses Armstrong had felt they did not dare to go. But Lawyer Ed did not approve of social distinctions of any sort whatever, and he was determined that the best people should come out and have a good time like the worst. So he had gone right into the enemy's camp and carried off two of the leaders captive, and here they were half-laughing and half-annoyed and explaining carefully to their friends how they had not had the slightest intention of coming in such a mixed crowd but that dreadful man just made them.

Once more the *Inverness* gave her last agonised shriek, the captain shouted to the Ancient Mariner to get away there, for what was he doing whatever, and with a great deal of fussing and steaming and whistling the voyage was again commenced. The band gave place to the Piper, and he marched out to the tune of "The Cock o' the North," looking exactly like a great giant humming-bird, his plumage flashing in the sunlight, as he went buzzing around the deck. Harry Lauder and the doctor and two or three others of the frivolous young folk in the kilts went away off to where the minister could not see them and danced a Highland reel. The people who did not quite approve of public picnics gathered in a group by themselves, Miss Annabel Armstrong and Mrs. Captain Willoughby in the centre, and told each other all the latest news about Toronto, and yawned and wished they could have a game of whist, but Dr. Leslie would be sure to see them. The tired mothers who seldom went beyond their garden gate, handed over their children to Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby, and settled themselves contentedly in a circle to have a good old-fashioned visit. Up in the bow, a group of the older men surrounded Dr. Leslie. Old Angus McRae was so seldom seen at any festivity that his presence had made the picnic an event to his old friends. Again and again Dr. Leslie placed his hand on the old man's knee and said, "Well, well, Angus, it's a treat to see you here." And Peter Fiddle, the outcast and drunkard, sat in the group and listened eagerly to their talk like a man who had been long away and was eager to hear again the speech of his native land. And indeed poor Peter had been for many years in a far country, and his return had opened up a new life to him. Roderick sat behind his father's chair and listened as they talked and wondered to hear Peter take his part with a fine intelligence. He looked at his father and thought of all the weary years he had toiled for Peter, and he was filled with a great gratitude that this was the sort of splendid work to which he had been called. He would take his father's place on the Jericho Road. It might be a highway here in Algonquin, the future was all unquestioned, but wherever it was the Vision would stand by him as He had stood in that hour of despair. And how glorious to think he might pick up a Peter from the dirt and help to restore him to his manhood.

J. P. Thornton had led the conversation to theological subjects. J. P. read along many lines, and it was whispered that he had queer ideas about the Bible.

Lawyer Ed had been balancing himself on the railing of the deck listening for some time but it was impossible that he could stay in the one place long when the whole boat was crowded with his intimate friends. So when J. P. intimated that modern criticism pointed to two Isaiahs and Jock McPherson strongly objected to the second one, Lawyer Ed yawned, and telling them he would be back in an instant, he wandered away.

"Come awa, ma braw John Hielanman," he whispered to Roderick. "This is a heavy subject for a pair of young fellows like you and me on a picnic day, come along and see what Archie Blair's up to. I'll bet my new bonnet and plume he's dancing the Highland fling in some obscure corner."

Roderick went most willingly. He knew Lawyer Ed would go straight to Madame, and where Madame was, there would she be also.

Afternoon Tea Willie who had finally come on board with a dozen young ladies, was running here and there at their beck and call in desperate haste. Lawyer Ed paused to chat with the girls, for he could never pass even one, and Roderick turned to Alfred and thanked him for the service to his father.

"Oh, that's nothing at all!" cried the young man. "You did me a favour lots of times, Rod. When I had no one else to talk to and tell my trouble!" He smiled at the remembrance of them. His cheek was flushed and his eyes were glowing. He looked as though he possessed some great secret. He came close and began to speak hesitatingly and Roderick knew he was going to be the recipient of more confidences. "Say, Rod, do you see that young lady over there beside Anna Baldwin?" Roderick looked and saw the latest arrival in Algonquin, a very handsome and well-dressed young lady who was visiting the Misses Baldwin. "Yes," said Roderick in a very callous manner, "I see her." He drew Roderick away a little distance from the group and whispered:

"Well—I—this is in strict confidence, you know, Roderick; I would not confide in any one but you, you know. But—well—that is she!"

"She? who?" asked Roderick.

Alfred looked pained. "Why the only she in all the world for me. Her name is Eveline Allan. Did you ever hear anything more musical? She came here just last week to visit the Baldwin girls, and they asked me to go to the station to meet her with them, and the moment I set eyes on her I just knew she was the only one in the world for me. I have sometimes imagined myself to be in love, but it was all imagination. I never really knew before."

Roderick found it impossible to conceal a smile.

"Oh, I know what you are thinking about, you are wondering if I have forgotten Miss Murray. But I have lived that down long ago. It was madness for me to think of one who was in love with another man."

Roderick looked at him so eloquently that he went on.

"I never really cared for her, in that way, anyway. I realise that now, and now that the man she was engaged to has come back—"

"What?" asked Roderick sharply.

"The man she was engaged to. Don't you remember my telling you about him? Why, they have made up again. He was here to see her last winter and he was in Toronto to see her in the Easter holidays when she was down there. I was very glad that it has all turned out so, for I found out my mistake as soon as I set eyes on Eveline. I know I ought not to call her that yet, and I don't to her of course. Don't you think she has wonderful eyes? I always felt that dark eyes are much more expressive than blue or even hazel ones, don't you? Oh, there is Anna calling me. Excuse me, I must run."

He flew back to the group, and Roderick was left to digest what he had told him. Unfortunately Alfred had a reputation for finding out things and he had no reason to doubt his assertion. He slowly followed Lawyer Ed about. They made their way down the length of the deck, his chief shaking hands with every one, and at last away in the stern under a shady awning he saw her. She was seated with Madame on one side, little Mrs. Perkins on the other, Gladys Hurd and Eddie at her feet, the Perkins' baby on her knee and a crowd of children about her. There was no hope of having a word with her even had he the courage to go forward and speak to her.

The children were sitting open mouthed, staring up into the face of Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby, while in low thrilling tones she was telling how the dreadful big giant came slowly up the stairs, every step creaking under him, and the lovely Princess behind the door just squeezed herself into a teenty weenty crack and held her breath till he got past.

Lawyer Ed burst into the story with a roar, and every one leaped and shrieked as if the giant himself had sprung into their midst. He caught two of the youngsters and bumped their heads together, he chased a shrieking half dozen to a refuge behind a pile of life-preservers, he tossed a couple up in the air and pretended he was going to fling them overboard, and finally he took out a great package from his pocket and sent a shower of pink "gum-drops" raining down over the deck, and the whole boat was turned into a mad and joyful riot!

Roderick lingered about for a few minutes until Miss Murray nodded and smiled to him across a surging sea of little heads, then he wandered down below to where the Ancient Mariner was seated spinning yarns to a crowd of young people.

"Indeed and I could tell you many as good a one as that," he was saying in response to the sighs of amazement. "I haff a great head for the tales. If I would jist be haffing the grammar I would challenge anybody to beat me at them. Take Scott now. He had the grammar. That's what makes folk think his stories are so great. But if I had jist had his chance! You get an eddication, you young people. There's nothing like the grammar indeed!"

Roderick leaned over the little pit of the engine room and talked with Young Peter. The dull eyes were shining. This was a great day for Peter.

"Did you see him?" he whispered to Roderick. "Did you see my father? driving down with your father? Jist like any gentleman! Eh, but it was mighty."

"Yes, it's splendid to see them together at last, Pete," said Roderick sympathetically. And then he had to listen again to the tale Young Peter never tired telling, how Rod's father had saved his father that stormy night on the Jericho Road. How Lawyer Ed could not sleep because Roderick had left him, and how he had driven out to the farm in the night to comfort Angus and had found the two on the road nearly frozen! Young Peter had an attentive listener, for Roderick could not tire of hearing the wonderful story.

They had passed through the Gates, and the news went around that the Island was near. It was a beautiful big stretch of green with a sloping shingly beach at one end, and a high range of white cliffs at the other, which J. P. Thornton said made him homesick, for they always reminded him of England.

There were many islands in Lake Algonquin; nevertheless when you said The Island every one

knew you meant that big, lovely, grassy place away out beyond the Gates, swept by the cool breezes of Lake Simcoe where Algonquin always went for her picnics.

When the cry went forth that the Island was at hand every one ran to the railing and leaned over to watch the *Inverness* slip in between the big stone breakwater and the dock which stretched out to meet them. Captain Jimmie from his wheel-house called to them, threateningly and beseechingly, commanding every one to go back or she'd be going over whatever. As usual no one heeded him and so the accident happened. Perhaps it was the lure of the Piper, now skirling madly from the bow, with flying ribbons, that distracted the captain, as well as the disobedience of the passengers; whatever was the reason, the *Inverness*, generally so stately and staid, suddenly gave a lurch, and went crash into the wharf as though she intended to ride right over the Island. Of course in a tourney with the *Inverness*, there could be only one result. The wharf heaved up and went over like an unhorsed knight accompanied by a terrible creaking and ripping and groaning as of armour being rent asunder. Disaster always stripped Captain Jimmie of his nautical cloak and left him the true landsman. He dashed out of his little house and leaning over the railing shouted to the Ancient Mariner: "Sandy, ye gomeril! Back her up, back up, man, she's goin' over!"

There were shouts and shrieks from the passengers even above the din of the Piper who played gallantly on. The crowd rushed to the side to see what had happened, and there might have been a real catastrophe had not Lawyer Ed taken command. While the captain and the Ancient Mariner were fiercely arguing the question of whose fault it was, he dashed into the crowd and bade every one in a voice of thunder to go back to his or her seats and be quiet. Lawyer Ed was a terrifying sight when he was angry, and he was promptly obeyed. The excited crowd scattered, the children were collected, the alarm subsided and they all waited laughingly to see what was to be done.

Meantime Dr. Blair and Harry Lauder had launched a canoe that was on board and were paddling round the wharf to investigate.

"I'm afraid it's hopeless, Jimmie!" shouted the doctor. For the floor of the landing place had almost assumed the perpendicular. "Nobody could land here that wasn't a chipmunk!"

This was disconcerting news and a wail arose from Madame's flock.

"Haud yer whist!" roared Lawyer Ed. "We'll get to land somehow, if I have to swim to shore with you all on my back. Hi!" he gave a shout that made the beech woods on the Island ring.

"Hi! Archie, mon! You and Harry paddle over and bring that scow! We'll load her and go ashore like Robinson Crusoes!"

A big scow or float, used as a rest for row boats and canoes lay near the end of the dock moored to the shore. A couple of agile young men leaped upon the upturned wharf, and making their way on all fours along it, they reached the scow in time to assist the doctor and Harry Lauder to bring it to the side of the boat. Meanwhile Lawyer Ed stood up on the deck and roared out superfluous orders in a broad Scottish dialect that was rather overdone.

The rescuing vessel was received with cheers and the gang-plank was put in place.

"Women and children first!" cried Ed heroically, but Madame, in the centre of her flock called out an indignant refusal.

"No, indeed, the children are not going first. You, Johnnie Pickett and Jimmie Hurd, you come right back off that thing, do you hear me? You go along yourself some of you Scotchmen, and see if it will hold, and then I'll bring my babies. You're in your bathing suits anyway," she added cruelly, for Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby was not a Scotchwoman, and did not know how to appreciate the kilts.

So the Piper marched out upon the scow, playing magnificently; some dozen young men followed him and with poles pushed themselves ashore. Then, amid cheers a couple of volunteers came back for another load from the wrecked vessel. When several trips had been made successfully and Madame and the children had been safely landed, Alfred Wilbur came forward and offered to pole a crowd over. Of course the crowd consisted of young ladies with the Baldwin girls and their pretty guest as the centre piece.

Alfred placed himself upon the scow, pole in hand and with many gallant remarks from Lawyer Ed the young ladies were handed on board. One by one they tripped out over the gang-plank, laughing gaily, their muslins and ribbons, their sashes and bracelets, their pink cheeks and bright eyes transforming the old scow into a floating garden. No wonder Alfred became excited over captaining such a fair cargo. In his nervous zeal he encouraged more than his sailing capacity would admit, and when the scow was almost crowded he saw to his dismay that the Baldwin girls and their guest had not yet come on board. He had pictured himself, pole in hand, shoving off before all the picnickers with Miss Allan clinging to his arm, and he began to grow anxious lest she be carried off in one of the row boats now come to the rescue.

"Move over further, won't you, girls, please," he called to his laughing, chattering crew. "I mean move a little aft won't you, please. I beg your pardon for troubling you, Belle! Alice! If you

and Flossie—Come, Anna. Come, Louise! Anna, bring Miss Allan; there's acres of room yet."

Thus encouraged, another group tripped over the gang-plank and at the same moment, those already on board, anxious to oblige Alf, who was always obliging them, crowded over to the farther side. But so much weight suddenly placed on one end of the scow brought dire disaster. Without a moment's warning, down went the heavy end three feet into the water, half submerging its shrieking passengers, and up came the light end with the unfortunate pilot perched upon it like Hiawatha's Adjidaumo, on the end of his Cheemaun!

Fortunately the water was not deep, and in a moment a dozen young men had plunged in and righted the capsized craft. But there were shrieks from all sides and threats of fainting, and dreadful anathemas heaped upon the innocent cause of the disaster, as the bedraggled young ladies, lately so trim, crawled back to the *Inverness*.

The catastrophe could not possibly have happened to any one whom it would distress more than Alf. He stood in speechless dismay watching the dripping procession pass. And when the pretty guest of the Baldwin girls splashed past him with a look which would have been withering had she not been so drenched, his despair was complete. He looked for a few moments as if he were about to throw himself into the lake, then he flung down his pole, and crept away aft to hide his diminished head behind a pile of life-preservers. Roderick captured a row-boat, and placed his father and Old Peter and a couple of their friends in it, and with the huge basket Aunt Kirsty had packed for them he rowed to shore.

When they landed, the old men seated themselves on a grassy mound under a big elm, and the basket was snatched from Roderick's hand and whirled away to the commissariat department in a big pavilion near at hand.

In a short time the long white tables were set beneath the trees with a musical tinkling of cups; there was a table for the Sons themselves and their friends, a table for the commoner folk and, farther up the shore, here and there, little groups of friends gathered by themselves. There was Madame seated on the ground away off at the edge of the beech grove, like the queen of the fairies holding court. The fairies were all there, too, seated in a wide circle, too busy to talk, as the sandwiches and cake and pie disappeared. Roderick had not once lost sight of Helen. She was there too, with Mrs. Perkins and Gladys. But he had to turn his back on the pretty group and join his father at the table spread for the Sons of Scotland. Dr. Leslie stood up at the head of it, his white hair ruffled by the lake breeze, and asked a blessing on the feast. And when the Scotchmen had put on their bonnets again and were seated the Piper tuned up once more and swept around the tables playing a fine strathspey. Lawyer Ed had a seat near the head of the table but he was too happy to sit still and kept it only at intervals. He ran up and down the tables, darted away to this group and that, taking a bite here and a drink there, until Dr. Blair declared that Ed had eaten seven different and separate meals by the time the tables were cleared away.

He stopped at a little group seated around a white table cloth laid upon the grass, to inquire if they would like some more hot water.

"No," said Mrs. Captain Willoughby, whose party it was. "We've plenty. We've been in hot water, in fact, ever since we started. Annabel and I are having a dispute we want settled. Come here, Edward, I'm sure you can decide."

"It's perfect nonsense," broke in Miss Annabel. "Leslie is no more likely to marry him than you are, Margaret!"

"Marry whom?" asked Lawyer Ed eagerly, "Me?"

Miss Annabel screamed and said he was perfectly dreadful, but Mrs. Willoughby broke in.

"No, not you, you conceited thing, but your partner. I thought Leslie claimed him as her property. She practically told the Baldwin girls she intended to marry Roderick McRae. And now she's left him and gone off to be a nurse."

Miss Annabel's fair face flushed hotly. "How utterly preposterous. Why, if you lived at Rosemount you'd know whom Mr. McRae would be likely to marry. As for Leslie, she never cared any more for him than you did. You know how she loves fun. She was just enjoying herself. I admit that she might have found a better way of putting in the time, but it was only a girl's nonsense. I was just dreadful that way myself when I was Leslie's age, a few years ago."

"Indeed you were, Annabel," cried Lawyer Ed, scenting danger and wisely steering to a safer subject, "You were a dreadful flirt. Many a heart you broke and I am afraid you haven't reformed either."

This put the lady into a good humour at once. She laughed gaily, confessing that she was really awfully giddy she knew, but she could not help it. And Mrs. Captain Willoughby, who never encouraged Miss Annabel in her youthfulness, said very dryly that she supposed they had all been silly when they were girls but she believed there was a time for everything.

Lawyer Ed saw conversational rocks ahead once more and piloted around them. "What is this I hear about Leslie?" he asked. "Is she going to be a nurse?"

"Oh, dear," groaned Miss Annabel. "That girl will break her mother's heart, and all our hearts. Just think of Leslie who never did a thing harder than put up her own hair going to be a nurse. It is perfectly absurd, but she has gone and Elizabeth will just have to let her go on until experience teaches her better."

"I think it's the most sensible thing she ever did," declared Mrs. Willoughby, "and you shouldn't discourage her. She'll make a fine wife for that boy of yours, Edward."

Lawyer Ed shook his head. He had had his own shrewd suspicions regarding Roderick for some time and Miss Annabel's hint had set him thinking.

"I've been such a conspicuous failure in any attempt to get a wife of my own," he said in the deepest melancholy, "that I wouldn't presume to prescribe for any other man." And he hastened back to his own table.

It was a great day. The Scotchmen ran races, and tossed the caber and walked the greasy pole across from the capsized dock to the *Inverness*. The Piper played, and the band played, and everybody ate all the ice cream and popcorn and drank all the lemonade possible.

At exactly seven o'clock the *Inverness* gave a terrible roar. This was to warn every one that going home time had arrived. Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby began collecting the fairies for the difficult task of getting them on the scow and thence to the *Inverness*. All day Lawyer Ed had been keeping an eye on Roderick and had no difficulty in confirming his suspicion that the Lad was unhappy, and he immediately conceived of a plan to help him. He called a half-dozen young men together and just as Madame was ready to walk across the Island to the scow, Lawyer Ed came rowing round the bend with a fleet of boats to carry them all down to the *Inverness*. Then such a joyful scrambling and climbing as there was, while Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby got her water-babies afloat. Lawyer Ed had seen to it that Roderick was in charge of the one canoe, and as a row-boat in the eyes of Algonquin youths, was a thing to be despised, all the older water-babies screamed with joy at the sight of him, and as soon as he had run it up on the sand they swarmed into it filling it to overflowing.

This was likely to ruin all Lawyer Ed's fine plan and he charged down upon them with a terrible roar and chased them all to the shelter of Madame's skirts.

"Get away back there, you young rascals!" he shouted. "You ought to know better than to try a load like that, Rod, you simpleton. Two passengers at the most are all you want with that arm of yours!" He glanced about him. Helen Murray was standing near with the Perkins baby in her arms, while the little mother, free from all care for the first time in many hard years, was wandering happily about with her hands full of wild roses.

"Here, Miss Murray," he cried, "you jump in. You are just the right weight for this maimed pilot. 'Ere, William 'Enry, you come to me!" But William Henry, now a sturdy little fellow of a-year-and-a-half, tightened his arms around his friend's neck and yelled his disapproval right valiantly.

"Well, now, will yer look at that!" cried the little mother proudly. "Wot'll Daddy say w'en I tell 'im? The little rascal's so took with the young loidy. 'Ush up there now, bless 'is 'eart. See, 'e'll go with mammy." She dropped her roses into Gladys's hands, and held out her arms, and the fickle young gentleman, let go his grip on his friend, and leaped upon his mother, crowing and squealing with delight. Helen waved him farewell as she stepped into the canoe, and the baby waved her a fat square paw in return. Gladys and Eddie were about to follow her, when the Lawyer Ed again interposed.

"No, you mustn't take a load, Rod, this is your first paddle, so get away with you. Now you kids, hop into this boat and you'll be there just as soon as Miss Murray!" he roared. Roderick pushed off afraid to look at his chief lest the overwhelming gratitude he felt might be seen in his face.

Lawyer Ed turned and watched them for a moment. They made a fine picture as they glided up the curving shore under the drooping birches and alders. Roderick kneeling in the stern, straight and strong, with no sign now of the illness he had been through, and the girl in the bow, her blue gown and her uncovered golden head making a bit of colouring perfectly harmonious with the sparkling waves and the sunlit sands.

But Lawyer Ed's gaze was fixed on Roderick. The joy in the Lad's eyes, answered in his own. Lawyer Ed's joys were all of the vicarious sort. He was always happy because he made other people so, but to be able to make Rod happy; that was his crowning joy.

Roderick was more afraid than happy. It seemed too good to be true, that she was here with him alone. At first he could do nothing but look at her in silence. She was so much more beautiful than he had thought, with that new radiance in her eyes. And then his own brief happiness waned, as he wondered miserably if it had been brought there by Dick Wells.

She was the first to speak. "Are you getting quite strong again?" she asked kindly.

"Oh yes, I am quite myself. I feel ready for any kind of work now."

"Then I suppose you will be going back to Montreal?"

"No." Roderick had made that decision long ago. "No, I could not go with the firm that engaged me—now." He was thinking how impossible those mining deals would be in the eyes of one who had been granted a glimpse into the unseen. Henceforth he knew there was no such work for him. "For mine eyes hath seen the King," he often repeated to himself.

She misunderstood him. "Oh," she said, "I thought—I was told that Mr. Graham's lawyers wanted you, that the position had been kept for you."

"Yes, they were very kind, but I could not. Something happened that made it impossible for me to take up their work again. So for the present I am a fixture in Algonquin, until Lawyer Ed grows tired of me."

She laughed at that, for Lawyer Ed's love for Roderick was a proverb in Algonquin. He had never heard her laugh before. The sound was very musical.

"You will stay a long time then," she said. "Algonquin is a good place to live in."

"You like it?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes, ever so much. I shall be sorry to leave at the mid-summer vacation."

Roderick's heart stood still. "I—I didn't know," he faltered. "I thought you were staying for the whole year."

She looked up at him, and then her eyes fell. The mingled adoration and hunger and dismay written plainly in the Lad's frank eyes were impossible to misunderstand. She had seen that look there before many times in the past winter. She had been afraid of it then, and she had run away from his good-bye that snowy day when he had left Algonquin. For then she had not wanted to see that look in the eyes of any man. She had seen it once before and had yielded to its spell, and the love-light had died out and left her life desolate. But since she had last talked with Roderick McRae, she had seen those eyes again, lit with the old love, and to her amazement she had found no answer in her heart. She had far outgrown Dick Wells in her self-forgetful life she had taken up in Algonquin. She had taken up the burdens of others just to ease her own pain, promising herself that when this or that task was finished she could turn to her own grief and nurse it. But the self-indulgence had been so long postponed that when the opportunity came and she had gone back to her old sorrow, behold it was gone. And in its place sat the memory of Roderick McRae's unspoken devotion, his chivalrous silent waiting for his opportunity.

So when poor Roderick all unschooled in hiding his feelings let her see in one swift glance all that her going meant to him she was speechless before the joy of it. She stooped and trailed her fingers in the green water, to hide her happy confusion. Then remembering she was leaving him under a misunderstanding she glanced up at him swiftly.

"I don't," she said breathlessly, "I didn't mean I was going away to stay. I meant only for the summer holidays."

The transformation of his countenance was a further revelation, had she needed any.

"Oh," he said, and then paused. "Oh, I'm so glad!" Very simple words but they contained volumes. He was silent for a moment unable to say any more, and she filled in the awkward pause nervously, scarcely knowing what she said.

"You were sorry too, were you not, when you went away?"

"It was the hardest task I ever met in my life," said Roderick. "And you didn't let me say good-bye to you." He was growing quite reckless now to speak thus to a young lady who might be going to announce her engagement.

She had not gained anything by her headlong plunge into conversation so she tried again.

"Not even your operation?" she asked. "That was worse, wasn't it?"

"My operation wasn't hard," said Roderick dreamily, his mind going back to the sacred wonder of that hour. "No, I had—help." He said it hesitatingly. It was hard to mention that event, even to her. He had spoken of it to no living person but his father.

"Indeed, I heard about how brave you were," she said. "I was told that there was never any one with such self-control."

Roderick looked at her in alarm. "Who told you?" he asked abruptly. She looked straight across at him and her eyes were very steady, though her colour rose. "Doctor Wells told me. He assisted, didn't he?"

Roderick's eyes fell. He tried to answer but he sat before her dumb and dismayed. She saw his confusion, and rightly guessed the cause. Her nature was too simple and direct to pretend, she wanted to tell him the truth and she did not know how.

"Doctor Wells was here last winter," she faltered, as a beginning, then could get no further. Roderick made a desperate effort to regain control of himself, and spoke with an attempt at nonchalance.

"Yes, he told me he was coming. He promised to come and see me too, but he didn't."

"No," she caught a twig of cedar from a branch that brushed her fragrantly as she passed. Her fingers trembled as she held it to her lips. "He—he told you he was coming?" she asked.

"Yes," said poor Roderick briefly.

"Then—then, perhaps he told you why?" She was examining the cedar sprig carefully, and Roderick was thankful. He would not have cared for her to see his face just then. She was going to tell him of her renewed engagement he knew.

"Yes, he told me," he said. She was silent for a little, looking away over the ripples of Lake Simcoe to the green arms of the channel that showed the way to Algonquin.

"Would it—would you think it right to tell me what he said?"

"He said," repeated Roderick, wishing miserably that Wells' words did him less credit, "he said that even if a fellow played the fool once in his life that was no reason why he should take it up as a life's profession." He paused and then came out in the boldness of desperation with the rest. "And he said that he was pretty sure he would get a welcome when he came." She flushed at that, and there came a proud sparkle into her eyes.

She sat erect and looked Roderick straight in the eyes. "And now, since you have told me,—and I thank you for it,—I must give you his message. He left one for you."

"Yes?" Roderick braced himself as for a blow.

"Yes, he left a message for you. I did not intend to deliver it but since he confided in you I feel I am doing no harm. He said to tell you the reason he couldn't wait to see you was that he had played the fool once more, and that was when he thought a woman couldn't forget."

She dropped her eyes when she had finished. Her fine courage was gone. She dipped one trembling hand into the water again and laid it against her hot cheek.

Roderick sat and looked at her for a moment uncomprehending. It took some time to grasp all that her confession meant. When finally its meaning dawned upon him, he drew in a great breath.

"Oh!" he said in a wondering whisper. "I never was so happy in my life!" It was not a very eloquent speech, it did not seem at all relevant, but she seemed to understand. She glanced up for an instant with a shy smile, and then Lawyer Ed with Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby and such a load of water-babies, that they looked as if they might sink into their native caves, came shouting round the point, and bore down upon them.

The sun was sinking into the island maze of Lake Algonquin and the moon was coming up out of Lake Simcoe when the *Inverness* sailed homeward through the Gates. The little breeze that had danced all day out on the larger lake had gone to sleep here in the shelter of the islands, and Algonquin lay as still as a golden mirror. A faint shimmer of colour was spread over it like a shining veil. It was scarcely discernible where the crystal water lay motionless, but as the *Inverness* sailed across the delicate web it broke into waves of amber and lilac and rose. The little islands did not seem to touch the water but floated in the air like dream-islands, deep purple and bronze in the shadows. From their depths arose vesper songs. Bob White's silver whistle, clear and sweet, the White throat's long call of "Canada, Canada, Canada," as though the little patriot could never tell all his love and joy in his beautiful home, the loon's eery laugh far away down the golden channel, and the whippoorwill and the cat-bird and the veery in the tree-tops. It was a wonderful night.

As the sunset colours grew fainter, and the moon's silver brightened, the passengers became quieter. The Piper went below and listened to the Ancient Mariner spin a yarn, and let the birds along the shore furnish music. The babies fell asleep in the arms of Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby, lovers drifted away in pairs to retired nooks. In a quiet corner J. P. Thornton and Lawyer Ed sat and laid once more their final plans for a trip to the Holy Land, certain this time of their realisation. The older people sat by the wheel house and talked of their younger days. Roderick left his father the centre of the group, and went in search of Helen. He found her sitting in a sheltered nook with Gladys. The Perkins baby had fallen asleep in her arms, and as Roderick approached the younger girl lifted the baby to carry him to his mother. He slipped into her seat by Helen's side. She smiled at him. It seemed quite natural and right that he should take that place without asking permission.

They leaned over the railing, the brightness of the sunset reflected in their faces and talked of many things, of the first time he had seen her here on the *Inverness*, of his hopes and ambitions for a career of greatness, as he had counted greatness, of his chasing the shifting rainbow gold, until a Voice had said "Thus far shalt thou go." He even hinted at the Vision that had come to him when he went down into the Valley named of the Shadow, and of how he knew



now the value of that real gold at the end of life's rainbow. And she told him how she too had found her rainbow gold. Its gleam had led her through storms and lonely journeyings, but she had followed, and she had found it at last, found it in the new light of hope that had awakened in many dull eyes in Willow Lane.

They were silent then, there was no more to be said. For the story of each had been the story of the journey that ended in their meeting. Henceforth, for them, there would be one gleam, and they would follow it together.

They had been slipping past the shadow of Wanda Island and now came out once more into the gold of the sunlight. Algonquin lay before them buried in purpling woods. Away above the little town, beyond the circling forest, and beyond the hills shone the last gleam of the day. The *Inverness* was going straight up the track of the Sun.

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