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Author: John Price-Brown

Illustrator: Frederick Henry Brigden

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK IN THE VAN; OR, THE BUILDERS ***

In The Van



"The wolf's teeth clutched the young man's leg"

In The Van

Or

"The Builders"

BY

PRICE-BROWN

(ERIC BOHN)

Author of "How Hartman Won," Etc.

Illustrated by

F. H. BRIGDEN, O.S.A.



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ILLUSTRATIONS

"The wolf's teeth clutched the young man's leg"	<i>Frontispiece</i>
"Thank you very much!" exclaimed Harold	<i>opp. page 80</i>
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IN THE VAN

CHAPTER I.

Ye Builders, true on land and lake
To name and Nation's glory,
Though time has left you in its wake,
Your stress must tell its story.

"**H**arold Manning: wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance, in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her as long as ye both shall live?" rang out in clear, solemn tones throughout the little chapel of the Abbey on that still November morning.

"I will," came the answer. The few who were present heard the words with a thrill. They knew in his case how much they meant.

"Helen Brandon: Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance, in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou obey him and serve him, love, honor, and keep him in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?"

"I will," was again the response, issuing sweetly but firmly from lips that would not tremble, although the tone brought tears to more than one pair of eyes fixed upon her as she spoke.

The ceremony and congratulations were soon over. Then the bride, on the arm of her husband, led the way down the aisle, while the tones of the Wedding March filled Grand Old Westminster to its furthest limits.

November days in London have not changed much in a century of years, although perhaps the opacity of the air was more penetrating in 1813 than it is to-day; for when the bridal party passed through the Abbey archway to the street, the mist of the early morning had developed into a dense fog, rapidly closing over the city. Hence, the coachmen had to pilot the way to almost invisible carriages, and then lead their horses in a tramp of several miles over the return journey, through almost deserted streets.

"My darling, mine at last," whispered the young man as he clasped his bride in his arms under cover of the closed carriage and dense atmosphere.

"Yes, Harold, yours forever," was the response; and with their first long kiss they sealed their marriage vows.

"Too bad to need such a wedding-day as this!" he exclaimed, looking fondly into her eyes, and then through the carriage window into the opaque street.

"And yet how fortunate that it is so," she answered with a little ripple of laughter.

"My sweet philosopher! Once in the Abbey, I never thought of it again."

"But I did. I looked all round and there was not a single visitor, only our own party, the clergyman, the organist, and the little, old-fashioned clerk."

"Pon my word, Helen, I don't believe I saw anyone but you, from the moment we went in until we came out again."

"You dear old boy! I suppose it was love that kept my eyes open to other things. Do you know I was actually glad to see the mist to-day, much as I dislike it."

"Yes, and after all it has been our friend. Everything seems to have favored us. Even the fog helped to keep our secret."

"Where did you say you had the Banns published, Harold?" she asked, leaning her head against his shoulder.

"At a little village ten miles out of London, a place I never heard of before."

"All the better for us. But now that we are actually married you won't need to keep the secret much longer, will you, dearest?" she asked, casting a glance from her big brown eyes up to his face.

"Not a moment longer than I can help, darling. You know Sir George Head is my new commanding officer; and I want him to hear the news first from me."

"And what will he say?"

"As I told you before, Helen, he won't like it. There may be no written law, but there's an unwritten one in the army, that no officer can marry without his superior officer's consent, particularly if he has been off duty as long as I have. Still, that terrible wound I got at Badajos is in my favor; and he can't turn me off, whatever else he does."

"But he might make it very uncomfortable for you, Harold."

"Yes, and he can refuse to sanction your going with me to Canada."

"That's the worst part of it, dearest! How can a wife love, honor and serve her husband, and keep him in sickness and in health, if she can't live with him?" she exclaimed, while blushes danced playfully over the dark beauty of her face.

"You are the dearest girl that ever lived," he cried, throwing his arms around her and pressing her again to his heart. "I shall do my best with the Colonel; and will see him as soon as I can. Perhaps I should have spoken to him first; but if I had he would have forbidden our wedding, and to have married after that would have been direct insubordination."

"Won't he think so as it is?"

"Perhaps. Still I am willing to run the risk; and I wanted to have you as my wife, whether I could take you or not. I'm afraid I'm a selfish fellow, Helen, and not by any means worthy of you."

"Why, Harold! What a way of speaking—just after our marriage, too!"

"Forgive me, dearest! I didn't mean anything, but that I love you so much, that I almost tremble at the responsibility we have undertaken."

"Is that a brave front for a soldier?" exclaimed Helen, with flashing eye.

"I would dare anything for myself, Helen; but it is of you I was thinking. To leave you behind with no one but your uncle and aunt to care for you when we sail, and perhaps not come back for years, seems more than I can bear."

"If we have to we must, though," she exclaimed, cuddling closer. "Then I will stay home and wait and watch and pray for the dearest one in all the world to me; and think of Penetang. Isn't that the name of the place? and long for the day that I can be with my husband again."

"What a noble girl you are!"

"I'm a soldier's daughter"; and she looked up proudly, although a tear was in her eye.

"Yes, and your brave father was shot in the heart while leading his men to victory."

"And come what will, his daughter shall never disgrace his name. Victory will yet be ours!" she said courageously.

"God grant it," was his response.

For some moments both had solemn faces, while with gentle pressure they held each other's hands.

"I am not without hope," Harold continued at last. "Sir George may be angry at first, and I can't blame him for that. He'll raise a row, of course—perhaps send me to Hades—but he may give in before the ship sails. It will be jolly happy for us if he does."

While he was speaking a critical look came into Helen's face.

"Do you know," she exclaimed with sudden earnestness, "I really believe I can help you!"

"My darling! How in the world can you? You do not even know Sir George or one of the officers."

"That may be," she replied, holding his hand in both of hers. "But see, the carriage is stopping. I cannot tell you now. Just leave it to me," and at once the expression upon her face inspired him with renewed confidence.

Just then they arrived at a little villa on G—e street, and the whole party alighted.

CHAPTER II.

Two days later, Lieutenant Manning was at the officers' mess at the quarters of the 100th Regiment. The fact that he had only recently been transferred, and that he was still on the convalescent list, made his temporary absence unnoticed. He ran his eye quickly over the faces of the men who greeted him by nod or word, for he was already a favorite. But he saw nothing unusual. The secret evidently was not out, and of this he was glad; for the Colonel could now receive the news directly from himself and not from officers' gossip.

They were talking of the prospective trip, and in the absence of Sir George, with more freedom than usual.

"Will you be ready, Manning?" Lieutenant Smith asked across the table. "The Colonel says we start in twelve days."

"So soon as that!" the young man exclaimed with a start. A lump had suddenly jumped into his throat. Pulling himself together before any one could observe, he went on: "Yes; but I thought we were to sail by the *Challenger*, which does not leave port until a week later."

"That was the first order," said Captain Cummings from the other end of the room; "but it had to be changed yesterday, for the *Challenger* on examination was found unseaworthy."

"And by what ship do we sail now?"

"By the *North King*, one of the best men-of-war in the navy. It is large, too, and leaves port a week earlier."

How Lieutenant Manning got through mess and the next two hours' official duties, before he could see the Colonel, he did not know. Never before did minutes appear so much like hours. Even when he lay in the trenches at Badajos, with a slice out of his leg, and could hear his comrades' cheers amid the din of cannonading, time seemed to pass more quickly.

At last, Sir George, accompanied by an orderly, crossed the barrack yard, and entered his office. But there were other visitors ahead of Manning, and the day was well advanced before his opportunity came. Finally the last one departed, an orderly opened the door and Harold entered.

"Lieutenant Manning, glad to see you," said Sir George in answer to Harold's salute. "I suppose you are as strong as ever, and ready for another march."

There was tone of inquiry in his voice; for it was unusual for the younger officers to visit him, except on special business.

"Yes, sir," replied Harold, coloring. "A soldier should always be ready for orders."

"There's not much time to lose," was the next comment. "Our men of the 100th go aboard the *North King* not many days hence, and sail from the London docks on the 24th. What's the matter, lad? Is there anything I can do for you?"

"I came to make a confession, sir," stammered the Lieutenant, his face remaining red in spite of himself.

"What, been gambling? You young fellows are always at it."

"No, sir! It is not that," replied the young man indignantly; while, at the same time, the utterance of the calumny seemed to relieve the mental pressure. "The fact is, Colonel, I've been getting married."

"Getting married, you idiot!" and Sir George fairly jumped off his seat in amazement. "Are you mad?" and his eyes glared fiercely at Harold. "Do you know what that means? Rank insubordination; complete separation for years from the silly woman who has taken you for a husband! Zounds, man, I thought you had more sense!"

By this time Harold's excitement had subsided. He was cool again.

"I am prepared to take the consequences, sir, whatever they may be. I only ask for the liberty of explanation."

"Explanation indeed! That should have come before, not afterwards," and with another angry growl, Sir George settled himself in his chair again.

"My wife," said Harold—the Colonel winced—"is willing to endure any length of separation that is necessary. But I want to say about her that her father and mother are dead. She is provided for, however, and lives with her uncle and aunt. What's more, she's a beautiful woman and is just as brave as she is good."

"That's all very well, sir, but why did you bluster along at this infernal speed?"

"For two reasons, sir." Harold had prepared himself for the fight. "First, because I understood my stay in Canada would be a long one; and second, because you said I might have the command of a fort there, some day."

"Yet you tell me when too late to stop a silly move that will upset the whole business."

"It would have been too late, sir, if I had spoken. A soldier never disobeys orders."

"Humph! If I were to report this at headquarters, it would check at once your chances of promotion, and probably your march to Penetang as well."

"That is the very point, sir, I was going to ask. I wish you would report me, together with the request that my wife be allowed to accompany us to Canada. It need be no expense to the war department, as she is able personally to defray all the cost."

"This scheme is just as mad a one as getting married. Do you know what you ask, sir? We are going out there in the winter, when the frost is often 25 degrees below zero; and on landing start at once on a tramp of a thousand miles; not over the prairies and along the roads, but through the woods and swamps, and over lakes covered with ice and snow two feet thick or more. Then, on account of the war with the United States, our road will be straight through the northern country, away from all towns and settlements. It will be like a tramp through Siberia in winter. No lady could stand it, sir."

"She will have to remain at home, then," returned Harold, dejectedly. "But it will be a severe disappointment to her. She says she can stand anything and will give no trouble if you will permit her to go. She would not be the only woman with us, either. The officers at mess were saying to-day that the wives of Corporals Bond and Jenkins and Private Hardman have all received orders to be ready."

"That's true," replied the Colonel, angrily. "But these women are not ladies; they are used to roughing it, and will do the charring for the men while the fort is being built. They've been through camp life in the European wars for years. There's no use talking; the thing can't be tolerated for a moment. You will have to leave your wife behind you. I look upon the whole thing as a breach of discipline. Still as your dead father's friend, and more for his sake than yours, I shall keep silent upon the subject, so as not to check your promotion. Give this despatch to Captain Payne as you go out. Strict discipline will be required from all now until we sail. So remember, you can only be absent from quarters during authorized hours."

"Very well, sir." Lieutenant Manning saluted and withdrew.

The young wife waited the return of her husband that night with much anxiety. She had often heard that Sir George was a stern man, and whether he would condone with a junior officer's marriage without his knowledge or consent, was a very doubtful question. As for the journey with the troops to Canada, she was determined to go with them if she could; but to do so the Colonel's consent must be obtained, and she was prepared to leave no stone unturned in order to accompany her husband. Harold told her it would be three years at least before he could return to England; and rather than remain that length of time away from him, she was willing to endure whatever vicissitudes an overland military journey in midwinter might bring. How little she knew what such an undertaking involved!

"What news, Harold?" was her first question, as he stooped to kiss her upon his arrival.

"Several things," was his reply, as he tried to smile serenely. "First, we sail on the 24th."

"So soon as that! What else?"

"Sir George was angry at our marriage without consent."

"And he will not let me go?"

"I fear not, dearest."

"Oh, do not give up hope yet," was the passionate response, as with pale face and quivering lip she led the way to their own room.

CHAPTER III.

An evening or two later, a carriage containing Sir George and Lady Head drew up at a little mansion in the West end, the residence of the retired general, Sir Charles Menzies. The house was not brilliantly illuminated, a subdued light gleaming only in a few of the windows. Evidently there would not be many guests that night. As they entered, the wide door in the deep archway was thrown open, and they were ushered into the drawing-room, where the General and his wife awaited their arrival.

"Just ourselves," exclaimed their host gaily; "a lonely old couple who have the selfishness to desire you to dine with them *en famille*, before they send you to the wars again."

"It is very kind of you," was the cordial response. "We are both of us delighted to come. But about the wars, General, I am afraid there are no more wars for me. It is just crossing the ocean to establish a garrison, and I assure you that I would rather command a troop and fight the enemy, than perform my allotted task."

"Still, it is all in your country's service, Colonel; and it sometimes needs greater courage to build a rampart than to fight a battle."

"You may well say that, General. Don't know but what my own case is an instance. It is a cut through the back country with only a couple of companies for a following, as though one were sneaking through the bush to escape the foe. After all, that is what it really is; for we could not in safety carry our garrison stores by the lakes."

"Yet you may have more than one brush with the enemy before you get there."

"If we do it will be all the merrier," returned Sir George with a laugh. "These Yankees are giving us as much as we can carry just now, and possibly there may be fighting on Georgian Bay before it ends."

"How soon do you sail, Sir George?" Lady Menzies asked.

"In eight days. Fortunately my wife is more contented over it than ever she was when I went to fight the armies of the Little Corporal. She always used to vow that I would never come back. Now she believes that I will."

"I think he has done fighting enough," was that lady's quick response. "To march a few hundred miles through the woods to build a garrison, and then to return home, is all they ask of him; a much better prospect—to his wife at least—than to have another fight with the French."

Dinner was announced, and the host led the way with the Colonel's wife upon his arm.

"That husband of yours is a brave fellow," was his comment; "and my lady, you need not be nervous about him. He's as true as steel, a good disciplinarian, yet one of the kindest men who ever lived."

"Perhaps you are thinking of Talavera," she answered, her face flushing with pleasure. "You know he helped some of the wounded French out of the ditch after the battle was over."

"Yes, but he made two of his own men stand in the stocks all night for letting another Frenchman run away," was his laughing answer.

When seated at the table the conversation became general, but soon drifted back to Sir George Head's prospective trip.

"It will be a new experience," exclaimed Sir Charles; "snowshoeing through Canada in January instead of marching through Spain in July."

"I have ordered my men a double supply of under garments as a safeguard," said the Colonel.

"What about night quarters on the road?" queried the hostess.

"That is where the rub will come," was his answer. "I believe there are no stopping places after leaving Montreal. But habitants and half-breeds are numerous. They are accustomed to the woods, and I intend to take a picked gang to help the men put up temporary shanties each night on the road. What is more, abundance of dead timber can be had for the cutting; and with good fires I have no doubt that we can stand the journey."

The ladies were rising from the table when a rap on the knocker announced the arrival of other guests.

"Oh, my dear!" exclaimed Lady Menzies to the Colonel's wife. "I want to introduce my sweet grand-niece to you. She has only just become a bride, and promised to come in with her husband for an hour this evening."

"We shall be delighted," was the reply. "You know Sir George still becomes enraptured over a pretty face. He always did."

The Colonel placed his hand over his heart and bowed.

"If the eyes have soul and the mouth character," he exclaimed gallantly, "I hope I'm not too old a dog, even yet, to lose my heart."

"Bravo!" cried Sir Charles. "Our little girl has both, but I am sorry to say we have seen too little of her of late."

The two ladies left the room, while the gentlemen over another glass of wine continued to talk over the wars, and the apparently dim prospect of peace.

When they entered the drawing-room a quarter of an hour later, Lieutenant Manning and his bride were there. A flash of astonishment swept over Sir George's face as he took in the situation. But it was only for a moment. Gravely, but not unkindly, he offered his greetings as Lady Menzies

introduced Helen to him.

Her appearance was striking. With broad forehead, dark hair and lustrous eyes, she carried her two and twenty years very gracefully. She was not a bashful girl, just out of her teens, but a large-souled woman, who knew much of the experiences of life, and had made her choice, determined, by all that was holy, to be a help-meet for the man she had married. Though scarcely at ease, she looked up into Sir George's face with a frank smile as she received his greeting.

"I am glad to have the opportunity of meeting you," he said, looking steadily into her eyes. "Lieutenant Manning informed me that he was married; though I assure you it is a surprise to find that his wife is a relative of my old friend, the General."

"Harold did not tell you, then," she returned, with a gesture toward her husband.

"Unfortunately he did not; but perhaps it was my fault. I was so astonished that I fear I did not ask him. And how are you, Mr. Manning? I think you have been stealing a march on me."

"Is not marching a soldier's duty?" returned Harold, with a merry glance at his wife.

"Yes, but countermarching is a different thing." There was a twinkle in the gallant Colonel's eye, as he gravely shook his head, that was not discouraging.

In a veiled way, Sir George watched every movement that Helen made. Her self-control surprised him, knowing as she must that her own future as well as that of her husband were in his hands. Soon an opportunity for a personal talk presented itself.

Sir Charles had been adding to his collection of paintings, and was particularly proud of a Reynold's beauty that he had recently purchased, as well as a French landscape by Turner, who at that time was winning fame as an artist. While the others were looking intently at the delicate coloring and divine symmetry exhibited in the portrait by the Master, Helen had lingered by Turner's picture. It was one of his "Rivers of France," an illustration of the parting of lovers beneath stately trees on the banks of the Seine.

"That is a remarkable picture," said Sir George over her shoulder. "It is said to be an incident in the artist's own life. I did not know that Menzies had it, though I have seen it more than once in Turner's studio."

"I have heard of it," returned Helen, gravely. "He was, as he seems, passionately in love; pity it came to such a sad ending."

"It was her villainous stepmother's fault," said the Colonel. "She intercepted all his letters, and when the maiden believed herself forsaken, she took a woman's revenge, and made herself miserable by marrying another man."

"A miserable revenge it was," returned Helen warmly, "and one that few women would take advantage of."

"I am not so sure about that," was Sir George's grave response. "I am sorry to say I have known women do that very thing, though I acknowledge they must have been vastly foolish."

"If they had married before that long tour of his," said Helen, earnestly, "when they were both in love, the letters would not have been intercepted; and of course they would have been happy ever afterwards."

"Marriage is always a serious business," said Sir George, looking gravely into her eyes.

"Yes, I know it is." There was a little tremor in her voice this time. "But when one does it bravely and with eyes open, it is not too serious to be borne."

"And are you sure you can bear it, Mrs. Manning, whatever comes?" he asked with almost a touch of sternness in his voice.

"Yes—I believe I can."

"I too believe it since I have seen you. Still for your sake I am sorry it has happened. It would have been much better to have waited."

"For myself I believe I shall never regret it," said Helen, "whatever happens. It is only the future of my husband that I feel concerned about."

"I am glad to be able to relieve your mind on that score"—but there was sternness still in his voice. "Lieutenant Manning has always been a brave officer, and his future is certain."

"Thank you, Colonel, for the word. I know his record; and I assure you as a soldier's daughter, as well as a soldier's wife, I shall never stand in his way."

She stood very erect, but she dashed a tear away as the words flashed from her lips.

"Nobly said," was Sir George's comment as the General and the other ladies joined them. Harold had purposely wandered off to the far end of the room to inspect some ancient weapons, of which Sir Charles had a valuable collection. But he returned in time to hear their hostess ask her niece to sing.

"I cannot sing to-night as the linnets sing," she replied with a half sad, half mischievous glance at

Harold, "but as my heart tells me."

"That is what we want, dearest," he whispered.

Seating herself at the piano, her fingers ran lightly over the keys. Then, in a rich contralto voice, she poured out Goethe's favorite, "To the Chosen One." There was the beauty of passion in every line of the first verse:

"Hand in hand! and lip to lip!
Oh, be faithful, maiden dear!
Fare-thee-well! thy lover's ship
Past full many a rock must steer;
But should he the haven see
When the storm has ceased to break,
And be happy, reft of thee—
May the gods fierce vengeance take!"

There was exultation as she sang the second stanza:

"Boldly dared, is well-nigh won,
Half my task is solved aright,
Every star's to me a sun,
Only cowards deem it night.
Strode I idly by thy side
Sorrow still would sadden me,
But when seas our paths divide,
Gladly toil I—toil for thee."

Then with all the tenderness of her impassioned soul she breathed out the last lines:

"Now the valley I perceive
Where together we will go,
And the streamlet watch each eve
Gliding peacefully below.
Oh, the poplars on yon spot!
Oh, the beech trees in yon grove!
And behind we'll build a cot
Where to taste the joys of love."

"You are a brave girl," cried the Colonel as she finished the song, "and you well merit everything that the gods can give you. Lieutenant Manning should be proud to have you for his wife—whatever happens."

Saying which he turned and asked Lady Menzies to be his partner at a rubber of whist, for which Sir Charles and Lady Head were waiting. Hence, the four elderly people were soon interested in the game; while the bride and groom, ostensibly examining curios, were taxing their souls with a thousand questions relative to the future.

CHAPTER IV.

The European war was drawing to a close, or rather to an intense lull before the final conflict. Napoleon's arrogance in declining to yield a jot of German territory to Austria's demand, culminated eventually in his crushing defeat at Leipzig in the "Battle of the Nations." The British forces, too, were successful wherever they turned their arms, and at Vittoria, Wellington routed the legions of Joseph Bonaparte. Before the close of the year disasters were even more complete, and the remains of Napoleon's armies were driven out of Germany as well as Spain.

British veterans, inured to the discipline and fatigues of campaign life, were fast returning to their own shores; and it was from these that Sir George Head's companies were chosen. Already they had spent months in the rest of barrack life, and tired of inactivity, they welcomed the call to duty again.

There was something alluring to the soldier in the thought of service in America, whether engaged in active warfare or not. The Western continent was an El Dorado toward which all eyes were turned. It offered something different from the camp life of Europe, where prospective and actual battles were looked upon as the be-all and end-all of the soldier's career. Of emigration to Europe there was none, but of emigration to America, save for the brief interruption caused by the war with the States, there was a never-ending stream.

Hence, when the seared soldiers of Wellington's brigades came home, and were told to prepare to cross the Atlantic, either to fight the Americans or to guard the British frontier from invasion,

hats went up, cheers echoed through the air and every man became an enthusiast.

For many days the *North King*, one of the largest war vessels of the period, had been undergoing repairs. Her keel was repainted, her hold thoroughly cleansed, and additional iron girders put in to strengthen her bulwarks. Her gun-carriages were rearranged, and to meet any possible contingency new guns were added. Then vast and unusual stores were loaded upon her, not for the use of the troops only, but for the building and maintenance of the new fort as well.

In direct preparation for the prospective voyage, perhaps no man was so actively engaged as Captain Payne of the Royal Engineers. To him was assigned the erection of the new fort at Penetang, together with whatever barracks might be required for the accommodation of the men. What added much to his difficulties was the selection and packing of materials to be carried in midwinter over a thousand miles of territory, three-fourths of the journey being through the woods.

But Captain Payne was equal to the occasion; and days before the time of sailing, the holds of the ship were filled with stores.

In completing and carrying out the arrangements, Harold's time was largely occupied, so that it was late each evening before he could have leave of absence to see his wife. These brief interviews were very precious to them; but to their amazement days passed without a word from the Colonel. Apparently he had not relented. Still Helen hoped on, while she devoted her time to preparation. At last a message came:

"Colonel Head desires an interview with Lieutenant Manning ten minutes before parade."

Such were the contents of a note handed to Harold in the early morning three days before sailing.

With a convulsive leap the young man's heart seemed to bound into his throat. What could it mean? Would his wife, after all, be allowed to go? Then, perhaps for the first time, something like an adequate conception of the magnitude and danger of the journey to her, forced itself upon him. Was it right to yield to their mutual desire, to take her with the troops in midwinter, and while war was still raging? Could it be his duty to transfer his bride from the comforts of home and the social world to the conditions which the trip must inevitably bring? He knew that her desire was just as keen as ever. It had also been his own passionate wish during the weeks that had elapsed since their marriage; but as he neared the Colonel's quarters, he found himself actually hoping that the final edict would forbid his wife to undertake the journey.

With many conflicting thoughts Harold joined his fellow officers at mess that morning. All were there. Even Sir George had walked over from his private residence to breakfast with them. From his manner, however, he could surmise nothing. Neither by word nor look did the Colonel indicate what was passing through his mind. At the appointed time Harold presented himself.

"I intended my first reply to your request to be the decisive one," said Sir George, without prelude. "But my mind may have changed somewhat. Do I understand that your wife still desires to go with us?"

"Yes, sir," was Harold's quick response.

"Has she thought the matter out in all its bearings? And does she appreciate how much of hardship and privation the trip will involve, to say nothing of the vicissitudes she will be obliged to endure after we get to our destination?"

"She has considered all these, Sir George, and her mind has remained unchanged," said Harold.

"It is a big undertaking," muttered the Colonel, and for a minute he walked up and down the room with his hands behind his back.

"I know it, sir; but fortunately she has means of her own, as I said, and can amply defray whatever extra expenditure may be incurred on her account."

"That is satisfactory," said the Colonel, "and after all, the objections may not be insuperable. I have, I must confess, a strong admiration for your wife; and if we succeed in establishing a fort at Penetang, she will, if she goes, be its brightest ornament."

"Thank you very much," exclaimed Harold, his face flushing with undisguised pleasure. "And am I to take this as equivalent to your consent?"

"Well, yes; if she is as firmly convinced as ever that it is the wiser and better thing for her to do."

For some moments Harold stood still with his hands pressed upon the desk in front of him. The old questions were coming back to him. Was it? Was it not?

"What is it, lad?" said the Colonel in a friendly tone, although he observed him keenly.

"I was just thinking," stammered Harold, "what a terrible thing it would be when too late, if it should prove to be a mistake."

"That is possible," returned the Colonel, again walking up and down the floor. "But, remember, if faint heart never won fair lady, neither did timid soldier ever win a battle. If you go into the thing at all you go in to win. Every obstacle must be overthrown. We must guard and keep that wife of

yours—take her right through to the end—and crown her queen of the little fortress of Penetang which, please God, we shall build.

"It is very good of you, Colonel," was all Harold could say.

"Well, we'll leave it all to the lady herself. Explain everything to her; but tell her from me that our officers are fine fellows, and from the Colonel to the last of them, will do what they can to make the journey comfortable, if she decides to undertake it."

"I thank you, Colonel, from the bottom of my heart," said Harold, warmly grasping his chief by the hand.

"That is all right," was the smiling response. "One more point, as your wife may need every remaining moment for preparation, you are relieved from duty from now out. So give her the news and aid her what you can."

Harold saluted, and in another minute was outside the barracks, speeding along the street to tell it all to Helen.

CHAPTER V.

'Eave-oh-haw, 'eave-oh-hoh!
'Eave-oh-haw, yoh-hee!
Sally come out to the wishing gate,
To the wishing gate with me.

'Eave-oh-hie, 'eave-oh-haw!
'Eave-oh-hie, yoh-hoh!
For after another day 'as run,
Oh Sally I've got to go.

So sang the jolly tars, as with mighty swing and steady rhythm they pulled the halyards and set their sails.

"Did yo' see the leddy, Alf?"

"Bet yo' six-punce, I did."

"Ar'n't she a daisy?"

"Ef she ar'n't, I'd like to know where you'd find on'."

"It's just jolly to have the real thing aboard—none of your tuppenny' a'penny pieces but a genuwine leddy, thro' and thro'."

"Did you see how she was watchin' and smilin' while we was fixin' the tackle by the big mast."

"Yes, we all seed it. She's got the hearts of the chaps already, even if she be a married 'oman."

'Eave-oh-haw, 'eave-oh-hoh!
'Eave-oh-haw, yoh-hie!
Sally's gone back to the washing tub
And on ocean brine am I.

"Do you know, Ned, I've been on the *North King* ever sin' she was launched at Glasgow, seventeen year ago, and this is the first time a leddy has ever sailed aboard of 'er."

"If they're all like this 'un, I hope it won't be the last time, uther."

But, 'eave-oh-haw, and 'eave-oh-hoh!
Yes, 'eave-oh-haw, yoh-hoo!
For whenever her lad comes home again,
His Sally will all'us be true.

And so the sailors echoed her praises, while they sang their songs and adjusted the rigging of the ship, even before they were three days out at sea.

Yes, Helen was on the *North King*, and her beauty and strong gentleness had captured the hearts of everyone, soldiers and marines as well. Already she was the acknowledged queen—queen of a mighty ship—for the *North King* had a splendid record. Never had she been defeated in battle, and her history dated back beyond the time when she was one of the vanguard in Nelson's memorable victory on the Nile.

Now, she had a double mission; first, to carry the two companies of the 100th Regiment to

Halifax, together with their stores for a long overland journey; and then to turn southwards along the coast line, to join the British squadron in the siege of American cities.

Like many of the British war vessels of that date, however, she was built in an antiquated style. While steady in movement and easily manned, she was a slow sailer; very different from the clipper-built, light-running American warships which had distressingly harassed the British during several of their more recent engagements. This fact alone made a sea-fight probable before Halifax could be reached, for the American liners were ever on the look-out for incoming vessels.

The English motto, "Keep your musket polished and your powder dry," seemed to actuate every man on board; and an extra look-out was stationed on the top-gallant mast to keep perpetual vigil.

Helen had never been on a man-of-war before; but she was a good sailor, and although the passage was stormy, she enjoyed being on deck, clothed in garments that resisted the penetration even of the December winds. Her comfort, too, had been well provided for; and Captain Osborne, the ship-master, out of courtesy to the bride, surrendered his little cabin to herself and her husband.

Harold, on the plea of discipline, protested, but the captain insisted, and gratefully they accepted the situation. The presence of a lady on his ship softened the heart of the old bachelor, and having no rule to guide him, he concluded to be a law unto himself.

While the rough weather did not affect Helen, it did materially affect the women of the steerage. The compartment assigned to them and their husbands was beneath the forecabin, at the extreme prow of the boat; and owing to its forward position, the rocking during a rough sea was extreme.

In the middle of the third day of the most prolonged storm of the voyage, the tempest was at its highest. The ship with frightful lurches pitched fore and aft—simply a plaything tossed at the caprice of the untamed sea. Rain for the time was over, but the wind whistled wildly through the rigging, stretching to their utmost the few sails that were set.

Harold had many duties to perform that morning, and was late in returning to his cabin. Three hours earlier he had parted with his wife, and the storm not having reached its highest point, she had gone on deck. Now, to his surprise, she was not to be found. First he scanned the upper and lower decks, next the large saloon, and finally their own stateroom; but all without avail.

He was seriously alarmed. It was the first time during the twenty days of their voyage that he had missed her. Where could she be? With the tremendous tip of the vessel, and the swash of the sea, could she have been swept overboard? Was it possible that the angry waves had stolen her from him? and unconsciously he wrung his hands in a sharp twinge of agony.

Rushing up the gangway again to the upper deck, he met Captain Osborne of the ship and his own Colonel coming down.

"You look alarmed, Harold!" cried Sir George. "Ammunition all right?"

"Yes, sir," he stammered, "but I am looking for my wife. She went on deck at nine bells, and I've not seen her since."

"Oh, she's safe somewhere," was the reassuring answer. "You could not lose a woman on the *North King*."

"You might lose one off, though, in a storm like this," said the captain, chaffing the young benedict. "I've known more than one woman to drop overboard—and men by the dozen."

"Stuff!" exclaimed Sir George, who saw that Harold was taking it seriously.

"Fact," returned the officer. "We just lighted ship after each battle was over." He laughed merrily, but Harold was off toward the soldier's quarters. A new idea had seized him; perhaps she had gone to visit the other women. Only the evening before, she had remarked that they had not been on deck since the storm began. And he knew that some of them were ill.

"Is Mrs. Manning here?" he asked of a seaman, as he rushed down the stairway to their cabin.

"Yes, sir; Ahh think so," was the answer. "Corporal Jenkins' wife is pretty low, and one of the wimmin fetched her. Theer she is at end o' t' cabin under t' fo'castle."

Harold hurried on. Owing to the storm the hatchways had been fastened down for days. The portholes were closed and the air of the densely peopled compartment was impure. Still a couple of men at the far end were again singing:

'Eave-oh-haw, 'eave-oh-hoh, 'eave-oh-haw, yo-hee!
Sally come out to the wishing gate,
To the wishing gate with me.

For a moment he felt savage, that his wife should be in a place like this; but then as a counterfoil there was the shuddering thought, she might have been overboard. Several men in the long, dark aisle stepped aside to let him pass. By-and-bye he reached the wretched little cabin which the women occupied. Helen was there, holding to one of the uprights for support, and bending over

the woman as she applied a soothing lotion to her head with the other hand.

Involuntarily she started when she saw her husband approach.

"Sweetheart, this is no place for you," he muttered as he gently took her arm.

"I had to come," she answered, motioning toward the bed. "I did not know she was so ill until Mrs. Bond came for me an hour ago. She has been sick ever since we came on board."

The woman was indeed ill. She seemed almost dying, and the foul air only helped to aggravate her condition.

Harold drew Helen to one side. "This fetid place will kill you. You must come away," he said.

"Never fear," she replied trying to smile. "I am much needed and can stand anything. Both the other women are sick; and unless the poor creature is helped she will die."

"From her looks," said Harold, "there is no hope even now. You had better suggest to Mrs. Bond what to do, and then come with me. I will speak to the Colonel of her condition at once."

"It is the abominable air that is killing her," said Helen.

"It is fetid, sure enough; but the storm is abating and the hatches will soon be opened again," he returned.

From the centre of the low ceiling hung a lamp, and although mid-day, its flickering light merely made the darkness visible. On the floor were a couple of wooden stools; and upon the straw pallet of a lower berth lay the woman. Covered with a grey blanket she tossed from side to side with every movement of the ship; while her husband sat by her and wiped away the saliva that ran from her mouth.

Helen was reluctant to leave, but she yielded, and Harold led the way to the upper air. The sky was already clearing, and the waves had ceased to wash the deck.

"What a pity we have no doctor on board!" she said, grasping his arm as they steered for their own gangway. "It does not give the poor woman a chance."

"The fact is, the marine surgeon took ill and had to be left behind at the last moment, so the order came to have his place supplied when we reach Halifax. Still the captain has a supply of medicines and is skilful," said Harold.

"I know," returned Helen. "The women say he has given her calomel every day since we sailed, and yet she gets worse."

"Perhaps his doses are not large enough," said Harold. "I know the doctors call it one of their sheet anchors. I will speak to the Colonel about it."

"And shall we have to go all the way to Penetang without a doctor?" Helen asked with a little tremor in her voice.

"Oh, no, dearie; that will be arranged for when we reach port."

"Hello, my lady! So you were playing truant! trying hide-go-seek in the nether regions, I hear," cried the Colonel with a laugh, as they entered the saloon.

"The women sent for me, Sir George," she answered gravely; "that poor woman Jenkins is very ill."

"Indeed, so bad as that!" he exclaimed in surprise. "I heard her case was one of ordinary sea-sickness. Something must be done for her. She is really the best woman that we have on board. Oh, here's the captain. We'll see what he has to say." And turning to him: "This is distressing news about Corporal Jenkins' wife," Sir George continued. "They say she is terribly ill. Did you know it, Captain?"

"I am sorry to say it is true," was the answer. "She took ill right after we left the channel, and should have been bled then; but there was no one on board to do it, so I applied a dozen leeches and gave her physic. Spite of all we could do, she got worse when the last storm came, so I increased the calomel, but I fear it will be of no use."

"Are you sure you gave her enough?" asked the Colonel, echoing Harold's question.

"I think so. It would hardly be safe to give her more. She is salivated so badly now that she can scarcely swallow. The only thing left to do is to give her opium."

"Too bad," returned Sir George. "After her large camp experience she was a capital woman to have with us. We couldn't bring her children on account of the overland journey, and now I fear we have made a mistake all round. Zounds! I wish I hadn't brought her."

"It is hard to tell what is really the matter," said the captain.

"My own belief is that it is low fever contracted in Spain three months ago," said the engineer. "She was not feeling well when we sailed. You know, Colonel, she was with the Corporal throughout the continental war, and he was transferred to us on his return."

"It is unfortunate that the sickness was not discovered sooner," said Sir George, seriously. "Is

there anything at all you can recommend, Payne? It is a d—d shame that we have no doctor on board."

"We might try wine and bark, and stop the calomel," was the reply.

"I'm afraid her mouth is too sore to swallow," was Osborne's comment.

"Make her try," returned the engineer, "and give her opium afterwards to soothe her gums."

And so saying they went down to lunch.

"I must see her again to-night," whispered Helen to Harold as they seated themselves at their own little table in the saloon. "I really must."

"But, Helen, the danger!"

"No danger at all, dearie! I may not ask to do it again." And there was an appealing tone in her voice that Harold could not resist.

"Well, if you must, I will go too," was his answer. And silently they finished their meal.

CHAPTER VI.

"**S**he's kinder sleepin', marm," said Mrs. Bond in a whisper, "but she was ravin' after you left till she got the new medicine. That quieted 'er like."

Helen was at the door with Harold by her side. As he had promised, the hatchways were open and the air purer.

"I have brought some jelly," said Helen in a low voice.

"This is the first sleep she's had for a long spell," returned the Corporal, gazing intently on the face of his wife. "P'raps we'd better wait a bit."

For some minutes Helen silently watched the sick woman. She was between thirty and forty years of age, with face prematurely old. Her ashen grey features were very thin and her lips swollen and open, while every few moments she grasped faintly at imaginary phantoms.

"Won't you take a seat, marm?" whispered Mrs. Bond. "Mrs. 'Ardman has gone on deck for a breath or two of fresh air."

But Helen declined. The woman moaned as she slept. Then with a start, her eyes opened and she peered toward the spot where Helen stood, grasping feebly with outstretched hand.

"It's Willie," she cried, in a tone muffled by her swollen tongue. Her eyes were wide open now. "Why don't they let 'im come to me? And there's Jimmy and Jenny, too, Oh, my childer! my childer!" And she ended with a low, tearless wail. Her friends tried to soothe her, but it was no use. Waving them back, she went on with a gasp: "They won't let 'em—they won't let 'em—but am deein'—and it don't matter now."

"Willie's the lad that died last year," Mrs. Bond whispered to Helen.

Mrs. Jenkins had the only dry eyes in the cramped little room. Women do not weep when they are dying. Saliva was still drooling from her mouth, and Mrs. Bond wiped it gently away with a soft rag as she gave her a spoonful of the jelly. The cordial in it soothed her and she closed her eyes again.

"It's the reg'lations about childer," continued Mrs. Bond in a low voice. "Soldiers' wives cannot take their childer wee 'em on a march."

"Where are her children?" Helen asked with trembling lips.

"Wee 'er mother," was the reply. "She was wee 'em hersel' for a week after she came back from Spain. And they say she cut up awful when she 'ad to leave 'em again."

"Have you got any children?" was Helen's next question, her mind becoming unpleasantly familiar with actual facts.

"Yes indeed, marm! I've three living—please God—they are pretty big now. I used to leave them when they were little sometimes, an' it was killing work, I tell you. But now they're big, an' placed; an' its different when they can take care of theirselves."

By this time Mrs. Hardman had returned. She was younger than the other two, and although married for several years, perhaps fortunately for a soldier's wife, she had no children.

"She's very low, marm," was her first expression.

"Has the chaplain been to see her?" Helen asked.

"Yes, marm, 'ee was here this afternoon, and said 'ee'd come again in the mornin'."

"She won't be living then," said the Corporal, wringing his hands. "Oh, my Betsy, my bonny wife! What'll I do without ye?"

Her eyes slowly opened and rested upon her husband who was kneeling beside her. Gradually a rational look came into her face. A faint smile lit up her features as he clasped her hand.

"God—bless—you," she whispered.

"Come, Helen," said Harold, gently drawing his wife away. "I will have the chaplain sent at once if you like, but I don't see what he can do now."

"He might comfort them, perhaps," she whispered as again she followed him. "What awfully sad lives army women have anyway!" she continued as she dashed away the tears that would persist in flowing. "Too bad for her to die. I wonder if it had to be? And that calomel, I hate it. The women say that pints of water have been running from her mouth for days. No wonder she could not eat. The poor thing's a mere skeleton."

"Quite true, darling! But this is something that cannot be helped," said Harold, slipping his arm around Helen's waist as they walked along the now quiet deck. "And my sweet wife must not think she knows too much. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, you know."

"I suppose you are right. Captain Osborne is kind-hearted, and it was very good of him to give up his pretty stateroom to us. But still I cannot help wondering if it was best to give her so much calomel? Perhaps she had to die—so many people have. How hard, too, for women to be separated from their children whenever they go with their husbands on a campaign."

"But it is their husband's fault."

"How so, Harold?"

"Because soldiers usually marry without the consent of their superior officers."

Spite of her tears, Helen smiled as she caught the drift of his words.

"Often, too, the common soldier enlists when drunk," he continued, "and then, out of revenge, or because he has to—I knew an officer who had to—he runs all risks and marries upon the first opportunity."

"Does that often happen?" she asked demurely.

"Yes, over and over again," he replied more gravely. "Sometimes a soldier will be married for years before his captain finds it out. He has nothing to keep his wife on, so he leaves her with her people or to potter for herself till he comes home again. Then in the end, if a man has been steady and seldom in the guardhouse, they give him a chance to take his wife and children with him, particularly when there is little marching to be done; but a tramp of a thousand miles is a different thing."

"I'm sorry for the poor children."

"Yes, and I'm sorry for the Corporal; he's a brave soldier and has promise of promotion. But it will be hard for him with his wife dead and his children away. What is more, sweetheart, I'm sorry for Mrs. Manning, who will have one woman less to go with her on her long journey."

"You foolish fellow, I'm all right." But she tightened her clasp upon his arm and cuddled closer.

"Of course you are, and the dearest woman that ever lived. But Mrs. Jenkins would have been a help to you."

"Oh, do send the chaplain, please!" she interrupted in trembling accents.

"Yes, dearest," and kissing her at the door of their stateroom, he hastened away on his errand.

CHAPTER VII.

The next day was Sunday, but a sad day on the *North King*; for it was known by daybreak throughout the long line of bunks in the forecabin, that the woman was dead.

The rugged tars, inured to the vicissitudes of warfare and the hardships of a never ending life on the sea, would have thought nothing of dropping a man overboard—"for what is a man more than a sheep?" And the brave soldiers, who time and again had rolled a fallen comrade hastily into a hole to keep his body from falling into the hands of the enemy, would only have been putting one more man out of sight. But this was a woman, the wife of a fellow-soldier, who had dared to leave

her children that she might be with her husband and his comrades through all the terrors of a long winter march. The conditions were different. In importance there was no comparison. And when Chaplain Evans, after reading morning prayers on that still December morning, announced that the funeral service would be at three o'clock in the afternoon, there were long lines of compressed lips and rigid features as well. All hearts were softened. By-and-bye all was over, and the sealed bag was dropped into the ocean. Then the men lined up and one by one grasped the Corporal by the hand, mutely telling him of their love and sympathy. It was all the poor fellow could stand. Perhaps it was bad form. They had never had a similar experience to guide them. But it told Corporal Jenkins that their hearts were true; and after the last clasp he strode away by himself to shed silent tears over his lost wife and motherless bairns.

For two days there was a subdued aspect onboard. The men joked less. There were fewer guffaws. Even "Sally" was not sung; and all on board, from the Colonel downward, bore the aspect of men impressed with the fact that something unusual had happened.

But soon a change came. Everything in the past was forgotten. The actual present became of vital moment, for in the early morning, "Sail ahead," sounded from the look-out. "Three-masted. West-by-sou'-west-and-over-to-larboard."

"What flag?" shouted the officer on duty.

"Too far off. Can't tell yet," was the answer.

In another minute, Captain Osborne was there too; and in the distance, brightened by the sunlight, he discerned a little speck of white canvas. The hull of the vessel was still hidden by the curve of the ocean. Bringing his glass to bear, he exclaimed to Sir George who stood beside him:

"I see it now; and, by heaven, it's the Yankee flag!"

"What's her course?" he yelled to the man aloft.

"Bearing down upon us, tacking to nor'-east. Now I see her flag. It's the Stars and Stripes. Looks like a man-of-war. The black spots must be her guns."

"Clear ship for action," shouted the captain in ringing tones.

Quickly the decks were swept of all but guns, canister and shot. Pikes, pistols and rifles were ready. Gun tackles were lashed. Every man was at his post.

In five minutes the distant vessel loomed up into clearer vision. The Stars and Stripes were there sure enough. Sweeping down upon them, the tightly built little craft was full of fight and bent upon the offensive.

"She's plucky to attack us," exclaimed the captain, "with the odds in guns and ship room in our favor."

"Yes, but look at her speed. How she scoots through the water!"

"There! She's tacking again," muttered the captain. "When her larboard-side heaves to, we'll take time by the forelock and open fire. Be ready, men!"

In another minute the American vessel gracefully swept around, setting every sail in good position for the conflict. Then the captain signalled for a round from the larboard guns. Instantly the big cannon bellowed forth their messenger of death. But it was none too soon, for at the same moment smoke issued from the bow of the frigate, and a twenty pound ball plunged through the ranks on the deck of the *North King*, shattering one of the boats to pieces.

"A good shot," said the captain quietly, as his men carried off a dead seaman and a couple of wounded soldiers.

"Her name's the *Delaware*," said Sir George, who was using his glass.

"We've hit her," ejaculated the captain. "There's a hole in her forecastle and her bowsprit's gone. Give her the rest of the larboard guns."

That the *Delaware* was injured was evident, for although continuing to fire, she tacked again and put on full sail to increase the distance between herself and the British ship.

A fierce yell rang out from the men. The order for chase was given and, wild with enthusiasm, every stitch of canvas was put on in hope of overtaking the retreating *Delaware*. The sun shone overhead among white-cap clouds, and the sea was tossing big waves and foamy jets over the sides of the ships; while at brief intervals one or other continued to belch out its thunder and its shot.

But the distance was too great for many of the balls to be effective. The Yankee fire did some damage to the rigging and sent a nine-pound ball through a porthole, making havoc inside, and wounding men; but as she was creeping further away the fire of the *North King* did little service. Over and over again the gunners aimed at her mizzen-mast, but it didn't budge. They were not sure that the shot even touched the ship. The fight was discouraging. At last there was a new

manoeuvre on the frigate.

"They are making desperate efforts over there," commented the Colonel.

"Yes," exclaimed Captain Payne, who was also closely watching the *Delaware*, "they are placing their biggest gun in the stern, right behind the mizzen-mast. Our fire has destroyed the railing and you can see what they are at."

"Good Lord! to rake us with their big ball as a parting salute," was Osborne's comment. "But we'll be even with them," and he hurried forward to give his command.

"That gun must be disabled at any cost," he yelled to his men, and with another shout they tried to do his bidding.

That the *Delaware* was determined to carry out her plans was evident. With her stern to her foe, her men were taking in sail to diminish the intervening distance and make the shot more telling.

"If they would only let us get within musket range," suggested Captain Payne.

"We might reach her now," exclaimed Sir George. "Give the order, Captain. Having once fired that d—d cannon they will put on sail again."

By Captain Osborne's order half a dozen balls whirled away from the muzzles of the forward guns, simultaneously with the crash of the musketry. Through his glass, Sir George saw a gunner at the big cannon fall, while the main deck of the frigate was torn up by the cannonading. But the big gun was still uninjured, and the *Delaware* had its revenge. Another seaman stepped into place and put a match to the magazine. Then with terrible force the huge ball crashed above water mark into the prow of the *North King*.

A yell could be heard from the Americans, for they saw the damage they had done; but as another broadside from the liner smashed into their rigging, they hoisted full sail again and gradually swept out of range. The exasperating effects of slow sailing could not be helped; and the battle being over, attention was directed to the dead and wounded, and the damage done.

How much the *Delaware* was injured it was impossible to tell, for she did not return to the attack. Steadily the distance increased between the two ships, and before night came, the last trace of the frigate was discerned from the mast head, disappearing over the horizon.

Much against her will Helen had remained in her stateroom during the whole of the contest. She had not appeared on deck that day when the *Delaware* was first seen, and the order to clear the decks given. After the battle, however, she went to the prow of the boat with Harold, in time to see the clipper's heels gradually disappearing.

"Are you glad it is over?" he asked, as he slipped his arm around her.

"I suppose I should be," was her answer, fixing her eyes on the distant frigate, "but I don't know that I am. It was audacious for a little thing like that to attack a big war vessel like the *North King*. They have killed some of our men, too; a pity you didn't give them a thrashing. Perhaps you couldn't?"

"Why, Helen, what a fighter you are!"

"I came by it naturally, I suppose." This time she laughed. "If the feeling had not been inherited, perhaps I would not have been willing to have come with you at all."

"And now you cannot turn back even if you want to."

"But, dearie, I don't and never did."

"Not even when the enemy were killing our men?" he asked, looking earnestly into her eyes.

"No, not even then," she said; "but I think Sir George might have let me come on deck."

"And expose the only lady we've got, and she my wife, to the hellish dangers of battle. No, indeed, my dear. What do you take us for?"

"If we have another fight I'll ask him," was her answer.

"And I suppose you think he will consent?"

But there were no more battles, in that voyage at least.

The wounded men progressed favorably, considering that there was no regular surgeon on the ship; and by the time they reached port they were almost well again—ready to be transferred to the military hospital as convalescents.

Christmas was over, and the New Year had arrived, before they passed Sable Island. But on the next day, they were in the long harbor, and passing McNab, they saw in the distance the little city of Halifax.

CHAPTER VIII.

Helen stood on deck, wrapped in seal coat and gauntlets, looking at the snow-covered town as the *North King* sailed up the harbor. Many vessels were already anchored. The bright winter sun showed to advantage the picturesque little city. The dazzling whiteness of the roofs, the varied contours of the houses, the glittering pinnacles of church spires, the little groves of naked trees, backed by the ever-green verdure of pines and cedars, all helped to make an interesting picture.

Most of the buildings were of wood, many being simple log cabins; while others were block-houses of more pretentious mien, whose timbers had been hewn into shape in the forest. Here and there a more stately dwelling, built of granite boulders or lime-stone rock, mingled with the rest.

What added much to the weird picturesqueness of the outlook, as Helen gazed upon it, was the glitter of icicles from many of the roofs, as the dazzling sunlight fell upon them. Then there was the far-reaching canopy of snow; while over beyond the houses were hills and craggy rocks and clumps of trees; and back of all, as distant as eye could see, the wide, interminable forest.

"How strange!" she exclaimed, drawing closer to her husband. "I never thought it would be like this."

"But is it not beautiful?" he asked.

"Yes; still it looks like a little town at the very end of the world," said Helen, with a shiver. "Pretty indeed, but where are the Indians? Is that the Citadel?"

"Yes, that is the Citadel. Although I see no Indians, there are the red-coats. Look! yonder is a company at drill."

"Ah! that is more natural! It makes me like it better. How wonderful it all is!"

Suddenly a violent gust of wind carried the snow in drifts from the roofs of the houses. A grey cloud swept over the sun, and for a brief space the glittering whiteness of the prospect was over. Gradually the ship neared the wharf, and protected by heavy sticks of timber hanging over its side, it ground against the big bulwarks, and with huge ropes was made fast to the dock.

Colonel Mason and his staff were waiting for them; and no sooner had the gangway been laid than they came on board to welcome the officers of the big warship, as well as the men of the 100th Regiment. Those were not days of Atlantic cables and telegraphic dispatches; and although word had been received by the last ship from Liverpool that Sir George Head was coming out with a small body of troops, the exact date of departure was not announced.

"Right welcome!" exclaimed Colonel Mason, as he shook Sir George and Captain Osborne by the hand. "Long expected, but here at last."

"Rough voyage! Six weeks of it. Glad it's over," was Sir George's laconic reply, as with equal heartiness he returned the greeting.

While introductions were made, Helen and Harold stood in the background, but the quick eye of Colonel Mason soon noted them.

"Lieutenant and Mrs. Manning," said Sir George at last. "You did not know, Colonel, that we had a lady on board."

"An unusual but a pleasant surprise," was the answer, as the officer bowed over her hand. "I extend to Mrs. Manning a most cordial welcome."

Helen looked very handsome that morning. The keen air had given a rosy tint to her cheek. Her eyes sparkled with interest and her closely-fitting fur coat set off her beauty to advantage.

"We never expect ladies to cross the Atlantic in midwinter, particularly on a man-of-war," Colonel Mason continued, turning to her again. "It takes rare courage, madam; and it is delightful to find it possessed by so young and charming a lady."

Colonel Mason was a courteous and gallant officer of the old school.

"Thank you, sir," she replied, her face flushing with pleasure. "It was a little trying to be the only one on board; but the officers were very good to me. I hope I did not tax their patience too much."

"She was all right," exclaimed Sir George with a laugh, "until after the battle—just a little skirmish, you know—when she wanted to install herself as head nurse to the fellows who were wounded—"

"Oh, Colonel!" she exclaimed, in amazement, turning suddenly upon him. "How could you?"

"Why! isn't it true?" he replied merrily. "But, Mason, what news of the war?" he continued with more gravity. "Word over the sea travels so confoundedly slow; I have heard nothing for two months."

"I am glad to say the report is encouraging," was the reply. "General Hampton's forces were defeated and driven back by De Salaberry at Chateaugay Junction; and with Hampton and Wilkinson have gone back to winter on the American side of the line. Then, too, only a few weeks ago, Colonel McClure, the terror of the Twenty-Mile Creek, was driven back by Colonel Murray's regulars, assisted by loyal Indians. Up to September the invaders were right in the country all along the line; but, thank God, we can hold our own now, and intend to keep it."

"That's good news. And how is it on the lakes?"

"Ah, that is different! So far we have had the worst of it. That naval battle of Put-in-Bay was a terrible disaster to us. Commodore Perry of the American fleet was too much for Barclay. It ended in a perfect rout. In their hands all our officers, and half the crews of our boats, were either killed or wounded. The fact is, that battle undid all that Brock accomplished by his great victory at Hull."

"That's bad, indeed! But what of Michigan? Surely you have better news from there."

"Gone from us forever, I fear. We must be satisfied if we can hold our own territory, but that we're bound to do."

"To which we all say 'Aye,'" and Sir George's words were echoed by the little group of men who had gathered round them.

"You have dispatches for me, I believe," said Colonel Mason, preparing to lead the way.

"Yes," replied Sir George. "I will give them to you when we reach the Citadel."

Sleighs with broad runners, curled up behind and before, comfortably cushioned, and well supplied with buffalo robes, awaited them; and cheers rang out from the crowd on the wharf as the officers, with Helen by the side of her husband, landed and took their seats. In a few minutes the sleighs in single file dashed away in the direction of the Fort.

"This is just lovely," cried Helen in glee. She had never seen a sleigh before. The ponies trotted off at a swinging pace, the circlet of bells around each of them ringing out merrily.

"First impressions are a sure omen of the future," returned Harold. "This is my first sleigh ride, too, and like you, I am delighted."

"Look at those boys and girls," she cried again as they turned a corner. Handsleighs and toboggans, loaded with children, were shooting down a neighboring hill at a tremendous speed. "I wonder if some of them won't be killed?"

"Not likely," replied Harold. "They are used to it. And use is second nature. You'll be coasting yourself some day when we get to Penetang."

"Coasting? Is that what they call it?"

Soon the sport of the children was out of view. Another turn was made and, driving along a level street, they ascended the hill to the Citadel.

"These orders are very explicit," said Colonel Mason to Sir George, three hours later, as the two sat together before a blazing fire. They were the only occupants of the room.

"That's Wellington's forte," was the answer. "Emphatic precision in the smallest detail, as well as the largest. Not a bad policy either, if it is an iron rule."

Colonel Mason read on:

"Two companies of the 100th Regiment, under Sir George Head, to march from Halifax on snowshoes, or otherwise, through Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to Quebec. Then on to Montreal and up the Ottawa river to Hull. From there to travel as nearly due west as possible, on the lines of the old Jesuit trail, through to Georgian Bay on Lake Huron, which will be their destination; upon which bay a garrison must forthwith be erected. All goods, ammunition and garrison effects required, must be carried on sleighs accompanying the troops; and, when necessary, roads must be specially made for the purpose. One imperative order of the march is that the column must arrive at Lake Huron before the winter is over and the ice broken up—otherwise, the latter part of the march will be much more difficult to accomplish."

"And when is the break-up likely to take place?" Sir George asked.

"About the beginning of April," was the reply.

"Which means, that in less than three months, in the dead of winter, we must travel a thousand miles; and that a large part of the journey will be through forest that has never been broken."

"A severe undertaking," was Colonel Mason's comment. "But, as the marshes and lakes will all be frozen, the winter season is in your favor, Sir George. The only pity is that you were not here before Christmas; then your time would have been ample."

"We expected to arrive two weeks ago. It was the storms and not the skirmish that delayed us."

"Something you could not avoid. How many men have you, Colonel?"

"Two full companies with the exception of several killed and half a dozen wounded."

"A few men of your regiment were left with us by the Marquis of Tweeddale, when he went west. What say you to exchanging the sick list and filling up your number? If I mistake not, you will need every man."

"Thank you—a good suggestion."

"What about stores for the journey?"

"Oh! the *North King* has a full supply; but it will take some days to unload, as well as to secure horses and guides; and in this matter we will have to call upon you for assistance."

"I had orders from the War Office to that effect some time ago, so you will have nothing to fear on that score. Both men and horses will be ready for inspection to-morrow. The enigma to me is: what is Lieutenant Manning going to do with his wife? I understood from her at lunch that she expected to go with you."

"That is the intention," said Sir George, smiling at the amazement of his host.

"Ye gods!" cried the latter. "Do I understand that this young and charming lady is to accompany you through all the hardships of a midwinter journey across half a continent?"

"Hardly that, Mason. Say a quarter instead of half. Still the arrangement is final so far as a woman can make it," was Sir George's answer.

"Well it beats me! But you must have other women with you, of the 100th. She cannot be the only one."

"We had three soldiers' wives, but unfortunately one of them died on the way. Under the circumstances is there anything you can suggest that will make it easier for Mrs. Manning?"

"Only this, that if the journey for her is irrevocable, when you arrive at Quebec, pick out one or two first-class habitant women to go with her. When you secure good ones they are invaluable. They know the country and can endure anything, are as bright as crickets, and as sharp as steel traps."

"A good idea, Colonel, thank you. I'll make a note of it."

"But what is all this about, Sir George? What do you really expect to do when you reach Penetang?"

"The order is to establish a fort, build a ship-yard, and found a colony; and when the end is accomplished, leave one of my officers in command and return home."

"I see, I see; and that officer is to be Lieutenant Manning."

"I did not say so," said Sir George with a smile.

A tap at the door interrupted the conversation. Colonel Mason arose and opened it.

"May I come in?" was the question, and a sweet, grey-haired lady, with a troubled face, presented herself.

"Certainly, my dear," replied her husband. "Sir George and I were just finishing our conversation."

"I hope I am not intruding," she answered, looking from one to the other, "but if at liberty there is something I would like to speak to you about, while you are together."

"We are at your service," replied Sir George, "and so far as I am concerned, you could not have chosen a better moment."

And so saying, he courteously placed a chair for her.

CHAPTER IX.

"I'm all in a flutter and scarcely know how to begin," commenced Mrs. Mason, stroking down the folds of her dress, and looking timidly at Sir George.

"Well, what is it about, Marion?" Colonel Mason asked, surprised at such an unusual exhibition of feeling on the part of his wife.

"Oh! it's about that dear young creature you brought over with you, Sir George. She tells me that she is going with her husband and the troops right through that dreadful forest. The idea is

terrible. Perhaps I have no right to; but I beg to intercede. Can not the plan be changed?"

"Did Mrs. Manning wish you to intercede?" Sir George quietly asked.

"No, indeed! I did not even tell her what I thought, but waited until I could obtain your permission to speak."

"Do you know, Mrs. Mason, that it is by her own desire that she is going?" said Sir George, gravely.

"But she doesn't know," protested Mrs. Mason, emphatically. "It would be a shame to take such a young girl out and let her freeze to death on that terrible journey."

"No danger of that, I think," was the smiling rejoinder. "The officers of the 100th Regiment are too gallant to allow such a thing to occur."

"Oh! I know you will do what you can," returned Mrs. Mason, changing her attitude a little; "but when you think of the snow and the ice and the intense cold, and all the terrors of the trip, would it not be better to let her stay with us for the winter, and have her go on to the new fort in the summer after it is built?"

"Ah! That is an entirely different matter, and very kind of you to propose it. But if I know Mrs. Manning aright, she will be the last person in the world to consent to a change in the programme."

"But may I not speak to her? I know Colonel Mason will consent."

"Certainly, my dear," assented that gentleman.

"May I ask her to remain with us for a few months then?" she said again, turning to Sir George.

"Undoubtedly you may. And if she is willing to stay in Halifax for the winter, with her husband's consent, of course, I shall be very happy to leave her to your care."

Thanking Sir George for acceding to her request, Mrs. Mason withdrew.

"It is a dilemma," said Colonel Head, after the door had closed. "And probably a more serious one than I imagined when I sanctioned it. Still I think the pros and contras will balance each other. The presence of a lady in our midst may render our march a little more troublesome, possibly make our speed a little slower, as well as necessitate greater care in our appointments on the road. But it will have a good effect, too. Mrs. Manning is a true lady and is thoroughly in love with her husband. So it will put the fellows on their honor and make them show a bit of genuine chivalry as well. She is as bright as a fairy, has lots of pluck, and what is more, has a capital voice. We can take care of her and I don't think we'll be out in the end."

"From your view of the case, I don't think you will," was Mason's comment. "Still the thing is so unprecedented that it will be impossible to eliminate the element of risk."

"Life would not be worth living if we could," returned Sir George. "We always have it."

"Well, here's to a successful march and happy ending, whether you take the lady with you or not."

And the two gentlemen touched their glasses and drank the toast.

By this time Mrs. Mason had returned to her own little parlor where Helen was still resting. Extending both hands she exclaimed: "I have got it beautifully arranged, my dear; you are to stay with us for the winter. Sir George Head has given his consent."

"But, my dear Mrs. Mason——"

"Now, no objecting at all," interrupted that lady with great vivacity, as she held Helen's hands tightly within her own. "You need not say a word but accept the conditions. The idea of you going in January on that desolate trip is terrible. It is appalling. Now, you must stay with me and enjoy Halifax while your husband with the rest of the men cut the road through the woods and build the fort; then you ——"

"This will not do, Mrs. Mason," Helen in turn interrupted. Her face was already flushed with excitement. "It is very good of you; but really you do not understand the conditions. My going with the troops is imperative. I am sorry you spoke upon this subject to Sir George, for the only reason I had in crossing the ocean was to go with my husband and the soldiers on this journey."

"But the intense cold?"

"I have lots of woollen things and furs."

"For hundreds of miles there is not a house."

"The men will build shanties and heat them with big fires."

"But the wolves! In winter they are intensely savage and hunt in large packs."

Here Helen discomfited her hostess by a ringing peal of laughter.

"Pity if two companies of soldiers cannot keep a pack of wolves from eating up a poor lone woman!" she exclaimed. "No, no, Mrs. Mason, argument is out of the question. I came to go with them and go I will."

"I suppose I must give in then," said Mrs. Mason, pensively. "You are incomprehensible. To think of a girl giving up home and friends and undertaking such a journey in the dead of winter beats me."

"Ah! but there's something at the end of it, Mrs. Mason," returned Helen warmly, "which will repay one for all the difficulties and fatigues by the way."

"And what is that, pray?"

"They say that Penetanguishene, and all the islands there, make one of the most beautiful pictures in the wide world. The old Jesuit Fathers used to declare that the rocky islands of the bay were in summer just like Paradise."

"And to prove it," exclaimed Mrs. Mason, "they froze to death in the winter to be sure of the comparison; but never mind, my dear, if you are determined to go, we must do our best to make the trip comfortable for you. You shall have a little break in the tedium of travel anyway. Our annual military ball takes place here on Friday night, and you must be our honored guest. It will not be as large as usual, for some of our officers have been killed in the war, and others have been wounded. Still it will be nice and the Governor, Sir John Sherbrooke, and his wife will both be there."

"I am afraid I have not anything to wear," said Helen. "You know I did not expect to attend balls in my new life in the woods."

"But what of your wedding dress?"

"That was of white satin; but, of course, it was high neck and with long sleeves."

"Still you must have had lace and ornaments of one sort or another with you?"

"Oh, yes! I have some rare old Indian lace of my mother's and a white crepe veil that my grandmother wore at her wedding."

"Well, you have the materials. That is very fortunate. And as there are two more days, we'll see what my own dressmaker can do for you."

"And where is the ball to be?" Helen asked with growing interest.

"In the Grand Hall at the Citadel. And let me whisper in your ear: We will see that you are the belle of the evening."

"You forget that I am an old married woman!" exclaimed Helen with a laugh.

"Perhaps you are," commented Mrs. Mason, raising her eyebrows, "but nevertheless you will conquer the hearts of the men—every one of them."

Just then Harold entered the room, and hearing Mrs. Mason's statement, he laughingly declared that he was already jealous. But when she told him of the discussion relative to the prospective overland journey, he folded his wife in his arms and kissed her—not once nor twice—but many times. Whereupon Mrs. Mason put on her spectacles and commenced to count over the names of the invited guests.

CHAPTER X.

The old Citadel was brilliantly illuminated. Lights gleamed in every window. The snow was shovelled clean from the footpaths, and guardsmen had made smooth the drives for incoming sleighs. The full moon shone with softened lustre from a cloudless sky, filling the air with voiceless music, and enveloping with chastened beauty the wide stretches of ice and snow which mantled the earth.

Within the citadel a bevy of pretty girls, aided by the junior officers, had decorated the doors and windows with elaborate care. Festoons of cedar, sprigs of holly and bunches of red berries, softened by the light from the candelabra, while innumerable lamps of archaic design added variety and beauty to the scene.

The ballroom was decorated with national and colonial flags, those of the 100th being added to do honor to the occasion; while the Vice-Regal chair was surrounded with rugs of rich and rare texture. In a tête-a-tête corner to the left of the main entrance, luxurious, long-haired, polar bear skins littered the floor; while, on the opposite side, the feet of the guests sank deep in the furs of buffalo from the west.

"What a characteristic room!" exclaimed Helen, as she stood for a moment at the wide entrance, leaning on the arm of her husband. "I never saw so many flags and beautiful skins in one room in my life."

"Nor I either. Still the setting is appropriate—the flags a token of the present war, and the skins a trophy of the huntsmen's prowess. Furs are one of the main products of the country, you know."

"I wonder if it can produce as many women?" said Helen, glancing over the Hall. "There are few but men here yet."

"All the more triumph for the women who are," was his answer, as he looked down with love into her eyes.

The Governor and Lady Sherbrooke, with Mrs. and Colonel Mason and Sir George Head, were receiving when they entered. Officers of the garrison and several from the *North King* were there, as well as civilians with their wives and daughters.

"May I have the honor of the opening quadrille with you?" said Colonel Mason to Helen after presenting her.

"I shall be only too happy," was her answer. But a faint flush rose to her cheek. She would prefer to have danced the opening one with her husband.

"The guests are still coming, and our dance will be soon; *au revoir* until then."

Harold and she passed on. More than a dozen ladies had by this time arrived—most of them young and some very pretty, with white shoulders and graceful figures. Not a few had flashing diamonds, brought by their mothers from the old land over the sea, and they sparkled like the eyes of their winsome wearers as they mingled with the men.

"How pretty they are!" said Harold, *sotto voce*. "As fresh as if new from England."

"I don't see any of the blue noses they talk about," Helen returned. "It must be a healthy climate, Harold, if it is cold."

At this moment Judge and the Misses Maxwell were announced. The Judge, a large and portly man, crowned with periwig, had a keen, intelligent face. He was accompanied by his two daughters. One was of the large blonde type with blue eyes and flaxen hair, always smiling in a decided way of her own. The other, Miss Maud, was of a different type. No one would have taken them for sisters. Slight in build and quick in movement, there was a winsome charm about her that was very engaging. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature in her manner was her strong, unconscious frankness. Her features were regular and her eyes black, while her wealth of dark hair and sweet countenance combined to make her irresistibly charming. One would think from the color of her hair and eyes that she should have been a brunette; but her skin was exquisitely white and the petal of a delicate rose seemed to have planted its hue upon her cheek.

In attire the two young ladies differed as much as in personal appearance. The blonde was dressed in white; but Maud had a robe of chameleon hue, that reflected in changeable lustre every flash of light that fell upon it from the chandeliers above. The delicate fulness revealed by the low corsage was partially hidden by a bunch of violets from her own indoor garden, while a little circlet of pearls and minute diamonds flashed upon her neck.

"What character there is in that face!" said Helen to Mrs. Mason a moment later, as the Colonel joined her for the dance.

"Yes, there is. Would you like to know her?"

"I would indeed!"

"I will introduce her after the quadrille is over."

"Thank you."

Sir John Sherbrooke escorted Mrs. Mason to the upper end of the room. Then came Sir George and Lady Sherbrooke, followed by Captain Osborne and one of the colonial dames, while Colonel Mason and Helen brought up the rear. Together they formed the set for the opening quadrille—and stately and beautiful it was, as Helen remembered long afterwards.

All eyes were fixed upon the four couples. With elaborate bows and graceful formality, they stepped through the figures of the dance. The measured music from the violins and harps beat a slower time in the days of our forefathers than now; and there was a dignity and solemnity in the first dance of the period—almost equivalent to the sacred decorum of a religious rite—that in this rushing age has been forgotten.

"Mrs. Manning—Miss Maud Maxwell," said Mrs. Mason after the dance was over. "You young ladies have each expressed a desire to know each other."

As they clasped hands and looked into each other's eyes, several moments passed away; thoughts seemed to be uttered without words.

"Strangers, and yet not strangers," said Helen. "I could fancy I had known you for years."

"It must be the same feeling," said Maud, still holding the extended hand; "a sweet joy in seeing

you, although we never met before."

"It is all owing to the talk you have made among us," said Mrs. Mason, taking each young lady by the arm and leading the way to one of the tête-a-tête corners already referred to. "Maud was always ambitious, headstrong, wayward. Perhaps a little chat between you two will do each good. There, I will leave you, but with so many gentlemen and so few ladies, I cannot guarantee a minute by yourselves."

"Would you care for a companion in your journey west, Mrs. Manning?" Maud asked in a swift, low voice, as Mrs. Mason, accepting the arm of an officer, left them. She must speak while the chance lasted.

"I know I would," was Helen's startled answer; "but after all that is said against it, I fear that I could not conscientiously advise."

"It would be simply glorious to go," said Maud, enthusiastically. "Out in the starry night with the trees cracking and the wolves howling, while you are rolled up in your buffalo robes, snug and warm, and safe from all danger."

"You young enthusiast! What a splendid companion you would make!"

"Would I?" and the girl's eyes flashed. "Oh, if I only could!"

At this moment Mrs. Mason returned to introduce another gentleman.

"Mrs. Mason," said Helen as they arose from their seat. "Do you know that Miss Maud Maxwell would like to be one of our party?"

"That is not surprising," was the answer. "I've known Maud ever since she was a baby, and she was always a Tom-boy."

"Why traduce my fair name?" said Maud with a laugh.

"My dear, is it not true?"

"Please don't be pathetic. I'd like to go; that is all."

"And you really mean it?" Helen asked, looking gravely into the girl's face.

"Yes, I do. But I suppose there will be little chance. Father would oppose it, and no doubt Sir George would also. Still I would give anything to go with you. But I am engaged for this waltz. Mrs. Manning—Doctor Beaumont."

And she walked away with him as Harold joined them. Helen followed the doctor for some moments with her eyes. His face had a French cast, although his skin was fairer and his hair lighter than is usually found in that race.

"The doctor is devoted to Maud," said Mrs. Mason, "although I do not think she cares for him."

"Is he the surgeon who is to go with the regiment?" Harold asked.

"I think not. Dr. Fairchild is the man spoken of," said Mrs. Mason. "I suppose I should not mention it, but as you are one of the officers it can do no harm to tell you. I believe that Dr. Beaumont would like to go. It will however be finally decided to-morrow."

"Thank you for telling us," said Helen. "I suppose it is out of the question about Miss Maud going?"

"Entirely out of the question." returned the elder lady emphatically. "If they should happen to appoint Dr. Beaumont, she would not dream of going. H-m, h-m," she continued, wisely shaking her little grey head; "that throws new light upon it; I do not believe she will really want to go."

"My dear, if we do not commence we shall lose our waltz," exclaimed Harold to his wife, "It is half through already."

"A thousand pardons, dearie. It is our first since we were married. I wouldn't miss it for the world," and her winsome smile thrilling him again, as it had always done, they glided over the floor.

The next afternoon Maud visited Helen at the Citadel.

"Our little chat remained unfinished," were almost her first words. "There were so many unmarried officers at the ball last night that the gentlemen outnumbered the ladies, and I did not get a chance to speak to you again."

"You were sensibly occupied, and I forgive you," returned Helen. "I know I danced more than I have done for years, and yet only managed to have two waltzes with my husband."

"I like Lieutenant Manning," returned Maud. "I had a polka with him, and his chivalry took me, for he stopped before our dance was over to escort old Mrs. Tindall across the room. Most young men would have let the lady look after herself."

"I knew what I was doing when I married Harold," said Helen with glowing face. "You see I think so much of my husband that I am willing to travel to the ends of the earth with him."

"I would have to love a man like that or I would never marry," said Maud.

"You'll find him some day, if you have not already. And what about Penetanguishene? Do you still desire to be one of our party?"

"Yes and no," was the girl's reply, her mouth assuming for the moment a set expression. "I'm afraid I said too much last night. Much as I would like to go I find it will be impossible. So there is no use even thinking about it."

"Perhaps later when our fort is built and the war is over, you will come."

"Possibly," and her eyes melted into a dreamy expression. "Let me thank you for the suggestion. If I can I will."

"It is probably better so," said Helen, puzzled at such a speedy change of attitude.

At this moment Mrs. Mason entered the room.

"I have just received the latest news," she said. "It was announced at the officers' quarters this morning, that Dr. Beaumont has received the appointment as surgeon to the 100th. Colonel Mason told me only a few minutes ago."

Helen involuntarily glanced at Maud, but at this moment the frank expression was absent. Did she know already?

"Is not this a surprise?" said Helen. "Of course I know nothing about the appointment, only that rumor last evening gave the place to Dr. Fairchild."

"So it did," said Mrs. Mason; "but his father is not well and can ill spare him. Perhaps that is the reason of the change."

"I have just been taking back some of my own foolish talk," said Maud, looking directly at Mrs. Mason. "My sudden fancy of going west with the regiment was inspired by the fortitude of this brave lady—just an enthusiastic idea that cannot be realized."

"But she has promised to visit me at Lake Huron after the war is over," said Helen.

"The very time you ought to go yourself," was her hostess' comment.

Mrs. Mason was one of those kind-hearted ladies who, having no children of their own, consider it their duty to interest themselves in the children of others. She always had two or three of her young lady friends under her wing, and was never contented unless endeavoring to pilot them to their destined haven. She must not only guide them aright, but see also that they did not wilfully go wrong. That Maud Maxwell, in her estimation the sweetest girl in all Halifax, should be allowed to go on that desperate western journey was not to be thought of for a moment. If she could not prevent the newly arrived bride from sacrificing herself on the altar of a "crazy idea," she certainly could prevent Maud from following suit. At all events she would try.

There were more ways of killing a cat than one. Persuasion in one quarter might have no effect, but a square talk in another, might; and Maud's incomprehensible coolness with Dr. Beaumont might be turned to advantage. Socially as well as professionally he was a very estimable young man; and Mrs. Mason was surprised, knowing how deeply he was in love with Maud, that a better understanding had not been arrived at between them. Now, however, when she discovered that Maud intended to make a special appeal to both Sir George and Colonel Mason to allow her to accompany Helen on the journey, she concluded to turn the association between Dr. Beaumont and the maiden to the best account, and in her own quiet way put an end to the mad "project."

What passed in the way of a curtain lecture between Colonel Mason and his spouse after the ball was over, there was no one to tell; but the celerity with which the medical appointment was discussed, decided upon, and ratified when morning came, was somewhat remarkable. Sir George and Colonel Mason were closeted together for half an hour after breakfast; and then a couple of orderlies were summoned, and messages dispatched to both of the doctors, containing the results of the decision. As a consequence, Dr. Beaumont's mind was filled with conflicting thoughts when he received the message. The first impression was surprise, for he knew it had been otherwise arranged; but as the decision now was final, he must obey, and his relation to Maud disturbed him. To leave her at once might render his unreturned love hopeless. If he could have remained, possibly he might win her yet; but to go away now and stay perhaps for years, with the attentions and hearts of other men continually at her feet, seemed more than he could bear.

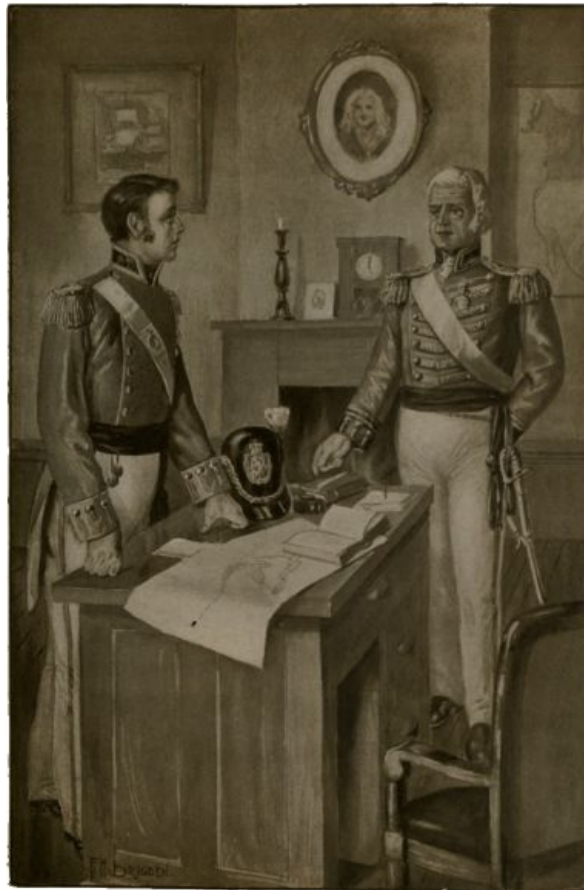
Still there was the other side to view. The post of surgeon to the 100th was a distinct promotion; for he and Doctor Fairchild were both army officers, and it flattered the spirit of rivalry which existed between them to be selected over his fellow. The illness of Dr. Fairchild's father was quietly hinted to both gentlemen as the probable cause of the change; but the possibility that Mrs. Mason might have had something to do with the final appointment, was not thought of, much less mentioned.

The die was cast however, whatever would come of it, and Dr. Beaumont realized that he must prepare at once for the journey. The mixed blood of his parentage had made a strong man of him;

for he possessed the passion and vehemence of the Frenchman from his father, tempered by the stolidity and integrity of the Scotch race from his mother.

After reporting himself at headquarters, and rapidly making preparations for the prospective march, it was late in the evening before he could spare time to call at the Judge's. He had sent no message to Maud. Still he hoped and believed that she would be ready to receive him. She must have heard of his appointment. Would she be glad or sorry? How would she welcome him? Was it possible that she would rejoice at being relieved of the attentions of an unwelcome suitor? Or was it imaginable that she would be glad of his promotion, and reward his devotion by encouragement on the very eve of his departure?

At any rate he would see and know the truth; and, after walking past the house several times to soothe his nerves and check the rapid beating of his heart, he finally knocked at the door for a final interview with Maud.



"Thank you very much!" exclaimed Harold

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CHAPTER XI.

Henri Beaumont, although a native of Quebec, was a graduate of an English university, and it was in London, after obtaining his degree, that he received his appointment on the medical staff of a British regiment under orders for Canada. For two years now he had been stationed in Halifax, and although during the war with the United States he had seen some active service, his duties had been chiefly confined to professional work among the troops stationed at the Citadel.

It was there that Maud met him. Perhaps if she had been less indifferent, the conquest would not have been so easily accomplished. But the impression was made at the beginning, and notwithstanding her apparent coolness, time seemed only to strengthen the one-sided bond that existed between them.

His heart was in a tumult as he entered the house that night—hope and expectation did not balance each other—and minutes elapsed after meeting Maud before the loud throbs beneath his

jerkin ceased.

"I am sure you heard the news?" he said retaining the hand which she attempted to withdraw. "I am ordered to be ready to march with Sir George's men in two days."

"Yes," she replied, finally retracting her hand, "and I congratulate you. Your friends, while sorry to lose you, will be glad of your promotion."

"That is very kind; but I would give the world to know that some one really cared."

He was growing serious already. So she threw back her head and with a gentle laugh exclaimed:

"Oh, my dear doctor, you don't know how much we shall miss you!"

"Mon Dieu, Miss Maud! That is very well. But you know what I mean. When I go away I can't return for a year at least. It is the time, the absence, that I think of. Won't you give me a chance at all? You know how I love you."

"You have your chance now, Doctor—founding a fort—establishing a settlement—perhaps building a city. That should be enough for any man to face."

"But it is not enough, mon ami." The doctor's face flushed and his eyes glittered as he drew his chair nearer. "I want my love returned. I have kept myself straight and pure for love of you, Mademoiselle. Do you care for me at all? Will you not give me one promise before I go?"

He was pleading very earnestly, a gleam of intense love illuminating his face. Maud's manner softened a little, although she felt no responsive thrill. She was not sure of her own heart, and was too wise to commit herself when she experienced no warmer feeling than that of friendship.

"You ask for more than I can give," she said. "If I do not love you, how can I promise?"

"Have I a rival then?" he asked with passionate earnestness.

"How dare you ask such a question!" she answered with flushed face. "I am in love with no one."

"Then why not grant my desire? In my heart no one can take your place. For long months I shall see only one other lady, and she the wife of a brother officer. But I will found a settlement and build a city, too, if you will only promise to be my—my sweetheart—when I come back again."

"Oh, you silly man! I promise nothing. Why not simply wait and see. When away on your long march (she did not tell him how gladly she would have undertaken it herself if he had not been going) your mind and time will be occupied with other things. You will never think of me."

"Never think of you!" he exclaimed passionately. "Perhaps it would be better for me if I never did. But I shall think of you every day when on the march, and every night when in the woods we pitch our camp. When the smoke arises from the pipes of the men around our fires, my thoughts will be of you; and when rolled in blanket and buffalo robes, during the long winter nights, I may see the stars through the tall trees, and hear the owls hooting in the forest; but beyond the stars I shall see your face, and in my dreams I shall hear your voice. No, Maud Manning, I may go away, but you cannot get away from me. You fill my soul, my heart, my whole being. You are my star, my light, my love—and it will be the same in Penetang, no matter where you are."

Spite of herself his words thrilled her, and unconsciously she rose to her feet. She could not sit still any longer. What manner of man was this French-Scotchman? This passionate pleader, this determined lover? This soldierly fellow, who, while he worshipped her, accepted the order to march to the end of the earth, for time indefinite, without a single murmur of regret? She had never until now been seriously impressed with his personality. She had seen the passionate, demonstrative side of his nature; but its integrity and strength, its staunch chivalry and unselfish devotion, were something new to her—and it was with a feeling not unlike reverence that she heard his last words. A species of humility almost akin to love was gradually stealing over her.

"I am sorry," she said at last, but her voice this time was low and sweet. "I should have told you sooner."

"Told me what?" he exclaimed eagerly. "That you never could love me?"

"No, not that." His intensity was so great, so real, that she dreaded the future that seemed imminent in his face. She must give him hope, however slight, until time could soothe the vivid chords of his being, and until she could read aright the inmost thoughts of her own heart.

"What then?" was his question.

"Can you not suggest something else? We have always been friends," she said.

"Promise me to remain free for a year. I will do my best and come back then," he said.

"Yes, *Monsieur le Docteur*, for one more year I will not love any one, for one more year I will be free." And the tone filled his soul with music. The cloud was raised—the veil was lifted.

"And I will write," he said. "Will you answer?"

"Yes," was her quiet response.

"Oh, Mon Dieu! I thank you," was his comment. His face had lost its sadness.

They stood together under the chandelier. He, excited, determined, passionate, with love in every look and gesture, but controlling himself by a strong effort. She, introspective, observant, wary; and yet with a warmer kindness towards her companion than she had ever felt before.

"I must go," he said at last. "Just a kiss to seal our promise." And he threw his arm out to clasp her to him. But with one step backward she raised the hand that was held in his and the kiss fell upon it instead.

"Good-bye and God be with you," she said.

"And may He keep you until I return," was his prayer; "but shall I not see you again? There may be time enough to-morrow?"

"It would be better not."

She stood at the door and watched him descend the steps. Then he turned and, with a last look and a sweep of his chapeau, he disappeared into the darkness.

CHAPTER XII.

On the day of the march the temperature was almost down to zero, and the sky a clear pale blue. The order had been issued for the little column to be ready at nine o'clock sharp; and cold as it was the whole town was astir. Union Jacks were flying in honor of the occasion, and many people were out on the street to witness the departure. The few days that had elapsed since the arrival of the *North King* had not passed idly away. A score or two of teams had been purchased. Long sleighs, bobsleighs, carryalls had all been secured, and many of them loaded with goods that Captain Payne had brought over the sea for the building and provisioning of the prospective fort. Then there were fur robes and blankets, kettles, pots and tins for the journey, stores of all sorts, and provisions for the men, fodder and blankets for the horses, as well as the reserve supply of ammunition, all packed in capacious sleighs, with drivers ready and horses snorting impatiently for the order to start.

Punctual to the minute the companies lined up in the square by the Citadel.

Sleighs for Sir George and his officers, one for Helen and Harold, and another for the soldiers' wives, were there in regular order. Then came the heavy sledges of the commissary department, and last of all the "bobs" containing the building supplies and ordinance outfit for the new fort at Penetang.

As the bell of the little old church on the hill struck nine a salute of two guns from the Citadel was fired in honor of the event. Adieus had all been said; hand-shaking was over; and as the shrill tones of the bugles sounded, the order to march was given. Then the crowd cheered and the sleighs started upon their long journey; while the soldiers in heavy overcoats formed a double column and brought up the rear.

For the commencement of such a journey the day was excellent. The roads were good, the snow well packed, and soon the procession of ponies and sledges commenced to swing along at a rapid rate.

"Put my coat collar higher, please," said Helen to her husband as they neared the outskirts of the town. Quick driving had made her feel the cold air more keenly.

"Will that do?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied. "It keeps the wind out. These hot bricks for the feet are delightful. What a glorious day for a ride! But look at that big snow bank right in front of us! Bateese! don't upset us, please!"

"Bateese nevare upset. Et is only de dreef," returned the Frenchman, and with a crack of his whip he circled around the sloping end of the bank as the other drivers had done before him.

It was not so nearly an upset as Helen imagined, but she breathed more freely when the huge pile of snow was behind them.

"Do we meet many drifts like that?" she asked a little timidly, for it was her first experience.

"Oh! dat is noting," replied Bateese, tossing his head; "but dere is a great big wan, high as yer head, right on de slope by de beeg hill, jess befor' you cam to de lumber camp—Gar—he be a fine wan."

And the habitant cackled and cracked his whip again.

"Still we can pass it all right?" said Harold.

"Nevare can tell," returned Bateese, shrugging his shoulders. "It ees on de end of a heel, where two winds meet—an 'eet may be flat as de diable in de mornin'—an' so big at night dat you couldn't see ovare de top if you was ten feet high."

"How then do you manage?" inquired Helen, who, seeing a twinkle in the eye of Bateese, was regaining courage.

"Oh, some tam you go roun, some tam over top after deegin' de snow awa—and some tam," he continued very impressively, "you make a tunnel—camp all night in de meedle—and deeg out a t'oder side next day."

"And what do you do with your horses while camping?" Harold asked with a smile.

"Oh! dat's easy," replied Bateese with perfect gravity. "We jess deeg places for dem beside de camp—don't have go out in de cole to feed 'em. Dey eat snow for vater, and de leetle fire keep us all warm."

"That's a pretty good one, Bateese."

"Oh, no, jess a leetle wan; tell you some more bime-by."

And the Frenchman's infectious laughter was joined in by both Helen and Harold as they scudded to the jingle of the sleigh-bells merrily along the road.

In a couple of hours the riders had left the heavy sledges and the soldiers far behind. They had passed the clearings. Open fields became less frequent, and the stretches of forest more continuous. Sir George had inquired minutely into the nature and difficulties of the road; and although he believed that the march for days would be outside of the war arena, he had sent forward a strong scouting party to reconnoitre.

The direction they were taking for the first part of the journey was almost due north, following the sleigh track, which finally joined the Truro-road along the banks of the Shebenacadie.

The troops and heavy sledges would come up later, but the order was to make the first halt at a lumber camp on their line of march, at which arrangements were already being made by the scouting party for their reception. By noon the Colonel's sleigh headed the file at the top of a long hill. Dr. Beaumont was with him.

"There it is!" he cried. "Yonder are the scouts."

"You know the place then?" said Sir George.

"Yes, I've often been here. Mr. Mackenzie has one of the finest lumber camps in Nova Scotia. See, he is out now talking to Sergeant Banks."

"A thrifty Scotchman, eh! I hope Banks has managed it. I would like the whole troop to dine at the camp without touching our rations. You can settle with Mr. Mackenzie afterwards," he concluded, turning to Captain Payne.

"It will be a great relief," returned the latter, "and give us a longer march this afternoon. Nothing like making a good start on the first day."

The sergeant saluted as they drove up.

"Mr. Mackenzie, this is our Colonel," he said, touching his cap.

And a tall, massively built Scotchman, with shaggy hair and rugged features, grasped Sir George's hand warmly.

"Your men have been telling me about you, sir," he exclaimed. "I am glad to see you. You must a' be hungry after your cold ride. The cook's doin' his best to gie ye all a bite. Come right in. Your men can feed the horses at the stable. Guid sakes, you've got a leddy with ye! and some women folk, too!" and he finished by doffing his hat gallantly to Helen.

"Yes, we are hungry and glad to call a halt, Mr. Mackenzie, and I know Mrs. Manning will be tired enough to rest."

Here Harold introduced his wife and the group went inside. The huge shanty was built entirely of logs, the inside walls hewed flat, the chinks filled with wood and then covered level with plaster. One side of the long wall was not more than six feet in altitude, but the opposite one was twice as high to allow for the sloping slab roof. Scattered along the two sides were a series of little windows, while in the far end a pile of dry logs was burning brightly in a huge fireplace. Dining tables of pine boards, supported on cross sticks, stretched the length of the room, and were already laden with platters and cups in preparation for the meal. The cross head table was built in a similar manner, but instead of benches on either side, there was an array of chairs, and perhaps in honor of the occasion, clean white sheets were spread upon it for the coming meal.

The rough, homely comfort about the place seemed attractive after the cold drive, and elicited warm compliments from the Colonel.

"Oh, it will do for the woods," returned Mackenzie, good-humoredly. "We keep our men warm and comfortable and feed 'em well. The consequence is that they like the job, and every man of 'em is glad to come back to the camp when the next season opens."

"But does not the war interfere with your work and make your men enlist?" the Colonel asked.

"Yes, sometimes; but it is a good thing to have a reputation. If peace was declared to-morrow, I could get twice the men I need. As it is, half the young men in the colony have listed. And yet I have all I want. But dinner is almost ready, so Sir George, you and your men might put your things in my office here; and, Mrs. Manning," he exclaimed with another bow, "I haven't got a leddy's boudoir, but if you are not afraid of an old bachelor's quarters, you might fix and rest yourself in my own den."

"I shall be only too glad," returned Helen. "This big shanty is so comfortable, I am sure I would be too warm, if I kept my furs on."

"Well, just make yourself at home. You are welcome to any little thing I can do for ye. But, ma sakes, what became o' the other weemen?"

"Oh, they went off to the men's kitchen with their husbands," returned Sir George. "You know Corporal Bond and Private Hardman were of the reconnoitring party."

And closing the heavy door of Mackenzie's den, Helen laid her wraps upon his bed. A little mirror was hanging by the window and without delay she arranged her hair. Then she washed in the pewter bowl and sat down in the arm chair, the only seat in the room. Soliloquizing, she began to realize what was before her. Through the little window she saw that the shanty was close to the woods, an impenetrable forest on every side. Only half a day out from Halifax, and notwithstanding the presence of her husband, in a certain sense alone. And if alone, when blessed with the rude comforts of the log camp and the generous cordiality of the owner, what must it be when out in the forest night after night, through all the long months of the winter? There could be no shadow of turning now—no possibility of retreat. Still she did not lament. It was only that life seemed more tense—more binding—ininitely more positive and real!

A little later, Harold came for her, and they joined Mr. Mackenzie, Sir George and the officers at the head table, in the big hall of the shanty. Their host placed Helen and Sir George as his guests of honor. Then the big gong sounded and the shanty-men in smock frock and blue jean overalls filed in and took their places.

"That's a motley crowd, Sir George," said Mr. Mackenzie. They could easily be observed by the Colonel, for his seat commanded a view of the whole room.

"Yes, you have many nationalities here: German, English, Scotch, Irish, French," said Sir George.

"But Johnny Canucks are on top every time," was the answer. "They stand the work well, and make fine lumbermen. They have their peculiarities, though. See how they spread their molasses on their pork instead of their bread."

"Like the Dutchman sleeping on straw with his feather bed on top of him."

"Or the Irishman with his potatoes and point."

"Yes, but the French and the Dutch make the most of it, while Pat contents himself with a joke."

"And on it he fattens," returned Mackenzie with a laugh. "But I tell you my men are well fed, the grub's rough but wholesome, and we often eat a calf or a deer at a meal besides a pile of other stuff. Our table doesn't differ much from theirs either," he continued, "but to-day in honor of our guests, particularly Mrs. Manning and yourself, Sir George, I told the cook to make it extra fine. By George, he's sending us griddled tenderloin, roast turkey and stuffed partridges as well."

Then they had baked potatoes, cranberry sauce, salaratus cakes and tea.

"We've only got brown sugar, Mrs. Manning, I'm sorry to say," he continued, turning to Helen. "And unfortunately our coos are all dry."

"It's a genuine feast," returned Helen, "and I'm thirsty enough to drink anything." With an effort she controlled the muscles of her face as she drank the beverage. Lumber-camp tea in those days was a nauseous draft to any but the woodsmen themselves.

By-and-bye the meal was over and Helen made a hasty run to the kitchen department to see what the women were doing. The lumbermen, too, filed out of the room to make way for the soldiers who at that moment were marching down the hill. They were hungry after their long tramp, and did not require a second bidding, when word came that the tables were ready.

In offering to settle for the meal so freely granted, the response was a surprise to Sir George.

"Take pay for a feed!" cried the Scotchman with a laugh. "Not much, I reckon we can stand it without smashing the camp. Thank ye kindly, though."

"This is too generous altogether," was the protest.

"Not at all," replied Mackenzie. "Scotch bodies are canny, but when they say a thing they mean it."

"Well! we'll not forget you," said Sir George, as he grasped the generous donor by the hand. "Perhaps some day our turn will come."

Soon the teams were ready again, and several of the marching officers took the places of those

who had ridden. The result was that Chaplain Evans was assigned to a seat in Helen's sleigh, while Harold walked with his men.

"It can't be helped," said the Lieutenant, as he gave his wife a momentary caress. "I shall have to ride and march turn about until Quebec is reached. But you are in good company and there is no danger."

"Well," replied Helen, forcing a laugh, "your absence will make your presence all the dearer; so good-bye, sweetheart."

"Until to-night," was his answer, and throwing her another kiss, he placed himself at the head of his men.

"How much further do we go to-day?" Helen asked of Sir George, who came to speak to her for a moment before getting into his sleigh.

"About fifteen miles, I think. We want to camp at Shebenacadie to-night. There will be accommodation in a settler's house for you and the women, but for the rest of us, the men will have to put up shanties, and the sooner we get away the better. The scouting party went ahead two hours ago on snowshoes, so they will have them started when we arrive."

"But what after to-night?" said Helen.

"I'm afraid we'll have to camp, women as well as men," said the Colonel with a shrug, and stepping into his sleigh, the cavalcade started.

CHAPTER XIII.

For more than an hour the drive was rapid, the country being less undulating and the road smoother. Still the way was always through the woods. Tall pines everywhere stretched skyward, while on the lowlands, ashes and elms spread out their grey branches, in vivid contrast to the evergreen above. Scrub oaks on the hillocks still carried the dead red leaves of the past year; while here and there a beech or a maple added its varied beauty to the winter landscape.

Although the road lay for miles along the banks of the Shebenacadie, its waters could only occasionally be seen. Now and then a wider vista opened, and a bit of the dashing river, rendered free here and there by a more rapid current, added picturesqueness to the view. At other places the bed of the stream was covered with ice, save for an occasional rollway, where the lumberer had piled his sawlogs upon its broken surface.

The drivers had covered more than half the distance to the proposed camp when they reached the top of a long ridge stretching out on either side. At the foot of the incline, a stranger sight than they had yet seen attracted their attention. It was a circle of Indian wigwams, in the lowest part of the valley, no doubt placed there to protect them from the winds that prevailed in the uplands. One of the lodges was taller and broader than the rest, but in other respects they were alike, and of the usual cone form.

In the centre of the circle was a huge log fire, around which stood a promiscuous lot of Indians, squaws and papooses, watching the approaching sleighs.

"Are these Indians always friendly?" the Chaplain asked of Bateese, as they gradually neared the little Indian village.

"Oui, Monsieur, yees," was the answer. "Dey be Micmacs, and Micmacs goot Indians. Not like de Hurons, who scalp all de tam. But let white man cheat a Micmac, or run away wid heem squaw; den by Gar he have revanche. He follow dat man till he kill him wid his hatchet, den put him in de ground; and no wan ever hear of him no more."

"Whew!" exclaimed Helen, with a little shiver. "They must be very good Indians, indeed, if they kill a man for cheating."

"Ah, madame! so dey be. Just treat Micmac square, he treat you square too."

"How do they build their wigwams?" the Chaplain asked. "They are very substantial looking."

"Vell, I tell you. I been in dem manys de time. Dey juss as warm as Madame's boudoir wid liddle stove in it. Dey make 'em of cedar poles, tight in groun' and fastened togeder tight at top. Den dey bind dem roun' all ovare wid strong green bark put on like shingles, and so close dat water can't get in. Dey make 'em in summare so it dry by wintare. Nex dey put on straight spruce branches all over de outside and spruce green branches all over de inside—till it is like de man from de contree—green all de way tru."

"Bateese, I didn't know you were so witty," exclaimed the Chaplain.

"Vell, by Gar, ef a man drive all de tam, day after day all wintare long, most tam wid no wan to spoke to, an' ees femme or ees fille a t'ousand miles away, ef ee can't jess tink of somet'ing funny he die."

By this time the chief with a number of his tribe were out on the road, and on the approach of Sir George's sleigh he threw up his right arm and shouted:

"Kwa."

"Yer honor, the spalpeen means how do yees do," said Pat, Sir George's driver, in a low voice.

"I'm very well, thank you," replied the Colonel, extending his hand. But the Indian ignored the proffered cordiality.

"Be jabbers, he can talk English, too, for I've heerd him," muttered Pat in a still lower key.

"Kwa wenin," next said the Indian, looking straight into the eyes of Sir George.

Pat this time remembered more fully, so he turned and spoke aloud: "He means, who are you? Tell him your name, Sir George, and he'll answer yees in English."

"Sir George Head, Colonel of the Soldiers of the Great Father."

"It is well. White Bear—Chief Micmacum tribum. Always everything two ways me speakum," replied the Indian in a dignified manner; while this time he accepted the hand of the Colonel, retaining it firmly in his own for some moments. The Micmacs, in their association with the whites, had made a strange jumble of the language. Still, White Bear's English being intelligible, a few minutes' conversation followed.

The chief had seen the scouts already, who, after telling him that Sir George and his soldiers were coming, had gone ahead to prepare for the night's camp.

Evidently from the way the chief and his braves strutted around, they had put on their best costumes in order to meet the representative of the Great Father.

White Bear was only armed with a tomahawk, but he was dressed in full Indian costume, with leggings, moccasins, hunting shirt and wampum belt; while his head dress, though of mink, was made in civilized style. The men who stood a few feet in his rear were dressed in more nondescript fashion. Two or three had muskets, and more than one hatchet and long knife could be seen beneath the blankets they wore. Further back, but outside the wigwams, the squaws were huddled together, and beyond them the children.

"Great Father send braves, Yankees you fightum?" said the Indian, feeling proud of his English.

"Not this time," said Sir George. "The Great Father sends his men to trade with the Indians up the Ottawa and on the great lakes toward the setting sun."

"Takum squaws too?" was the next question, with a side glance at Helen and the women in the next sleigh.

"Not many squaws," replied Sir George, gravely. "Just enough to make the men behave themselves. More will come by-and-bye."

"When White Bear make bargain squaw nevel speakum," said the Indian, sententiously.

"Do you hear that, Mrs. Manning?" cried the Colonel to Helen, who was near enough to hear the words of the conversation. "But we must drive on. I am glad to have met you, Chief."

Again they shook hands; White Bear once more raised his right hand above his head as before; and, simultaneously, the band of Indians joined in the parting salutation, "Kwa."

The tone was so fierce and loud that the women started. It sounded more like a war-whoop than an expression of good-will; and they were glad to commence their journey again. But the Indians remained where they were until the last of the sleighs had passed. Then Sir George raised his helmet in salute, and in answer to his courtesy, White Bear pulled off his mink skin and once more yelled "Kwa." Whereupon the sleighs quickened their speed to make up for lost time, while the Indians returned to their lodges.

CHAPTER XIV.

The second night of the long march was passed by all in newly made camps far away from human habitation. It was very different from the first night, in which a comfortable house was secured for the lodging of the women, refreshing both Helen and the soldiers' wives for the next day's travel. But this time they, too, had to abide like the soldiers in the woods.

The sun was still above the horizon when the sleighs reached the little valley in which it was decided to pitch their camp for the night. The spot was well chosen, being sheltered from the winds. It lay close to a little tributary of the Shebenacadie.

Already the scouting party had commenced work. They had felled a big pine across a narrow ravine, leaving space between it and the earth sufficient to utilize it as a beam pole for a large improvised wigwam. Some of the men were chopping off the long branches and leaning them against the fallen trunk, while others were cutting down saplings for a similar purpose.

"That's a good beginning," said the Colonel, as he stepped out of his sleigh and stretched his limbs after the cramping of the long drive. "A fine selection, too; lots of water and no wind. Now, every man must do his best, for it will be dark in an hour, and it will take until then for the troops to arrive. Chaplain, cannot you and the Doctor fix a place at one end of that shanty specially for Mrs. Manning, and make it snug and warm? She will have to camp out with her husband this time."

"That will be clerical work of a new kind," replied Mr. Evans with a laugh. "But I can say grace over it while Beaumont does the fixing. How will that do?"

"Capital. If you will also arrange the rugs and blankets while attending to your devotions," responded the Doctor. "I think the wigwam idea excellent. When hunting in winter I always prefer a shanty to a tent."

"Come along, then," exclaimed the Chaplain. "I see they've got the poles up at that end already. If Madame will excuse us, we'll soon fix her little boudoir; and by the time Lieutenant Manning arrives, he'll find his castle built and his lady waiting at the gate to receive him."

"It is very good of you," said Helen. But there was a look of concern upon her face, for they had hoped when starting to cover five more miles that day, in which case they would again have found a house for her to pass the night in. As it was, there was nothing but woods on every side, and even Harold would not arrive until the darkening.

Colonel Head's kindly eye noted the distress, which Helen was doing her best to hide.

"There is no help for it. We've got to take things as they are," he exclaimed cheerfully. "It may be a good thing after all that we can't cover the other five miles. The men are tired enough, and this spot is simply ideal for a camping ground."

"I believe it is," returned Helen, who in watching a dozen men swing their axes to good advantage, was regaining her courage. "The women are helping and so will I."

Every one worked hard. Sir George, too, was constantly on the move, issuing orders and making suggestions to facilitate the completion of the preparations for the night. The experience in army life, which the soldiers' wives had learned in Europe, proved of advantage now. It was on this account they had been selected to accompany the column, and the wisdom of the choice was proving itself already. What added cheerfulness to the prospect, too, was the big fire of dead timber built by the scouts.

Helen watched with interest the details of the work going on around her. She was laying in a store of knowledge for future use; and before the wigwams and tents were ready for the night, she helped not a little to make them comfortable.

As the tired men marched down the hill to the camp, some of the wigwams were ready for occupation. The horses had been provided for in an enclosure made by the arrangement of the sleighs, and supper was ready. Caldrons of pork and beans were sizzling on the fire, while tea and bread from the Halifax supply were there for all. The officers' mess, too, was a jolly one with its added fresh meat, biscuits and jam.

"My darling," said Harold to his wife, after the meal was over and they stood together for a few minutes by one of the blazing fires. "I realize now more than ever what you have sacrificed for me, and how much you were willing to endure."

"Don't talk in that way, please," she returned, pressing his arm, but at the same time dashing away a tear. "I was very willing to come, Harold, and I have never been sorry that I did."

"And a brave little woman you are."

"I try hard. It will be easier when I get used to it. The worst of all is the loneliness, but that I knew would come."

"It is the hardest at the start, dearest," he said, holding her tighter by the hand.

"Forgive me, Harold. I know I am silly, but this is the anniversary of my mother's death. Is it any wonder that I should feel a little blue? But never mind my foolishness, I will be better to-morrow."

"Foolishness, indeed! You are the dearest and best woman that ever lived. I had not forgotten either; and if I could I would have been with you all day."

"Well, I'm not going to be disconsolate any more," she exclaimed in a gayer tone. "You have not seen the dainty little wigwam that the Doctor and Chaplain have fixed up for us among the pine branches. They have covered the floor with pine needles. Then our bed is the funniest thing of all. It is a pile of small pine branches, covered with another of cedar. Over that are blankets, next a

huge buffalo robe and pillows, and over all some more blankets and another buffalo robe on top. For a door you shove a slab of wood away and squeeze in. When inside you light a candle to find a sloping branchy roof, seven feet high on one side and four on the other, with a floor space that is quite large and green branches all around."

"Is that your cozy corner Mrs. Manning is talking about?" said Dr. Beaumont, who at this moment joined them.

"Yes, she is giving a graphic description of your skill as a builder," replied Harold, laughing.

"We did our best, and the Chaplain said grace over it, too; but it is not much in the way of a lady's bed-chamber; sans stove, sans windows, sans crockery, sans everything, but a place to sleep in," said the Doctor.

"Well, I only hope that your quarters will be as comfortable," was Helen's laughing comment.

"Thank you, we looked after that. What is more, we fixed our own bunk right next to yours, so that if anything happens to the Queen of our party, we shall be on hand to attend to her wants forthwith, whether medical or spiritual," rejoined the Doctor.

"How kind you are! What's that?" she exclaimed, turning her head to catch the sounds, for in the distance a long shrill howl was heard.

"Dem's wolves, Madame," said Bateese, as he brought up another armful of wood for the fire. "Dere's anoder and anoder, sacré! de'll be lots o' dem to-night."

"What a gruesome sound!" returned Helen with a shiver.

"The pack must be large," said Sir George, as he approached with Captain Payne. "You had better give orders," he continued to the latter, "to have big fires kept up all night. They say that when the wolves are numerous as well as hungry, they will even attack a camp if not well guarded. What do you know about them, Bateese?"

"Some tam dey very fierce, Monsieur, and when hongree will chase 'eem right roun' de fire till 'ee shoot 'eem dead."

"They are not coming this way," said the Chaplain, who was also listening.

"Na, na," said Bateese. "Dey smell long way off, and go 'roun' and 'roun' before ever dey come to camp."

"You don't say that we are in for fun to-night, do you?"

"Don't say noffin," replied Bateese with a shrug. "Only dey won't be here for a long tam anyway."

"Will you take me to see the other women, Harold, before we go to bed?" said Helen with another little shiver.

"You are surely not afraid with such a body of troops around you, Mrs. Manning?" queried the Colonel.

"Not a bit, Sir George," was her answer, and she turned upon him a face that showed no trace of fear, "but I want to visit the women a few minutes and see how they fare."

"By jove, we are blest with having such a woman with us!" said the Colonel to the little crowd about him, as the two moved away. "It gives us a bit of civilization right in the woods; and God knows we need it. She's a treasure, and you men must do what you can for her."

"We will all do that, sir," was the hearty response.

Helen found the women seated on a log with their husbands beside a fire near the middle of the men's quarters. They, too, were discussing the wolf question.

"Just listen!" exclaimed Mrs. Hardman in alarm. "There must be twenty of 'em. They might come to us when there is such a lot."

"Let 'em come," said Mrs. Bond, tossing her head. "What's twenty wolves agin two 'undred men?"

"That's not it," said the other woman. "They're such sneaks. They say they can squeeze into any 'ole. I wouldn't want one of them beasts in my bunk for a bed-fellow."

"You need not be alarmed," said Lieutenant Manning. "There will be a fire in front of each camp all night, and plenty of men on guard. If the women are afraid though, Corporal, it might be better to put in a few more stakes to block up the bunks more thoroughly."

"P'raps it would. We'll attend to it, sir." And the two men went off to cut the stakes and put them in place.

Helen remained with the women a little longer, while Harold crossing over to speak to the Colonel, told him of Mrs. Hardman's alarm. Sir George laughed. Nevertheless, he gave the final order to double the guard for the night, with relief every two hours instead of three. At ten o'clock the bugle sounded the men to bed.

The large fires in front of the camps made them warm and comfortable; and in another hour the whole camp was still, while the guards on duty stood and lounged around the blazing fires.

Silence and quietude reigned supreme, save for the crackling of the faggots and the howling of the wolves. For a time the sounds were very distant, seemingly miles away.

Hour after hour passed by. Snuggled beneath the blankets the men and women were sleeping. Suddenly the howling, which had been circling in the distance the whole of the night, concentrated in one direction, and gradually the sounds grew louder and the tones clearer.

Captain Cummings, knowing that the drivers would be familiar with the country and the habits of the animals, had arranged for two of them to take part with the pickets on each watch. This time both Bateese and Pat were on duty.

"Sacre! de dem wolf comin' straight for us," exclaimed the former.

"Be jabbers! They're on a bee line down the Truro-road," added Pat. "In foive minutes the howlin' pack 'll be on us as sure as shootin'. Pile on the dry pine, boys," he called out in a higher key. "Whin ther's a big pack and a cowld night, it'll take a tremendous fire to keep the spalpeens from sessling right into us."

"We'd better call out the men," suggested a private.

"Holy Peter! we must call the drivers too, or the horses 'll be afther a stampede," was the answer.

But both drivers and soldiers had heard the wolves and were up. Captains Cummings and Payne and Sir George, too, were already out, and the men, many of them only half dressed, with guns in their hands came tumbling after them.

"We may as well see the end of this," cried the Colonel.

"Heavens! Yonder they come," shouted Cummings; and at the top of the long incline, leading out of the valley, a dark, surging mass could be seen clearly in the moonlight.

On they came straight down the road, filling the air with unearthly yells. Some in the centre were on a steady run; others at the side scampered irregularly to the right or left; while a few young and lanky fellows leapt madly over the backs of others in order to get to the front.

"Quick, men! Rifles ready," called out Cummings, as the men got into position before the unusual foe. The wild rush of the wolves was checked as they neared the blazing fires. Still, as Pat said, "Numbers made them bould." There were more than a score of the hungry brutes; and the sight of fire was not enough to divert their attention from horses and men that they saw within their reach.

As they struck the camp they set up a more terrific howl than ever, and made a sort of momentary halt. The leaders, a couple of huge fellows, turning grey with age, seemed in a quandary whether to turn to the right or to the left. Then they made a rush toward the riflemen who stood nearest, and the whole pack came on.

"Fire!" cried the Colonel.

One of the old greys dropped and several others with him. With a cowardly yell the animals veered; but it was only for a moment. Then, some savagely turned on their fellow-comrades to tear them limb from limb, while others scattered to right and left. Again the men fired, and then charged with fixed bayonets, rushing on the animals with cold steel.

By this time the whole force was roused, and clinching their guns appeared on the scene. But brief as it was, the battle was almost over. A number of the wolves were killed, some were wounded and others, still unhurt, retreated into the forest; while one or two, surrounded by the bayonets of the men, made a wild dash through the camp for the woods on the further side.

Helen did not go to sleep early that night. The excitement of the day's travel, together with the new conditions, had unsettled her nerves. Consequently, a couple of hours passed away before sleep came, and then troubled dreams marred her rest.

The mad yells of the wolves as they neared the camp awoke both her and Harold. With a suppressed scream, Helen clutched her husband as he sprang up to don his outer-clothing. Then came the fire of the first shots.

"Don't leave me," she pleaded, in momentary terror. "What if a wolf should squeeze in between the poles!"

"No fear of that, dearest," he answered, pulling on his boots and tunic in less time than it takes to tell. "But I won't leave you. There has been no general call for the men as yet."

"The only way in or out is through that passage," she cried, calm again, and busy dressing while she spoke. The shooting continued and the shouts of the men grew louder, while there was less yelling of the animals. Then came a wild hurrying and stampeding around the camp. Harold had stuck a lighted candle in a crotch and a brace of pistols in his belt. In another moment he was ready for anything.

"What's that?" exclaimed Helen with a wild shout.

Harold turned instantly, and by the dim light saw that the slabs at the entrance were being wriggled.

"By heavens, it's a wolf!" he shouted, and almost without taking aim he fired one of his pistols at the head of a monster which was squeezing between the poles. The bullet grazed his shoulder, but with a gruesome howl and snapping jaw he continued forcing himself into the narrow cell. Helen, shrinking to the further end, seized a dirk from the sheath in which it hung, while Harold fired his second pistol. This time the ball passed through the wolf's neck into his body. Still he was not killed, and snapping savagely he floundered into the room.

Then came the life and death struggle between Harold and the wolf. With his empty pistol he struck him a fierce blow upon the head, while the wolf's teeth clutched the young man's leg.

"Quick, the knife," he gasped, and like a flash the dirk was buried in the brute's heart. The jaws relaxed. The leg was free again and the huge wolf rolled over.

The candle was still alight as Harold staggered, a gory spectacle, to his couch. Helen, too, was trembling and spotted with blood. Bravely she had faced it all and had not swooned.

"How terribly he has bitten you!" she cried with quivering lips.

"Only a scratch," was his answer. But the shots and Helen's screams had been heard, and the poles were being forced aside. Sir George, the Doctor, Cummings and others had come to the rescue.

"What in heaven's name have you here?" cried the former in consternation as, in putting his head in, he almost fell over the body of the dead animal.

"We've been entertaining a wolf," Harold gasped.

"And he's been trying to kill my husband," Helen added, bravely keeping back the tears.

"You're not dead yet, though," exclaimed the Doctor. "Can you stand up, old man?"

"Certainly I can." And Harold, spattered with blood, rose to his feet. "The rascal nipped my leg, though. Perhaps you had better look at it, Doctor."

"Come outside then, if you can walk." He managed to reach the blazing fire, followed by Helen. And there the Doctor dressed the wound.

When the other men dragged out the dead animal before putting the place to order again, they were amazed at their discovery.

"Why, it's the big she-wolf!" Cummings exclaimed. "The mate of the old grey that was shot. What a desperate fight Manning must have had!"

"And his wife," echoed Sir George. "The wonder is that she retained her senses at all."

Harold's hurt was not a severe one. Fortunately it was but a dying snap, and the blood on his clothes was from the wolf. So he cleaned and changed them; and Helen with water and sponge refreshed herself too. Half an hour later they returned to their own wigwam. But the men had not been idle. They had made it over again; and they found their bunk as good as new. So after each had taken a glass of old wine, which Harold had fortunately brought with him, they once more retired to rest. The outside guards were changed, and soon the men of the troop were trying to sleep again, in preparation for the next day's march.

CHAPTER XV.

Notwithstanding the exciting disturbances of the night, to both men and beasts, the troops were up by daylight. Breakfast was over, the camp was struck, and all were ready to march before the sun in the clear winter sky was much above the horizon. During the last of the preparations, Helen, wrapped in her furs, was seated on a log by one of the fires. While waiting for Harold she was busy jotting down notes in a scrap book that lay on her knee.

"Well, dearie!" he exclaimed, as he joined her with a slight limp. "We start in ten minutes. Are you quite ready? But what is this you are doing?"

"Just scribbling a bit," she replied. "Commencing my diary. And how is the leg? It must hurt you."

"Only a little. The Doctor has dressed it again. He says it is a mere trifle. The thick folds of my trousers saved me from a bite that might have been serious. So you are turning historian, are you? Commencing, I suppose, with a thrilling tale of adventure."

"Last night's experience should be thrilling enough to make a record of, don't you think?" was her answer.

"Well, yes; if you only put it down right. You should commence with an account of the brave lady who, without fear, seized a dagger and by her dexterity saved the life of her husband."

"What do you take me for? Any more nonsense like that?"

"There is no nonsense about it, my dear. Where would I have been but for you? Both my pistols empty, clutched by a big wolf, and no knife within reach until you handed it to me. No, my dear Mrs. Manning, you were veritably your husband's preserver. Put it down quick, for we have scarcely a minute to lose."

"It is too late," she returned with grave perspicacity. "The first chapter is closed. What I have writ, I have writ, and there's the end o't." And closing her scrap book she opened her reticule to put it in.

"But my brave lady," he cried. "My heroine of the midnight battle, won't you let me see what you have writ?"

"That is a question," was her laughing answer, putting her bag behind her back.

"Why so?" he asked.

"Because——"

"Because what?"

"Because you shouldn't see anything I put down. I just thought I would write a bit each day until we get to Penetang; but there are things which a woman would not want to tell to a man, even her husband."

"I never thought of that," he replied gravely. "Still, there may be truth in it."

"I don't want to be mean, Harold," she said relentingly, handing him the scrap book. "Read it this time, but please let me write what I want without showing it to you again, until we reach Penetang anyway. I promise that you may read the whole of it then if you insist."

"Well, I agree," he replied, stooping to kiss her. "Writing letters to nobody with nobody to read them."

"Who else should read them but the nobody for whom they were written," was her laughing response.

The horses were harnessed, but he had still time to glance hastily over the first entry of her diary. It ran thus:

"Shebenacadie, Nova Scotia, Jan., 1814.

"Just three days and nights since we left Halifax. The weather sharp, cold and bright, with scarcely a cloud in the sky at any time, and jolly long drives they have been. We had great fun at a lumber camp on our first day out. A good-natured Scotchman was what they call 'Boss' and he made it very pleasant for us. He gave us an excellent dinner and was very gallant to us all, but he tried to be funny, too. For instance, he told me it was lucky I was not going to stay in Nova Scotia, for if I did, I would become a 'blue-nose' like the rest of the women, for I was catching the disease already.

"I laughingly repudiated the charge and told him it was a calumny upon the Nova Scotia women, for their noses were all a natural color.

"'My dear woman,' he replied, 'I'm no daft. Their noses are all blue, but for the sake of effect they just paint 'em pink.'

"The Doctor heard him and shook with laughter, while Mr. Mackenzie reiterated: 'Fact, madame, fact! When you come back jess ask Mrs. Mason and she'll tell you.' I feel sure he was joking, although my nose was a little blue at the time from the extreme cold. Still the 'Boss' is a fine specimen of his race; rough, generous and warm-hearted. I wonder if he has a wife. If not the sooner he gets one the better, for like Harold he could make a woman happy.

"That afternoon we passed an Indian camp. Some of the redskins were armed, and as there were a lot of them, and only a few of us in sleighs, it didn't seem safe, until we had driven on and they had shouted their last 'Qua.'

"But the horror of all was last night, only three or four hours before dawn, where, if it had not been for a providential candle, Harold would have been killed. Oh, that blessed candle! I have stowed it away already among my most valuable belongings in commemoration of the event. The fiendish eyes of that gaunt wolf made my blood run cold as he wriggled through the bars into our camp. Harold shot him twice with his pistols and afterwards stabbed him to the heart with his dagger; still he could not have done it but for that little candle which he had stuck between the branches before the fight began. What a terrible scene it was! When Harold and the brute were locked together and the blood spurted all over, I felt sure that it was Harold's. I almost fainted. But somehow I just wouldn't. So I grabbed hold of the wolf's leg and helped to roll him on his back. It was all the help I could give. The whole thing was horrible to think of. It made my blood curdle. But I don't care so long as Harold is all right. I always knew what a good, true man my husband was, but never before did I know how brave he could be. He's the——"

But here the record broke off abruptly, caused no doubt by the said Harold's arrival. "I wonder how you purposed concluding that last sentence?" he asked with a laugh, as he handed back the

book. "Possibly the dash was merely a happy substitute for something else."

"On second thought I don't think I'll finish it," she said, dryly. "Just leave it for you to conjecture."

"And am I to read no more chapters?" he asked.

"Not even one," she replied, nodding her head. "A woman's fiat is like the law of the Medes and Persians—it cannot be altered."

"So be it," he assented, while he helped her into the sleigh. "I shall restrain my curiosity until the manuscript is finished. But woe betide you if you do not let me read it then." And they both laughed.

The next moment the bugles sounded, the sleighs and troops were already in order, and on the word of command the journey was resumed.

Helen's diary continued.

"Camp, — miles northwest of Truro, Jan'y —, 10 p.m., 1814.

"I thought I would write a little in my diary every day when I commenced, but here, on the very start, I have missed a day already. Perhaps it was because Harold, on account of the wolf's bite, has been with me ever since. To-day it has been terribly cold, and I was afraid he might be worse, but thank heaven he is not. The roads are still good through this mountainous region, and without many drifts either. Bateese pretends to be disgusted. He says they are not worth a 'tam,' for he has been doing his best to find a drift to camp in ever since we started. So we laugh and tell him it is foolish to despair.

"Last night we were on the lookout for wolves again. We sat on logs around the camp fires until quite late listening for them; but there was not a single howl. We did hear something, however, that was at least more amusing. The men had made our little camp comfortable for us, and Harold and I were having a chat by ourselves before turning in for the night. Perhaps I felt moody again in the still air and deep solitude of the woods. It was so new and strange to me—so different from anything I had ever experienced.

"Suddenly we heard singing in the habitants' camp. The drivers were seated around their own fire and listening to Bateese. I wonder if I can remember the words of the quaint little song. It ran something like this:

Ma luffly gal she ees so neat,
She be ma femme come by-am-bye;
She ope her leetle mouf so sweet
An' all de day sing lullaby.

Ven she vas baby dress in print,
Her petite nose vas vide an' pug,
So dat it make her eyes go squint
Ven she shut up her leetle mug.

Her arms so short, her feet so long,
Dey make you tink of kangaroo;
Still, mon devoir, I sing ma song
An' tell de story all to you.

But she so fair, her hair like gold,
Her bref is like de rose to smell;
An' vat care I for tings I told,
I luff dat leetle gal so well.

An den who cares vat people say?
Mon Dieu! e'en d'ough de night owls sing,
It ees no mattare. Ve'll be gay
An' Cure'll marry us in spring.

"Then the men laughed and we laughed too. Somehow it roused my spirits, and I liked Bateese all the better for singing his foolish little ditty."

Diary continued.

"Miramichi River, New Brunswick, 240 miles from Halifax, Feb. —, 1814.

"I intended to write in my diary every day when I started, but, 'The best laid schemes of men and mice gang aft a'glee.' Several weary days have gone since I used my pencil last. I was more than half sick and did not feel like writing. But now I am better; so start anew and will try to keep it up. Harold has been very good to me; and so have the Doctor and the Chaplain, and the Colonel and everybody. Still travelling twenty miles a day, no matter how you feel, is no joke, particularly when you have to camp out in improvised shanties every night, no matter how intense the cold. Two of the days it stormed furiously and Bateese had all he could do to keep our sleigh from upsetting in the drifts. Some of the others did go over much to their discomfort, and we began to prize Bateese all the more for his dexterity, even if he does brag a bit. When the blast was the

keenest both the women got their noses frozen. That was two days ago, and their driver discovered it just as we stopped to camp for dinner.

"By gar!" he cried out vehemently, 'de vemen's noses bot' be friz.'

"Bateese dropped his lines into Harold's hands and almost with a bound reached the other sleigh. Then the two men commenced at once to rub the frozen noses with snow, much to the disgust of the women. But opposition was useless. It was the right thing to do, and at the same time a rare joke to the Frenchmen who continued to jabber their patois.

"Be quiet now, Femme Bond,' cried Bateese. 'You no want your nose drop off.'

"Ardman never look at 'im femme again wid big hole in him face," yelled the other. "Old steel I say.'

"The women realized the truth and slowly the white ivory hardness of the two noses disappeared, and they became red and soft again.

"Dey must cover de face wid wraps all de rest of de day" was Bateese's parting injunction as he left them to return to his own sleigh.

"We are lucky in having Bateese for a driver. He is usually so amusing with his stories. At first we used to believe all he said. Now we discriminate, and laugh at his tales about bears and things as heartily as he does himself. Speaking of Bruin reminds me that I saw wild bears for the first time yesterday. Harold was with me. The Colonel's sleigh, as usual, was just in front of ours; and as our horses slowly ascended a steep hill on the curve, we saw a big black bear, with two little cubs some months old, sitting on her haunches right in the road—a most unusual thing, for bears as a rule hibernate during the winter.

"Sir George's horses reared, while the men in his sleigh picked up their guns and fired. The old bear dropped, but the little ones were not hurt, and instead of running away they cuddled beside their dead mother. Such a pitiful sight! Some of the men clamored to keep the cubs for mascots; and the habitants declared that the journey would be lucky if they did. I was glad when the Colonel gave his consent, for I hated the idea of killing the cunning little things; and if left without their mother they would surely die. So some stayed behind to skin and dress the bear, for it was so much added to our larder; and also to fix a box to put the little cubs in. Funny, too, that this should happen on what they call 'Bear-day.'

"And last night we had roast bear for supper. It has a strong taste, but as I am getting well, and hungry again, I relished it as a change from our regular diet.

"Harold was telling me afterwards that one of the cubs is a male and the other a female; and that the two companies are to have one apiece. The funniest part of it is that they christened them both with singaree—one to be called Helen and the other Manning. I knew the officers were very kind, but I never suspected that the soldiers cared a button for me. Pshaw! There's a tear on my paper. I wonder where it came from?"

CHAPTER XVI.

HELEN'S DIARY CONTINUED.

"R estigouche River, Feb. —.

Four more days' journey without writing a line: and then the long, long nights. The same old story; riding all morning, then helping the women to fix things for dinner in the woods. Then riding all afternoon till nearly sundown, followed by the excitement and turmoil among the men, in building camps for the night. It is a strange life to lead. Three weeks since we left Halifax, and only once inside a house during all that time. Just think of it. Camping in the woods among the hills every night no matter how it snows or how it freezes. Still, as long as it has to be, the woods are better than an open plain; and the denser, the kinder, for they break the cold winds from the icy northland. There is always a big fire before each shanty when we retire for the night; but after you get into bed, the sighing of the winds through the trees of the forest sounds very weird. Down in the valley where the men pitch the tents may be still; but away in the tops of the tall pines, a whole legion of elves are sounding their harps and scampering through the branches. How often when you lie still with eyes wide open, waiting for sleep that will not come, you can see the glittering stars through the chinks above you, while the fairy imps go by in myriads, blowing their tiny whistles and twanging their lutes in tune to the elfish music of the night. By-and-bye, tired nature whiles you to the silent land; but the dirge goes with you even to the world of dreams.

"Then by the break of day the bugle sounds. Up you start to make a crude toilet. You stow away your little bits of goods and chattels, eat your breakfast of biscuit and bacon and tea, and while

men are tearing your bunk to pieces and packing it for the journey, you in turn take your place in the caravan, counting the days of the fathomless past and the inevitable days of the future.

"But how lucky it is that there are incidents to note. It keeps one thinking, so I watch the officers and men in their strange methods. Sunday, Monday and Saturday are alike to them; except that the Chaplain holds a short service after breakfast every Sunday morning. Just as battles are fought more frequently on Sunday than any other day, so soldiers when marching want to cover more ground on that day than any other. I wonder if it is because they want to follow our Saviour's teaching?

"Then all seem to have forgotten the past. They live in the actual present. Even the Chaplain, whom one would expect to find as grave as a judge, is, I verily believe, the jolliest man in the whole party. He doesn't seem to have a single care. One day as we halted for dinner, a big black squirrel got cornered among some logs; and he was the first to jump from his sleigh to try and catch him. Of course others followed to join in the chase. But the squirrel was not to be caught, and he chirped merrily as he scampered up a beech tree. Captain Cummings was for shooting him.

"'Let the poor beggar alone,' cried the Chaplain with a hearty laugh. 'When we run it's our fun, when he runs it's his.'

"Another time when it was his turn to ride in our sleigh, I happened to say as we neared the camping ground that I would dearly love to have venison for supper again.

"'Do you hear that, Bateese?' he cried to the driver, giving him a punch in the back. 'Madam says she won't eat a bite of supper unless you provide her with venison steak.'

"I looked at him in astonishment; but before I could speak, Bateese exclaimed:

"'All right, Padre, we'll get it, me an' you. 'Alf hour early dis time. Bateese know place well. Pat tend horses, you bring rifle, an' come wid me. Sacre! Big fonne.'

"'It's a go,' replied the Chaplain, and jumping from the sleigh, he had a word with the Colonel. In another minute he was back again.

"'And what shall be your choice, Madam?' was his question. 'Rump steak, devilled kidneys, or sirloin?'

"'When you shoot your deer, Chaplain, I will tell you,' was my laughing answer, for I had not the remotest idea that the suggestion would be carried out.

"But in another minute, Mr. Evans and Bateese, each with a rifle over his shoulder, plunged into the forest along the winding of the Wapskeheden river. I was almost sorry then over my suggestion, for I did not know what might happen before they returned, and, woman-like, felt nervous. Half an hour later when the sun was setting, and the trees beginning to snap and crack with the frost of the coming night, we heard a couple of shots, but they were far away.

"'They've found their game at last,' said Sir George. 'I suppose Bateese is a good shot, though I never heard of the Chaplain distinguishing himself in that line.'

"'He was one of the crack men of the 91st before he was transferred to the 100th,' said Captain Payne, who with Harold joined Sir George and myself as we stood by the fire.

"It was pretty dark before the hunters returned. When within hailing distance they shouted for help. Then all came in together dragging a big buck by the horns.

"'Who shot him?' was the general question.

"'Oh, de curé he be goot shot,' said Bateese.

"'I hit his shoulder, but Bateese put a bullet through his heart,' said the Chaplain. 'Now, Madam,' he continued, turning to me, 'what is your answer to my question.'

"'Venison steak from the breast,' I answered at random, not knowing one part from another.

"'Because it is nearest the heart, and deer-heart at that. But I think you'll try the rump too,' and he went off to give his orders to the cook with a ringing laugh.

"One gets one's eyes strangely opened on a trip like this. I don't know that meeting so many men, and none but men, is good for one, either. When you come in such close touch with them day after day, you find them so different from each other; and so different too, from what you expected them to be. Sometimes I feel startled, turning with open arms to Harold, my one rock of defence. And yet it is needless and foolish to feel so. They are all so good and kind and yet so free and easy, that I feel like drawing myself together and being alert for hobgoblins that never come. They say 'the witches we dread most are those we never meet.'

"Still there is one man in Harold's company that I don't like, even if he is his captain; four times during our journey has he ridden by my side for the afternoon drive, and each time I liked him less. He is a bachelor; and it is not that he does or says anything that is offensive, but there is an insinuating way about him that I cannot bear. There is not a more courteous or polite man in the two companies; but then there does not seem to be any sincerity in what he says. He laughs at religion, and, in a cynical way, scoffs at what he calls the mock pruderies of the world. I never

went a great deal into society; the sorrows of my girl-life prevented me; but I don't like to have my respect for what I do know dragged in the dust. I do wish the Colonel would not put him with me again. Still, I would not have it known that I dislike him. It would make my position more uncomfortable, and, what is more, might do Harold harm. A feud between the captain and lieutenant of the same company over the wife of one of them, might be romantic, but could never be pleasant. What is more, we have a long future before us, five or six weeks or more before we can arrive at our journey's end. I almost shiver at the thought of it. But that won't do. I must brave it out. If faint heart never won fair lady, neither did timid woman ever bring a villain to her feet. Fortunately no one will ever see this screed but Harold, and not even he till we get to Penetang, unless my position becomes unbearable. Perhaps if I had a lady friend with me I would not even have writ it down.

"Lake Temiscouata, Lower Canada, Feb. —"

"For the last two days we have been travelling due west, almost close to the northern limit of the States. On this account Sir George has kept the troops and sleighs together. Indian scouts have been sent to the south and front, and we have been travelling more slowly, to be prepared for any surprise.

"Runners came in yesterday from the border with the message that the American forces are at least a hundred miles away, and that there is no prospect of fighting again before the spring opens. I think our men were a little disappointed. This is the nearest to the United States that they will be during all their journey to Lake Huron; and they would like to have at least one fight just to show their pluck. I believe Harold in his heart is as keen for action as they are; but on my account he expresses himself the other way. For my part I am glad to hear that the Yankees have the good sense to keep to their own side of the lines.

"For the last three nights, we three women, Mrs. Bond, Mrs. Hardman and myself, have had houses to sleep in—actual houses. Settlers' log shanties with board floors; each time with a big log fireplace at one end of the living room. Oh, it was a luxury to sit down on wooden chairs at the clean pine tables again; to eat our supper of mush and milk and buckwheat pancakes; and our breakfast of pork and potatoes, wheaten cakes and molasses! Then we sat down together just like sisters. There was no distinction in the backwoodsman's shanty. We were too glad to get even a glimpse of civilization again to think of hair-splitting distinctions; and whether we did it outwardly or not, I am sure we inwardly thanked God for supplying our wants so comfortably on these two happy nights. There was a strong resemblance in the cabins, although they are more than twenty miles apart. Each has the Scotchman's "ben-place" to sleep in, partitioned off from the ordinary living room. On the first night the two beds occupied by the settler, his wife and children were vacated for our use, while the family, with generous hospitality, slept on the floor in the larger room. Last night the conditions were very similar, and again I had a bed to myself. These homely people have a warm place in my heart, and I shall never forget their unselfish kindness.

"This must be a pretty spot in the summer time. Our officers' and soldiers' camp is on the banks of the Temiscouata. High hills all around and little lakes throughout the region. They say they are full of fish; and through holes in the ice, our men this morning caught a lot of pickerel and bass for breakfast. But we women in the cabin were quite satisfied with the good things that the Scotch housewife provided.

"To-day, as well as yesterday, I left some silver behind me, but it was interesting to see the perversity with which the good housewife persisted in declining it. If her husband had been present, his canny Scotch nature would no doubt have been more reasonable.

"'Guid sakes, misses,' said our hostess, 'I dinna want no siller. Ye are aye welcome to the bit I gie ye, an' tho we never see the color o' English shillin's in these parts, I willna take them frae ye for the wee pickle ye've taen.'

"Notwithstanding all my urging, the woman kept her hands behind her back. So I rolled the money up in a piece of paper and laid it on a little shelf by the wall. This time there was no demur, and with a friendly smile she bade me 'guid-bye an' a safe journey through them awfu' woods.' While I was speaking to our hostess the women slipped away to be with their husbands for a minute before starting; and Harold came for me as I left the house.

"'It is my turn to march this morning, dearie,' he said, 'so Captain Cummings will take my place.'

"'But in the afternoon I shall have you to myself,' I returned, restraining my annoyance as much as I could. 'Still, why Captain Cummings this time? He was with me only day before yesterday.'

"'You see, dear, you have them in order.'

"'Scarcely that, I have had neither the Doctor nor the Chaplain for four days,' I replied in a low voice. I felt like rebelling, but was afraid of arousing Harold's suspicion.

"'I did not think of it in that way, sweetheart,' he exclaimed, while he laughingly raised my chin. 'Possibly as captain of our company, he expects greater privileges. You don't dislike him, do you?'

"'Why should I?' I replied, while carefully buttoning my fur coat. 'He is always polite. Perhaps I am getting a little bit tired of these long drives. But I musn't grumble. How long will it take to reach Quebec?'

"Several days yet, but Sir George has promised us two or three to rest when we get there. Keep your heart up, dearie. I expect we can secure houses for you to sleep in after this all the way through to Montreal. Good-bye till I see you at noon.'

"The sleighs were drawn up near the door, and the next minute Captain Cummings joined me.

"'This is an unexpected pleasure,' he remarked as he tucked the robes around me. 'Sir George wanted to have a special talk with Beaumont this morning about surgical matters, so he requested me to take his place. There, are you quite comfortable?' he asked, solicitously.

"'Yes, thank you,' I replied. 'Do we march with the men to-day or go ahead?'

"'On ahead,' was his answer. 'We shall be close to the U.S. boundary line for another day yet, but as they have never had troops in this region, the Colonel thinks we are perfectly safe in leading the way. We are off on the trot already.'

"The road here was smooth, and Sir George's sleigh was spinning ahead of us.

"'Still, it would be alarming to be attacked, with the soldiers miles behind us,' I remarked.

"'Even if they did,' said the Captain, 'unless the forces were very strong, we could defend ourselves until the men came up. Every man of us is well armed.'

"'That may be,' I volunteered, 'but what of the women?'

"'Oh! the chivalrous Englishmen will always protect them,' was his laughing rejoinder, as he extended his gauntleted hand, seemingly with the intention of placing it over mine. But, suddenly feeling the chilliness of the air, I withdrew it beneath the buffalo robe.

"'It is good of you to say so,' I said, 'our officers are always both gallant and brave.

"'I am glad you have such infinite faith,' he returned with a light laugh.

"'Why shouldn't I have? They say there are none truer than the men of the Hundredth in the whole of the King's brigades.'

"'Quite true, and pray God that their history may never be tarnished.'

"Then with a piercing look he relapsed for a time into silence. The road was well beaten, winding in and out among the hills, and occasionally stretching in a direct line over the frozen surface of a lake. Sometimes a ravine would be crossed or a steep hill climbed; and as we neared Temiscouata, Mounts Lennox and Paradis loomed up before us. More than once smoke curled upward among the distant trees, indicative of the wigwams of Indians or the cottages of settlers.

"Little of interest occurred, however, until near noon; when suddenly an Indian, whom Bateese said belonged to the Ottawa tribe, bounded out of the woods and rushed up to the Colonel's sleigh. The whole line at once called a halt, and Sir George signalled for Captain Cummings to join him. I could see from the faces that something serious had occurred, and that the discussion was one of more than usual significance.

"But I must break off here, for I have not the heart nor the time to tell the rest of the happenings of that terrible day. Perhaps I can later. We shall see."

CHAPTER XVII.

"**T**his Indian brings a bit of genuine news," said the Colonel to Cummings. "An attack is to be made upon us at Chestnut Hill, two miles west of here."

"An attack by whom?" the Captain asked.

"By a company of recruits made up of Yankees and disaffected Canadians from the lumber camps. They have heard that we are a squad of soldiers taking supplies to Quebec, and have undertaken to surprise us and capture the booty."

"They will have their hands full," said Cummings.

"That's what they are aiming at," chimed the Chaplain, with whom negative virtues were always at a discount.

"We'll fill more than their hands," sternly responded the Colonel, as he turned to Cummings. "You had better send orders to Captain Payne to join us in full force with all possible speed."

In the meantime Sir George called a halt where they were. The place was well sheltered, and could readily be protected against attack. He also sent scouts forward to ascertain the strength and equipment of the invading force, with instructions to report as soon as possible.

But another Indian runner had carried the news to the marching force, and very soon a messenger arrived from Captain Payne. The soldiers were crossing Pecktawick Lake, only a mile away, and would be with them immediately. In a few minutes the men of the two companies were in sight, coming out on a double quick from a turn in the road.

Sir George acted with alacrity; not a minute was lost. In a few brief words he explained the situation and gave his orders. Then the men marched ahead—a small, well-stationed force being left to protect the women and sleighs.

On their way they met the returning scouts with the news that the invaders numbered about a hundred rough-looking, but well-armed fellows.

It was a bold move for a company of recruits to attempt to arrest the march of double their number of veterans, notwithstanding the rich booty at stake. Presumably, however, they did not know the strength of their opponents, and the prize that might be obtained was a tempting one.

Sir George now divided his force into right and left flanks, with central attack. Payne to take the former, and Cummings the latter; each to push his men quickly over the hard snow, while Sir George himself led the main force over the beaten road.

After arranging details, the Colonel gave the final order.

"We must carry the hill, no matter what it costs. The centre to do the first firing, then the flanks. Now, right and left, march!"

The men had been under steady tramp for hours, the last half-mile on the run, and were going into action without food; but they were eager for the fray. Allowing the flanks to advance first, on account of the density of the woods and the unbroken snow, Sir George led on his men.

A quick march brought them to the foot of the hill, and on the top could be seen a number of blue coats and peaked hats bobbing among the trees. Sir George at once widened out, but it was none too soon, for a volley of bullets whistled through them. Two or three of his men dropped, and among them Corporal Jenkins. Lieutenant Smith, too, had his arm disabled.

"By heaven, this is too much!" exclaimed Sir George. "They shall pay for it. Double quick; but not a shot must be fired till I give the order."

The men, scattering wide of each other among the trees, hurried on; while orderlies took charge of the dead and wounded.

The Yankees, stimulated by the success of their first shot and meeting with no response, hurried to the edge of the hill to fire again. Then came Colonel Head's command:

"Halt, fire!"

The aim was well taken. The heavy storm of bullets riddled the men of the attacking force, and some of them fell. Almost at the same moment volleys were fired from the right and left flanks. The combined attack was a surprise and staggered the Southerners.

"Quick, charge!" cried the Colonel. Then the men bounded forward. The irregularity of the ground, the up-hill work, the trees and the snow prevented precision of movement, but with a shout the order was obeyed. Finding themselves hemmed in on three sides by a larger and better equipped force than their own, the Americans fired another volley and, picking up some of their wounded, beat a retreat.

It was Captain Cummings who commanded the left division, and seeing the direction that the Yankees were taking, he tried to head them off. But the ground was too uneven, and he contented himself with a parting fusilade.

By this time Sir George had reached the summit of the hill, only to find it vacated. On it, however, were several dead bodies, as well as a couple of wounded men whom, in the hurry of retreat, their comrades had deserted. Soon the main body was joined by the flank divisions, and as it was unlikely that the attack would be renewed, the order was given to return to the improvised camp.

In the list of casualties, Corporal Jenkins and a private were killed, while several others, including Lieutenant Smith, were wounded; but it was the loss of Jenkins that grieved his comrades most, for they had not forgotten the death of his wife on the *North King*.

With the bodies of their own men waiting for burial, there was not much mirth at mess that day. Still, they were glad that the fight was over, and that with so little delay they could continue the march. The grave being dug, Jenkins and the dead soldier were sorrowfully consigned by the Chaplain to their last resting-place.

"What about the dead on the hill?" Captain Payne asked of Sir George.

"That's for their comrades to say when we are gone," was his answer.

"But about the prisoner with compound fracture of the leg?" asked Dr. Beaumont. "He's not in good condition to travel even by sleigh."

"Oh, but he must!" exclaimed Sir George. "The man's alive, and we've got to take him, whether we will or no. What of the other fellow and of our own men?"

"Lieutenant Smith is the worst; he has a serious flesh wound of the forearm, but no broken bones. The other Yankee is suffering more from loss of blood than anything else and able to travel if we can find room for him."

"Well, arrange them as best you can, Doctor, but we must start at once. Bateese tells me that there is another lumber camp twelve miles further on our way. Perhaps we can reach it to-night."

"Excellent," returned the Doctor. "We can leave our prisoners there, *et maintien le droit*."

The idea was well received by Sir George and, late as it was, they continued the journey. The sun was already sinking in the west, and it would take hours after dark to reach the camp. Still, the march could be accomplished, for the moon was in its second quarter and all danger of renewed attack was believed to be over. The surprised party of untrained invaders already regretted their rashness, for they realized the strength of their opponents as well as the inutility of following them, as every mile now carried them further into Canadian territory.

So the order was given for the sleighs to again take the lead and report as quickly as possible at the lumber camp of the prospective arrival of the troop.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HELEN'S DIARY.

"The Citadel, Quebec, Feb. —, 1814.

"We arrived at Point Levi two days ago. What a delight it was to be in the vicinity of civilization again! On the other side of the great St. Lawrence was the famous old city. And how glad I was to drive over the frozen river to this haven of rest. The air was keen, for the smooth ice stretched up and down as far as the eye could see, and the wind from the east was very piercing, but we didn't mind that.

"Now, we are all, officers, men and women, as well as horses and baggage, comfortably lodged and quietly resting. And, although tired, I am already getting glimpses of this historic and venerable place. What a fortress, with its massive walls and many gates! What steep ascents! What quaint churches! What a mighty river, stretched though it be in ice!

"Then to think, as I sit here by this high window, far above the crowds and tinkling sleigh-bells of the lower town, that I am just resting on an oasis for a day or two, before setting out over the desert of ice and snow again.

"Even now the last few weeks are like a dream to me. One of those long, disturbed visions, in which you have to, whether you want to or not. Every day a definite number of miles to cover; it mattered not how the snow fell or the winds blew, or how intense the cold; whether you slept beneath pine boughs and could see the stars twinkle above you, or whether you had the luxury of sleeping in a woodsman's shanty; it all had to be endured. Thank heaven, the first division of our journey is over, and our little rest will prepare us for the second.

"Harold tells me that the officers of the Citadel say we have made one of the quickest winter marches on record. There is satisfaction in that, even if we did take a month to do it in. I hear, too, that the Commandant of the Citadel has been congratulating the Colonel on the despatch with which he defeated the invaders at Temiscouata. For my part, I think the less said about it the better. It would be a poor thing if two companies of regulars could not put to flight one of raw recruits. It was too bad, though, to lose two of our best men. Poor Jenkins! What a sad fatality! The mother to die and the father to be killed. The silver lining to the terrible climax is that the children were left at home.

"Oh, I must say a word about Lieutenant Smith! He is such a retiring fellow that I knew little about him, although we had travelled together all the way from the London docks. But after he was shot, our sleigh being very comfortable, I proposed to Harold that he should have a seat with me whenever it was not occupied by himself. The consequence is that I have only had an occasional word with my particular friend, Captain Cummings, since the day of the battle, and not a single drive. I was quietly killing two birds with one stone, though nobody knew it. But Mr. Smith's arm is better now—and, forsooth, we may return to the old order of things—unless some other member of the staff should be similarly unlucky.

"Smith is so young a fellow that I felt like mothering him. Fortunately, it was his left arm, and as I sit on the left side of the sleigh the sore arm was between us, protecting it from the pressure of the buffalo robe and also from the cold. The boy is of good family, has high ideals, and wants to win his way to fame. Just the kind of fellow I would like for a friend. And if I am to make my home in Penetang without a single lady to stand by me, and without relatives either, except my dear husband, I may need a true, disinterested friend some time. Who knows? Yes, and guileless,

gentle, brave Lieutenant Smith, the man who was wounded in our first battle, shall be the man.

"Talking of men, there is some one else I want to take right through with us, and that is Bateese. The jolly, genial, conceited, whimsical, but reliable, habitant. But if we take him we must take his wife also. For days before we arrived here he could talk of little else than his 'femme,' but there was a sad tone about his musical jargon that was unusual.

"'Madame,' he exclaimed one day, after a long silence. 'You not know, Emmiline, mine wife. She live wid me in Kebeck.'

"'I didn't know you had a wife, Bateese.'

"'Oh, oui, married dis two year.' His tone was persuasive.

"'I would like to know her,' I replied.

"'Vell, I will bring her to you. She vas ma fille, bootiful, petite, so young. Den de curé at Kebeck marry us—seem long tam—still only two year. Den she grow into grand jolie femme. Bime-by she have twins—wan garçon, wan wee leetle gal, petite an' putty as you nevare see. Mus' I tell you de story? Eet no laughin', eet sad.'

"'Yes, tell me,' I could not but acquiesce.

"'Oh, sacré!' he exclaimed, giving the lazier horse an extra touch of the whip. 'When de hot summare com, Bateese was away drivin' de carryall along de revare down by de sea, de leetle Emmile go sick and die. An' Emmiline was full of broken heart. Den when de fall came, scarlet fevare steal like de diable after ma leetle Louis—ma cher fils—he die, too. Ah, mon Dieu! Et nearly kill ma femme, an' it drive Bateese clean crazee. Didn't care a sacré if Yankees lick Cannayans—didn't care how soon I die—didn't care for nuffin! But dat no do. Poor Emmiline lay sick four week in bed—Doctor said nevare get well no more. So Bateese shake hisself and forget de dead babies to tend his leetle wife—say his pater nostra ten times a day—go to church every tam de priest tell him, give medicine all de whole tam. And, by gar, she get well at last. Den Bateese had to leave her an' go on dis long trip to Halifax—an' has not seen her again sence wintare cam.'

"'It is a sad story, Bateese, but you will soon see her now. Where does she live when you are away?' I asked.

"'She stay wid her modare, close by de Abraham plain, where de French General de Montcalm licked de Engleese.'

"He said this with a sly glance out of the corner of his eye, but with a very grave face.

"'I thought it was General Wolfe who licked the French,' was my mild rejoinder.

"'Vas eet? mauvais memoree,' he returned, gently tapping his forehead. 'Vell, dey both die, anyway, and bury in de same grave. Et not much mattare which win. French Cannayans steel have Lower Canady and, by gar, dey always will.' And in spite of his grief for his dead babies, he concluded his narrative with a long, low chuckle to himself.

"It was on this occasion the thought came to me, that if Bateese went with us to Penetang, Emmiline might go in place of the Corporal's wife. That would give us three women besides myself. Only a small number at best, and, if necessary, I would be willing personally to bear the expense.

"Well, to-day she came up to see me, and I was quite taken with the little French woman. She has a sweet face with a wee touch of sadness in it, owing to the loss of her children. But it is not a face to retain its melancholy. She has a little turn-up nose, rosy lips and bright black eyes, and, like most of these habitant women, an abundance of dark hair. She looks as though she might be very devoted to any one she liked, and I will speak to Harold about it to-day."

"Quebec, Feb. —, 1814."

"Last night a large party was given in honor of Sir George at the Commandant's residence. Harold and I, and all our officers, were there, the Chaplain as well. What a handsome old place it is, just like an old European castle suddenly planted in the new western world!

"The first person that interested me there was Sir George Prevost, the Governor-General of Canada, the most talked-of man in the whole country. He seems to be such a strange combination of weakness and strength, and little as I know about such matters, the two opposites seem to be vividly impressed upon his face. His kindness and courtesy have a favorable impression upon the social life of which he is the leader; but the weak chin and irresolute mouth tell a different tale when fighting his country's battles, and, lackaday, this has been proved over and over again already.

"But this is something I suppose I have no right to talk about, even to you, my little diary. So I will chat of the old place, of its lofty halls and tapestried boudoirs. What rare old paintings are on the walls, and so many of them French! It was in fine spirit for the English conquerors of this old aristocratic colony, to retain so many of the portraits of the nobles of the French regime.

"While on our voyage I read a good deal about the country that was to be my home, and seeing the names of the old French governors under their pictures only impressed their history more

vividly upon my memory. The strikingly handsome portrait of Baptiste Colbert, Louis the XIV's minister, was there, too. The man who, a hundred and fifty years ago, did so much for New France. How well his picture sets off the east hall near the main entrance! The long, wavy locks of his court headdress well suit the keen, dark eyes and clear-cut features; while the ruffles and sword, and gaiters depict him every inch the courtier as well as the gentleman.

"De Mezy, De Tracy, De Courcelles and Count de Frontenac, the daring discoverer and bitter opponent of the English, were all there. What tales they could tell of the days of the old regime, and of the strife which lasted for years, until Wolfe and Montcalm fought it out at the cost of their own lives and buried the hatchet between the nations!

"The old armor and Indian trophies hanging on the walls of room after room in this old seigniorie are very curious. The peculiar windows, too, quite took my fancy. They are deeply set within the massive masonry, the sills standing three or four feet from the floor, with cushions placed on them to serve as seats, while benches below the sills act as stools for the feet to rest upon.

"How well the élite of Quebec filled the old house that night, although gathered together with such brief notice, and with what pleasantry they greeted us! All seemed desirous to do what they could to help us to forget for the time our journeyings. And they were just as courteous as they were jovial, from our host and hostess down to the youngest of the beaux and belles of New France. The Quebec girls are even prettier than those of Halifax. For one thing, there are more of them, and another, there is a larger French element from the old noblesse, and to me the educated and cultured Canadienne has a charm of her own that is very fascinating.

"Dr. Beaumont seemed to enjoy himself thoroughly. I wonder how much he really cares for Maud Maxwell? Several times he has sat by my side for half a day in our drives, but, to my surprise, he rarely mentioned her name. Being half French I expected his vivacious nature would express itself more freely. Perhaps it was the canny Scotch overshadowing the Southern blood that kept him silent.

"But this time he seemed to have no care. He talks French beautifully, and several times I heard him in animated conversation with one or other of the smiling demoiselles in their mother tongue. He seemed to be enamoured most with one Louise de Rochefort. Several times he danced with her, and she talked the purest English; sometimes they used the one language, and sometimes the other. She was quite different from Maud Maxwell. Although not fair, her face was brilliant with a clear transparency, and her brown eyes and exquisite mouth, when wreathed in gentle laughter, made her expression very winning. She had many admirers, but none were so attentive as he. Late in the evening, when the Commandant took me in to supper, they were tête-à-tête in a corner over salad and ice.

"Harold noticed the little flirtation, too, and said afterwards that it would have a good effect upon the Doctor in compensation for the coolness of the winsome Maud.

"The Commandant's wife was very kind to me. As a strict disciplinarian, she did not try to dissuade me from completing the journey to Penetang; but it was evident that she was astonished that I had undertaken it, and hinted that it would be a wise thing to remain in Quebec until the war was over—almost another Mrs. Mason. If she had known how determined I was she would have said less about it, I am sure.

"Perhaps one-third of the ladies present are Anglo-Canadians. I believe I was introduced to all of them. They are charming—not so stiff and stately as society ladies in England—but just as courteous and, perhaps, kinder in manner. I like them and wish there was a prospect of having at least one as neighbor in my prospective home in Penetang.

"These Canadians, both French and English, take great interest in the war, which is almost at their doors. When not dancing, they continually discussed it. Still, dancing was the feature of the evening, and I must have been specially honored, for I never danced so much in my life before. My first waltz was, of course, with my husband. Then who should ask me for the next but Captain Cummings. It was odious to dance with him when my aversion was so strong. I hope I did not show it, and with all my heart I wish I did not dislike him so much, for he is very graceful and dances beautifully. Still, he looks at you with those great black eyes of his, as if he could read your very thoughts. I wonder if he influences other women as he does me. Of this I have no chance of knowing. Oh, those eyes! How you have to fight them with all your might, and yet never say a word! Somehow the fates have given me a hint to beware, and I pray God to have me take it. I wonder if Harold would laugh at me if he saw what I am writing.

"'It is an exquisite pleasure to waltz with you again,' he said, in his low, penetrating voice, as we made our second circle round the room. I had heard that he was always chagrined when he had a poor partner, so I purposely made a misstep, while I replied:

"'You flatter me. I never was a graceful dancer, and, as you see, I am out of practice.'

"'Pardon me, but that was my clumsiness,' was his comment. 'It will not occur again.'

"And, if anything, he held me closer. I did not dare to repeat the step.

"'Not so tight, please,' I whispered, scarcely a minute later.

"'They have waxed this floor so confoundedly that one cannot help it,' he returned smoothly, and with a smile that rivalled Mephistopheles. 'We must not let these French-Canadians surpass the

English in their own waltz.'

"In a matter of competition they would be sure to win,' I replied coldly.

"Why so?' he asked.

"They are more graceful than we are.'

"Free and easy, you mean. They have an abandon which the English girl does not possess. No, no, Mrs. Manning, I would not exchange a dance with you for a hundred with these Canuck maidens.'

"Again you are flattering.'

"Not in the least. You remember our waltz at the Halifax ball. Well, the one I had with you was worth all the others put together. It will be so to-night, even if this is the only one you honor me with. Ah! it is over now. And here comes that odious little Frenchman to claim you for the next. Bah! I could see him in Hades. But, never mind, I shall remember that to-night you have blessed me with a few minutes' exquisite pleasure.' Again his eyes opened wide, and with a quick flash, the look seemed to penetrate my soul. An unpleasant thrill came over me and turning away I accepted the arm of Colonel Joquelin for the next waltz."

CHAPTER XIX.

HELEN'S DIARY.

"M ontreal, Feb. —, 1814.

"Another week of hard driving and marching is over. Sometimes we had night quarters for the men, always for the officers and women. Still, I was so tired each night, and there were so many little things to attend to, that my diary has been neglected. Now, however, we are comfortably quartered at the foot of the mountain, and while Harold is away attending to matters of the regiment I will try to make up for lost time.

"I had a long talk with Sir George at the Commandant's on the night of the ball at Quebec, and was delighted at his ready consent to have Emmiline and her husband go with us to Penetang. When he said that she might be my own special servant I offered to pay the expense of the journey for her.

"That cannot be thought of,' was his reply. 'I always intended to secure another woman to take the place of the one who died, and I assure you I am more than pleased that you have found one to suit.'

"It was very kind of him, and the next morning I told the good news to Bateese. In his exuberance of spirits he threw his hat up in the air.

"By gar!' he exclaimed, 'such fonne to have ma femme. She no spik much Angleese, but teach soon she quick—tree or four week she spik everyting goot as Bateese. She bonne scholare an' tak prize when leetle gal at seminare.'

"And so she came, and they made room for her in the sleigh with the other women. I was afraid that the soldiers' wives would quarrel with the little woman, yet, so far, there is not even an inkling of war among them.

"Speaking of war. Montreal is the place for the signs of it. I was surprised to see so many troops in the city, more by far than there were either in Halifax or Quebec, regulars and colonials combined. They are a determined-looking lot of men and well drilled.

"Harold tells me that everything on the frontier is still quiet and, so far, the American General Wilkinson has not renewed his attack. Both sides are making preparations for a final conflict, and it will be fight to the finish when the summer comes.

"Our rest here is going to be short, for we have a third of our journey yet to cover, and, being over the roughest part of the road, it will take longer to accomplish. Lakes and rivers have still to be crossed, and all must be done before the ice breaks up. Hence, although we arrived yesterday, we start again to-morrow.

"To-night, however, we are invited by the officers of the Montreal regiment to a toboggan slide at the mountain, with a supper and dance afterwards. It will be my first ride on one of these swift-running sledges. They look dangerous as they fly so quickly down the hills, but if safe for others they should be safe for me, and I am glad to have the opportunity to try the sport before we make our final parting from civilization."

The next day. Diary continued.

"I must jot down the impressions of last evening while fresh in my mind. The meet was at a place called 'The Cedars,' almost half-way up the mountain, and from which there is an irregular decline down to the St. Lawrence. One of the attractions was that the toboggans, by the long descent, would be carried far out over the surface of the river.

"What a jolly lot of people they were! A score of officers in uniform, a few civilians and a bevy of Montreal's prettiest girls, chaperoned by officers' wives and matrons of the city.

"As an Englishwoman, I am loyal to my own land and people. Still, whether due to the atmosphere, to lighter living, or the freer life they lead, the young ladies you meet here seem to have more spirit, quicker movement and clearer skins than the average English girls that I have known. But this is another digression, Mrs. Diary, and again I say, '*pecavi*.'

"We were lucky to have so good a night. The air was cold and still, and our position at the top of the slide gave a fine view of the lower city, with its myriads of lights from the houses and streets. Countless stars covered a sky only slightly dulled in lustre by the pale, half moon; while on the hillsides far and near clumps of evergreens stood out clearly upon their background of snow.

"Introductions, buzz of voices, gay laughter, occupied some minutes as we collected on the little plateau at the head of the slide. All were busy, too, getting their rigs in order. Toboggans are funny-looking things—flat-bottomed, turned up in front like a South Sea Islander's war canoe. But they are very comfortable when you have cushions to sit on and robes to put over you.

"Captain Thompson, of the Montreal Rifles, was our leader, and one would almost think he was marshalling his troops as he issued his orders.

"Quickly he had us going, and it was jolly enough as soon as we got used to it. Off our toboggans sped, one after another, down the mountain, crackling and whistling over the snow, giving each and all a vivid pleasure in the swift, exhilarating ride. At first the grade was even and smooth in its descent, then undulating, then on a level for another hundred feet, finally down a little abyss, and away for hundreds of yards over the icy surface of the river, between mighty ships frozen at their anchorage for the winter. Here, carryalls for the riders and long sleighs for the toboggans awaited us to take all back again to repeat the sport.

"Harold and I sat together on one of the sledges, and I must confess that when we started to descend the hill at almost lightning speed I felt terribly frightened and grasped him firmly around the waist. He only laughed while he whispered:

"Don't be frightened, dear; you'll get used to it in another minute,' and so I did.

"We had a number of rides and were commencing our last one when an accident happened. It was on the sled in front of ours, and we were in the act of starting when I saw a man fall off.

"Why, that is Captain Cummings!' I exclaimed, my heart making a tremendous leap.

"Yes, it is,' returned Harold; 'what can have happened?' and he rushed over to give assistance.

"He was trying to rise to his feet but could not.

"It's that confounded leg of mine,' I heard him say. 'My ankle got twisted under the runner. I don't think it's broken though. What do you say about it, Beaumont?'

"And the Doctor on his knees examined the joint, the Captain being propped up by another officer.

"No bones broken,' was his comment. 'You must have got a terrible wrench though, the way the joint flaps about. Is it very painful?'

"Excruciating,' returned Cummings. 'The joint has been weak ever since Vittoria. I got it twisted then.'

"Well, we'll take you back to quarters and dress it. No dancing for you to-night, that is certain. Don't know that it will be safe for you to travel with us to-morrow, either.'

"In both of which I differ from you,' said the Captain, with a supreme effort at self-control, notwithstanding the pain. 'Take me back to the hotel and dress the joint. Then help me into the ballroom. I can watch the others even if I cannot waltz. As to going with the troop, why certainly I'll go,' and for a moment he cast a sharp glance in my direction.

"I believe I shivered again.

"An hour later all our party were at the French hostelry partaking of prairie chicken, oyster patties and singaree, and when we made our entry into the ballroom, there sat in state Captain Cummings. He had evidently preceded us. Of course, he was the lion, and the ladies rivalled with each other to sit out the different dances with him. Harold told me I must do it, too, so my turn came with the rest.

"I don't know but I'm a lucky dog after all,' he undertoned, as he squeezed my hand.

"It cannot be lucky to be lame,' I replied, as I sat down beside him.

"A soldier takes his knocks as he gets them,' was his comment, 'but I had no expectation of taking Lieutenant Smith's place so soon.

"Perhaps you won't need to. A night's rest will do wonders, mayhap the injury is more imaginary than real,' I said.

"I know the effects too well to be deceived. The injury is too devilish to heal in a week or fortnight, either,' he replied, drily.

"Why go with us at all, then?'

"Because I'm wanted when I get there. I won't be in anybody's way, except for the riding instead of walking, and as yours is the most comfortable sleigh for an invalid, I fear, dear madam, I must crave your indulgence—Say, Manning!' he exclaimed to Harold, who just then joined us. 'I was telling your wife that Smith gives such a capital report about your sleigh that I feel like begging the privilege of occupying a part of it for the next two or three days.'

"Harold winced and flushed as well. Was he, too, getting suspicious?

"I think that might be arranged satisfactorily, dearie,' he said to me in somewhat constrained tone.

"That depends upon the Captain's meaning,' I replied. 'It would be too much for me to give up your seat when it is your turn to ride. But for the rest of the time it is different.'

"Thank you,' responded Cummings. 'That is exactly what I mean.'

"So in order to secure half a loaf he asked for a whole one, and got it without demur. How could I help it?"

CHAPTER XX.

Dreary enough were the next few days for the adventurous troop, as they wended their way westward. The sky was heavily clouded, while a gusty wind blew the pellety snow into the faces of the men and women as they walked or drove over their destined route. Drifts filled the sleigh tracks, and the packing of the road by those who took the lead was a weary business. Progress was slower than ever, accommodations along the line absent, and general camping again became a feature of the journey.

"What place have we here?" Sir George asked of his new driver on the evening of the fifth day from Montreal as they called a halt in the vicinity of two or three little cabins.

"They call it Sparksville," was the reply, "after a fellow named Sparks. He lives in the village of Hull across the river there. They say he bought it from the Government for a song, and has made his money out of sales already."

"So these shantymen are the owners," said the Colonel.

"No, siree, the lumbermen from Montreal bought from Sparks, these men only cut the timber."

"And splendid stuff they've got if these pieces are samples."

"You bet your last pound," returned the man, with the easy nonchalance of a westerner, "Montrealers wouldn't put their money into it if there wasn't a good chance of getting it out again. What's more, they say this is a splendid site for the building of a big city."

"Are these shanties the only buildings on this side of the river?" Sir George asked.

"Yes, 'cepting a little sawmill down in the hollow and a cabin beside it."

"Well, we'll camp here for to-night. They couldn't accommodate us in yonder village if we did cross."

And so the order was issued.

His men by this time were well accustomed to the oft-repeated duty. Putting up tents, cutting down trees, trimming poles, building temporary huts, flooring them with boughs of cedar, arranging timber and evergreens to protect the inmates from prevailing winds, and gathering dry wood for necessary fires, were matters of detail which they accomplished with alacrity. It was marvellous how neat and cozy a camp the two companies, assisted by the trained drivers, could build in an hour or two of twilight.

Sir George and the Doctor, leaving Cummings in the rig, joined Harold, who was helping his wife out of their sleigh.

"You are not ill, Mrs. Manning, I hope," exclaimed Sir George, who had never before seen her

require so much assistance to alight.

"Just stiff and cold after the long drive," was her answer, as with a sudden effort she straightened herself.

"Madame tired long tam, no let 'em spak," said Emmiline, who on Bateese's example was learning to speak "Angleese quick." She was already attached to her new mistress.

"It is lucky to find houses here, such as they are," said Harold, as he folded Helen's fur coat more closely around her, while he noticed that her teeth were chattering.

"We'll try this shanty," said the Doctor, approaching one. A large dog jumped out as the door opened, barking vociferously, and followed a moment later by a half-breed Indian.

"We have a sick woman with us," said Beaumont, "and want to put her in your cabin for the night."

"No come ma shanty," replied the man, fixing himself squarely across the doorway. "Me trapper—live 'lone."

"Entre nous, mon ami, voila une femme tres malade," returned the Doctor in a more conciliatory tone, "et je vous donnera cinq francs."

"Arjent comptant porte medicine. Oui, oui, monsieur. Entre vous," returned the trapper, slipping to one side and allowing him to enter.

A fire was burning on a rude hearth at one end of the floorless shack, and the ground was packed hard everywhere but around the sloppy doorway. A wooden settle covered with skins stood at one side, while a couple of rough benches, together with a kettle or two, completed the outfit.

By the time the Doctor had made a cursory survey, Harold and Helen, followed by Emmiline, had joined him.

"Will you let me have the whole shanty for to-night if I pay you for it?" Harold asked.

The cunning eyes of the half-breed glanced rapidly over the whole party. Then he answered with a drawl, while he looked quizzically into the officer's face:

"Yah—pour, say five franc, s'il vous plait."

"Well, you shall have it."

"Pay me now."

"No," replied Harold. "I will give two now—the balance in the morning if you tell us all we need to know."

The half-breed shrugged his shoulders, but accepted the money and, after answering several questions, took his leave. Helen sat down on the bench by the fire, but her teeth still chattered, while her blue lips and contracted features indicated the severity of the chill.

"My dear, what can possibly be the matter?" Harold asked in much alarm.

"It is an attack of the ague," said the Doctor; in an aside: "Mon Dieu! it is too bad."

"Can nothing be done?" he asked again.

"Yes, and we'll do it at once. Peruvian bark and brandy are our sheet-anchors."

So he busily prepared a large dose of the medicine, which she washed down with half a glass of brandy and water.

"Fortunately the hut is new, and probably free from vermin," said the Doctor.

"It might be better for the women to sleep here," said Harold. "There will be room enough, and with the fire they can cook what is needed. What say you, Helen?"

"Divide the hut and stay with me. Then it will do," she replied. "We must have a man in the house, even though it is a shanty."

The bark and brandy were taking effect. The chills soon stopped and Helen felt warm again.

Later in the evening a cord was stretched across the long, narrow room, and quilts thrown over it to form a partition. Harold and his wife took possession of the end near the fire, while the three women improvised a bed for themselves in the other half.

"I hope we are not going to have a sick lady on our hands," said Sir George to the Doctor, after his final visit.

"I hope so, too," was the reply. "Ague is difficult to control when once established, but, taken at the start, it can be broken. Fortunately, this is her first attack. She will be better to-morrow."

"Perhaps we had better leave her for a day or two to rest and recuperate. I will speak to Manning about it. What say you?"

"Why not let to-morrow's report decide?" said the Doctor. "I could tell better after seeing her

again."

To this the Colonel assented.

The spot chosen for the camp was well protected, the temperature mild for February, and all slept soundly. The bugle sounded at break of day and the whole camp was astir. It was unusual for the officers to rise as early as the men, but the keynote of Helen's illness roused them, and the first question put by each was concerning the condition of the patient.

Captain Cummings, with a crutch, was hobbling about for the first time, and insisted on swinging along with the Doctor to make inquiry.

The report was favorable. Helen had slept a little. The other women were up, and a good fire was burning.

"How is Madam now?" the Doctor asked of Harold.

"Her head is still aching. You had better see her."

So he led the way behind the screen.

"What about resuming the journey?" he asked, after looking closely into her face.

"By rule, in the army, all must travel, and I have will enough to abide by it," she answered, wearily.

"There is no rule for you unless you are well able to follow it," he returned with a smile.

"But how could I possibly remain behind?"

"You might stay for a time at Hull, across the river."

"That won't do," she exclaimed, the tears starting. "I am better now, and can stand it very well. The worst is that my ears buzz and my head aches, but when out in the air again these will pass away."

"Don't be alarmed about the ears," said the Doctor, cheerily; "that comes from the medicine I gave to stop the chill."

Turning to Harold he had a brief conference with him.

"I have a plan that might answer," he suggested.

"Sir George will do anything that is necessary," returned Harold.

"Well, it is this. The newest sled will hold four people. We can retain it here with the best team. Madam can lie where she is until noon. Then you and I and the driver will remain with her and, starting early in the afternoon, overtake the troops by night."

"Will our separation from the men be safe?" Harold asked.

"Perfectly, monsieur," was the reply. "We might meet a few Indians, but they are all our allies."

"How do you like the plan?" Harold asked of his wife.

"Very well, if you are sure we can overtake the men by night," was her answer, as she closed her eyes again.

"Madam, it shall be done," said the Doctor, and he went out to complete arrangements.

"I hope you have a good report," said Cummings, who was still waiting. Harold told him and then sought the Colonel.

"The idea is an excellent one," said the latter. "Some of our baggage sleighs will also be delayed, for I've given orders to purchase an extra supply of feed for the horses at Hull. Of course during the summer the order is to supply us by the boats on the lakes—all right if the war is over, or if we whip the Yankees—but the other way if they beat us."

Some of the officers were nonplussed. Soldier-like, not bearing responsibility, they had never given the matter a thought, and the suggestion opened up a new difficulty.

"Don't take the thing too seriously, my men," Sir George finally exclaimed with a laugh. "It will come out all right, as everything does with the British soldier whichever way it goes. But I want to take a look at the river from yonder crest for a minute or two while we have time."

"Well!" he exclaimed again, as he cast his eye upon the hamlet on the other side of the Ottawa. "This is the first time I have ever marched *by a town* and camped outside."

"Why not change the name Sparksville^[1] to Bytown, and give that as your reason, sir," suggested Smith.

"Not so bad," replied the Colonel briskly. "A garrison town could be built here, with fortifications, and this dashing river at our feet—providing Hull were in the hands of an enemy."

"Which can never be," put in the Doctor, "unless the French cut loose from the British and the Ottawa divides them."

"In that case we'd build a citadel," said Captain Payne, "and change Smith's Bytown to Out-away, as our command to the enemy."

"Which means," said Sir George, who was amused at the play upon words, "that we'd take the Hull of Ottawa."

"Sacre!" cried the Doctor with a flush, "that could never be. The Lower Province is stronger than the Upper one, and could beat it any day."

"Hoity, toity, man!" exclaimed the Colonel, elevating his eyebrows and smiling good-humoredly at the irate Anglo-Frenchman. "I should not think you would care exceedingly which way it went."

A general laugh followed, and the next moment the bugle sounded.

CHAPTER XXI.

HELEN'S DIARY.

"R"oche Lake, Madawaska River, March —, 1814.

"One hundred miles yet to face over this weary way! Oh, why did I come? Harold is well and strong, and could have done without me; while I am a drag to him and the whole troop besides. It is two weeks since we left Sparksville, or Bytown, as Lieutenant Smith calls it, and I have had that miserable ague, in spite of the Doctor's medicine, every two days since we started. Sometimes I have a funny kind of delirium with it. While it lasts my head buzzes and whirls, and when I walk I feel as if travelling with tremendous speed, and keep looking over my shoulder to see if some hideous object is not chasing me. The sensation is horrible, and the only relief is stillness. Even the motion of the sleigh affects me, no matter how quietly I sit. During those long drives along the Madawaska River the feeling was sometimes terrifying. I stood it while I could. At last Harold spoke to Sir George, and he promised, if I could endure it till we arrived at Roche Lake, to have a shanty built for me in which I could rest until able to finish the journey. The reason he chose Roche Lake was because we would there leave the smooth surface of the ice for heavier marching through the forest.

"It was very good of Sir George. He sent men on ahead to build the shanty, and now here we are, and a cozy cabin they have made of it, although isolated at least a hundred miles away from any other white man's dwelling. But I must jot down how it is built. To my surprise they put in a little window and a heavy board door they were taking out for the new fort. The roof is of split logs laid flat and covered with pine branches, and as it won't thaw for a month there is no danger of the snow melting and running through. The chimney is built of slabs of green timber put across one corner, leaving a hole in the roof; and the sides and back of the fireplace of sheet iron, intended for the smithy. It may be crude, but we women folk—astonishing how clannish the life is making us—find it very comfortable, considering the long nights we have so often spent in the woods with a shelter not quarter so good.

"The journey from Bytown has been very weird to me, owing to my ague. Still, I can remember the facts, I think. After Harold, the Doctor and I started that first afternoon, we drove until nearly dark along the old Jesuit trail before we overtook the men. They were putting up the camp for the night, and had taken special care to provide for my comfort, so that next morning, notwithstanding another chill, I was ready to continue the journey. After that, for three whole days, we were guided by Iroquois Indians, cutting our way through the woods to Calabogie Lake. These red men of the forest are not very picturesque. We saw nothing of their feathers and wampun and war paint. Perhaps that is because we are so far from the frontier, where all the battles are fought. Their dress resembles that of the habitants, and they are proving themselves both friendly and trustworthy. Nearly every day they bring in fresh venison or bear meat for sale, and to-day we were astonished by a present from them of a huge elk.

"Strange, however, we rarely see the squaws. Perhaps it is because they know that our men are a body of warriors going through the country, who would have little use for women.

"How our soldiers rejoiced on being ordered to march on the ice of the Madawaska! The river in some places is wide, winding in and out through a rugged and open country, but the ice is thick and the surface smooth and without drifts, save occasionally near a sudden bend. So, except where the rapids interfered, we had steady marching and driving for days over a road of our own make, and not along the Jesuit trail. The great drawbacks are the depths of snow to be shovelled away or tramped down, and the wearisome windings of the river.

"Harold tells me that a hundred miles as the crow flies on the Madawaska would be two hundred by the windings of the stream.

"But my ague is coming back. I must stop my scribbling, and will start it again to-morrow. It is so

lonely out here in the woods that writing is like talking to an old friend. Oh, those wretched little imps! There they are again! You infernal bug-a-boos! You think you frighten me, do you? Oh, I wish Harold was here, but he can't be until night! How my head aches and swims, too! Still, I hate to give in. There, Emmiline in the other end is singing. So I will put down what she says, if I can, in spite of the little fiends who have been chasing me ever since I left the Ottawa.

Rock-a-bo babee up de tree
Like vas de early morn,
And ve vill mak de feu de joie
And roast de Ingin corn.

Rock-a-bo babee, airly an' lat,
Ven sweet de birdies sing;
Petite garçon laugh an' ee grow fat,
An' make de woods to ring.

Rock-a-bo babee, Patre is come
From drivin' ever so far,
Over de rivare, so glad he's home
To wife and child, by gar.

"What a mercurial nature! She feels well and can sing a child song, notwithstanding all her sorrow."

Diary continued next day.

"My ague was not so bad yesterday, though I did see the little devils, and was disconsolate and blue all day, the bottom for a while being knocked out of everything. But the long rest helped me, and now that I feel better and have time, Mrs. Diary, I will have a good long chat with you. The men finished fixing the shanty this morning. The two women have a big kettle of water boiling outside and are doing some washing for the men. They say there is enough to keep them busy every day for a week. Emmiline—and, by the way, she sang that ditty very sweetly yestereen—is cooking over the fire at the other end of the room. She's as happy as a queen and is singing again. This time it's habitant love song. How good-natured and volatile these French-Canadians are! The loss of her two babies seem to be entirely forgotten in the joy of travelling out west with her husband. Outside we can hear the axes of Bateese and another driver chopping firewood for our camp. Harold, as well as Bond and Hardman, are all away with the Colonel and his men cutting a new road in and out among the granite boulders through the woods. They will be back to-night to remain with their wives until the morning. It seems an awfully funny arrangement—four married men with their wives to sleep together in a single shanty. What a terrible thing it would be if any of them got mixed!

"Strange, we never think of these things until they come upon us, and then we take them as a matter of course—simply, I suppose, because we have to. If I had known what lay before me on leaving England, I am just as sure as—Still—I would have done a great deal for Harold—God knows I would—and perhaps, yes, perhaps—What's the use of talking, anyway? Whatever is, had to be; and whatever lies before us, we must face, whether we will or no.

"Still, these men are not a bit rude to me, and our long shanty is so arranged that our end is cut off from the rest, though what is said in ordinary talk can be heard all over the room. Then about our bed, I was going to tell how we make it, but I won't, even to you, Mrs. Diary.

"Still keep somethin' to yoursel'
You'd scarcely tell to ony.'

"But I must say something more about our drive. For three or four days after leaving Bytown, Captain Cummings was with me the half of each day while Harold was marching, and I must say he seemed a different man, just as gentlemanly as he could be, and so kind and thoughtful that I felt ashamed of having ever entertained suspicions. He was considerate, too, for on recovering the use of his ankle earlier than he expected, he suggested a return to the old rôle. I must say I was both glad and sorry to get some one else now and then in his place.

"Three days ago, though, one of my off days, in which I had no fever, he again drove with me the whole afternoon, and as it had occurred more than once before, I became interested in his conversation. He has read and travelled so much that his talk is instructive, and before you know it you are thrown off your guard. You vow to yourself that it shall never occur again, and yet it does occur, even before you know it. That afternoon we commenced almost at once to talk about Penetang.

"Yes,' he said, 'I have taken the trouble to learn a good deal about it. It is short for Penetanguishene, the name given to it by the Ojibway Indians, and is said to be very picturesque.'

"Has the name a meaning?' I asked.

"Yes, it signifies the rolling sands or the shining shores made by the gods of the fairies for lovers

to bask upon.'

"And do the Ojibways still live there?' I asked.

"Oh, no! Governor Simcoe bought the section twenty years ago from the Matchedash Indians for garrison purposes, and it is only now, by advice of the present Governor, Sir George Prevost, that the idea is being carried out."

"And so we are going there to build the fort,' was my response.

"Don't you think we are an admirable body for the purpose?' he asked. 'A valiant knight of the Cross, with full complement of officers and men to establish the quarters and put up the building, and a lady of quality to preside at our functions and be queen of the realm.'

"But what will you do with her in the meantime?' I asked merrily. 'Put her on the rolling sands and shining shore until the fort is built?'

"That's just it,' he returned. 'Turn her into a sea nymph and give her a tent to adorn until the building is finished.'

"You are very kind. But how came it, Captain Cummings, as chief officer of the company to be stationed, that you did not get married and bring your own wife to be queen and preside at your functions?'

"I had very good reasons,' he blurted out. 'First, the lady to whom I was engaged flatly declined to come west when I hinted the matter to her. She was not so brave as you are. Second, she was a hothouse plant, and would have been out of place in a garrison settlement. Third, I did not love her enough to bother with her company, even if she had been willing.'

"And did she break the engagement?'

"I suppose so, and I am happy to say I'm a free lance again, ready to gather the luscious fruit whenever opportunity occurs.'

"You don't believe then in the adage: 'Once in love, always in love?'

"Lieutenant Manning does,' he replied.

"And so does his wife,' was my response.

"Oh, of course, but I believe in friendship more than love, and you must count me your staunchest friend when we establish ourselves on the shining shores of Penetang.'

"I thanked him, of course, and again I say what else could I do?"

CHAPTER XXII.

Through interminable forest of spruce, pine and hemlock; through scraggy underwood, through clumps of tamarack poles, through dense cedar hedges; in and out among boulders of rock hard as adamant, jutting crags and angry precipices, over mounds of granite and shelving plates of limestone; over hill and down dale, the men of the 100th slowly made their way. Cutting down brushwood among rocky masses, made a narrow lane through which soldiers, two abreast, could force a tortuous march; but to make sleigh roads for teams to transport goods for settlement and garrison was a more difficult matter. The way through the frozen wilderness was unbroken, and Indian guides, as well as their own scouts, were sent on ahead to locate the road they must cut. Even a deadlock was possible, and to save interminable journeys around impassable ravines, teams would be unhitched and horses saddle-bagged and led singly, while men carried goods in their arms or on their shoulders to the smoother way beyond.

Many more days passed away as slowly but surely they forged ahead in a south-west direction. Monotony of labor, monotony of snow, monotony of cold, but variety of wilderness. Sometimes troops of squirrels chattered and scampered around them. Bold, black fellows would run down tall pines and angrily interrogate the drivers and, having delivered their message, dart back from tree to tree and disappear in the distance. Mink would run in and out among the boulders, sometimes brought down by a soldier's gun, but more frequently lost in a hole in the ice, to reappear next minute when distance lent safety to the view. Now and then a wild cat was seen as well as heard, and in the early dawn the tail of the red fox, as he darted across the smooth surface of a frozen lake and startled the deer as they lay in sheltered nook or browsed among the bushes. But of wolves they saw no more, though night was often made hideous with their unearthly yells, always reminiscent of that one occasion, so long to be remembered.

At last, on a bright March morning, they drove out upon a broad, level plain. Octopus feelers stretched out in every direction. They were on the Lake of Bays. Next, with all the speed they could muster, they struck southward along Muskoka River. Then over hill and dale, across ponds

and beyond Muskoka Lake. South and west was still the watchword till Waubashene was left behind, and finally one day, with the bright sun shining above them, the terminus was reached.

"All things come to him who waits and prays the Lord to guide him!" piously exclaimed the Chaplain.

"God be praised, we're here at last, thanks to our perseverance," echoed Sir George. "But waiting would never bring a man to his destined haven. Egad! this is a fine spot! Looks well in winter, what must it be in summer?"

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed the Doctor, whose expletives were always in French, "if yonder is not a schooner frozen fast in the ice."

"Yes, and by my father's ghost, there's a man on her deck taking stock of us," cried Cummings.

At this moment the men gave a loud cheer, which was answered by a whoop from the owner of the boat.

"The unexpected always happens," said Sir George; "who could imagine that we should find a brig here? Captain, send down Bond and Hardman to tell the man I would like to converse with him."

In a short time the men of the little column, as well as horses and sleighs, were gathered in an open space above the crest of the hill. On two sides and behind them the forest extended illimitably, while through the scattered trees in front, the surface of the bay stretched out for miles. It was here they purposed camping in temporary shanties and tents until permanent houses could be built.

A week's rest at Roche Lake had improved Helen's condition, and now with joy she welcomed the end of their long march.

"Home at last," cried Harold, as their sleigh stopped.

"Even if it is a snowbank," she responded with a laugh.

"Scarcely that bad," said Sir George, who overheard her. "I see two or three empty shanties yonder. They can be fixed a bit. And that little schooner may have accommodation, perhaps. We shall soon know."

The spot on which they stood was tramped hard by the many feet of the men, and Helen alighted.

"I wonder if there is a woman on board of her?" she questioned.

"If there is, she's had a winter of it," commented Harold, "though not as hard as you have had, dearie."

"I can sympathize with any of your sex now, our own women particularly," exclaimed Sir George, and extending his hand to Helen, he continued, "and I congratulate you, Mrs. Manning, most cordially, may I say affectionately, for the brave and noble fight you have put up during the whole of this terrible journey. We are all proud of you, and when I tell your uncle, Sir Charles, of the doings of the brave lady we took out to the west, he will simply be amazed."

Helen's cheeks flushed, and her eyes drooped as she murmured her thanks, but her thoughts were wandering off in another direction.

"You are not going back soon?" she asked, timidly.

"Certainly not for a while; but when summer comes I may have to, unless you make the new fort so charming by your presence, that even an old fellow like myself cannot tear himself away," replied the Colonel, gallantly.

"But how could we possibly do without you?"

"Oh, that can easily be managed, and to save time, preliminaries are already being arranged."

"You are cold," said Harold, noticing the sudden whiteness of her face. "Let us step to the fire."

Already one was burning, and beside it she stood, silently watching the men felling trees for the larger camp of the night.

"This is Mr. Latimer, sir," said the Corporal to Sir George, touching his hat; with him were Hardman and the shuffling skipper. "He owns the craft."

"Good day, sir," exclaimed the man, with a general air of amazement on his face.

"Good day to you," Sir George replied, extending his hand. "We were surprised to find a boat in the ice with a live man on it at this time of the year."

"No more'n I was to see youse, sir; an' where the deuce you all comes from beats me."

"On sledges straight from the Pole," returned the Colonel with a smile.

"So I suspect!" a humorous twinkle taking the place of the look of astonishment, "but I didn't think the Yankees could scare red-coats so far north as that."

"Not so bad! But who have you on that boat of yours, or are you alone? In fact, have you any accommodations to spare? Two or three berths, for instance."

"There's me an' my old woman. If she's willin' possibly we might take in two or three womenfolk, if they can put up with our fixings."

The man took a side glance at Helen, who stood by the fire, and then at the other women, but his eye immediately reverted to the first face. She had regained her color and was attentively observing him.

"Thank you," returned the Colonel, "but how do you happen to be frozen up in this plight?"

"That's easy told," returned the man with a nod. He evidently wanted to have a talk. "Fact is, I'm a trader, dealin' with Indians and whites all around the Georgian Bay. But you see this war bizness knocked me out a bit, for it wan't safe to run a craft right in the teeth o' destruction; so I waited till fall, and when the gunboats laid up for the winter I pitched in and did a rushing business right up to December. Then the big gale hit us, and I thought it would blow the *Bumble Bee* to pieces, but it didn't. She just drifted right to where she is. Lor! how it did blow that night! An' it friz, too, like all creation! When mornin' came we was froze in as solid as a rock, an' here we are yet, and likely to be for a spell. Turn about's fair play. Straight bizness—none o' yer foolin'! Where did youse all come from?"

"From Halifax."

"How in Sam Hill did you do it?"

"By cutting our way through the woods."

"Well, I swa'an!" The man pulled out a jack-knife and began whittling a stick. Then he expectorated an exceedingly long distance, and finished by exclaiming: "Golly, but you're bricks—and to think of having a leddy with you, too!"

"Thank you," said Sir George.

"An' how much farther be you going? Clean through to the coast?"

"No; this is the end."

"An' you'll stay here?"

"Yes."

"An' build a barrack for the sojers?"

"Yes."

"By Jehupitee Cripes! If that don't beat all! I must tell my woman. Won't the *Bumble Bee* make a fortin'?"

Latimer clapped his knee in high glee. Then he turned to shuffle down to the boat to tell his better half the good news.

"Stay!" called Sir George, and, turning to Harold, he continued: "You and your wife had better go with Mr. Latimer and see what accommodation he has to offer. It might save time."

So, accompanied by Bond, they followed the man in single file down the footpath through the snow. A steep but straight decline led to the level of the frozen lake. About twenty yards from the shore lay the *Bumble Bee*. It was a small craft with two masts and about nine feet beam. The gunwale stood several feet above the ice, and beside the little midship cabin the whole of the poop had been boarded in by a railing. A pile of wood lay beside the boat, and as Helen stepped across the little gangway, she noticed that the foredeck was cleanly swept.

With arms akimbo, a middle-aged, stern-faced woman stood in the narrow doorway, but her thick homespun dress and general air of tidiness and thrift gave confidence to her visitor, notwithstanding the puzzled look of inquiry with which she returned Helen's salutation.

"These people want to know eff we'll tak' in boarders?" said Latimer, by way of introduction. "What say you, Meg?"

"He means," said Harold, "that we are stranded, and would like you, if possible, to accommodate this lady and two or three other women until we can build our own quarters."

For a moment or two the woman looked straight into Helen's frank and kindly eyes. Then her hard expression softened, and a smile lit up her face as she accepted Helen's hand.

"I guess I can," was her answer. "It ain't much, but such as I have she's welcome to. About t'other women I don't know, for I haven't seen 'em yet."

Helen's eyes filled with tears.

"Thank you," she said.

"Step right in, marm; the coop is warm if it is little, and there's a chair you can sit down in," pointing to a little rocker which Latimer had made for her. "It's kinder comfortable."

"I'm sure it is," said Helen, and slowly she rocked herself to and fro, while she listened to the talk of the woman.

She felt strangely attracted by her. Some old memory link of the past was aroused. Had she seen that face before, and if so, when and where? While talking and asking questions Helen's mind was in an analytical mood, dissecting, so far as she could, everything associated with her appearance and life. Who was she? Where had she seen her? Was it possible that their lives had ever touched each other—this woman, double her own age and of different station? Yes, there was a link somewhere. Of this she felt sure. She must solve the mystery, but not now. To find a spot to rest in was enough for the present.



"Strangers and yet not strangers"

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CHAPTER XXIII.

The few remaining hours of that 31st of March were well occupied by the men of the 100th. Larger and better camps were pitched to last for many nights, instead of one, until real barracks could be built. The Indian wigwams, of which several were standing along the shore, proved to be useless, but a couple of trapper-forsaken shanties for the time did duty as officers' quarters. Fortunately, in each was a rough fireplace, and big fires soon dried the dampness and made them passably habitable. So with the women on the *Bumble Bee*, and officers and men in their camps, the first night passed away.

On the following morning the men strengthened their stakes, while Sir George and Captain Payne had an earnest consultation over plans for the future.

"Of course," said Sir George, "a fort and barracks will have to be built at once, whatever we do afterwards; the question is, which shall be first and where shall we put them?"

"Both important questions," returned the Captain. "There is another serious one, too. In three or four weeks, perhaps half that time, winter will break up. The spring thaw and cold rains will come, and better shelter for our people will then be imperative."

"True," said the Colonel. "You already have your plans."

For some moments there was a pause while they scanned the outlook.

"Yes," said the engineer at last, "beside the men's camp, near the margin of the hill, will be a good place for the garrison. It commands the whole length of the bay to its mouth and Beausoliel Island beyond. You couldn't have a better place for a fort. In it you might have officers' rooms as well, and later on build your shipyard at the foot of the hill down by the bay."

"What about the men's quarters?"

"Build them right behind the fort."

"You notice that little narrow island to the south of Latimer's boat?"

"Yes; it commands the mouth of the harbor direct, and would be a fine place to build a magazine with a battery of guns."

"A good idea, Captain. When summer comes perhaps we can manage it with our light cannon. It is lucky they were no bigger. If they had been it would have been impossible to portage them so far through the woods."

"To put up the buildings every man will have to work," said Payne.

"There need be no reserve on that score," returned George. "How are you off for tools?"

"Starting at London and ending at Montreal, we secured a full complement, including axes, broad-axes, shingle knives, cross-cut saws, etc. Then all the drivers are skilled woodsmen, and can show our men how to use them."

"When will you be ready to start?"

"Immediately after mess."

"Another thing, Captain, we must not forget that Mrs. Manning is here to stay. One of our first buildings must be for herself and her husband."

"I thought of that. How would it do to put up a house at once big enough to hold them and the officers, too?"

"You might throw up a little cottage for them and a larger one for ourselves. That would be better than the double combination. Then we could wait a bit. For that matter, we might build the new fort of stone."

In another hour a score of axes were at work. Busy hands swung them from morning until evening for many successive days. Saws were used to cut the logs into necessary lengths, while the little Frenchmen with their teams snaked the logs out of the woods into the clearing where the houses were to be built.

Some of the men cleared the ground of underwood and dug cellars with bevelled edges for the coming dwellings; others, discovering a spring, hollowed out the surface, put in a cedar block curb and turned it into a flowing well; while another gang felled clear stuff white pines, sawed them into short lengths and split them into shingles.

And so, under control of Captain Payne, this complex host of industry busied itself day after day, from early dawn until the darkening. The weather was in every way propitious, and though it thawed in day time, it always froze at night. The sun, in a clear sky, daily reached a loftier altitude and shed a warmer ray, melting the snow until the water ran in ripples to the lake. But the tightening each night saved the situation. Every body knew that warm weather was coming, and with so much impending, not a moment was lost. So the time passed until one afternoon a man was squaring the butt-end of a log when Captain Payne joined him.

"Can you have all ready for the raising by Monday morning?" he asked.

"For the first cottage, yes," the man answered, resting for a moment upon his broad-axe. "It's the little one for the lady. Bateese and Bouchere are both good hewers, and they will have the logs for the other by the time we have the first up."

"That's satisfactory. I'm glad you are prompt. We are going to have rain."

"Bateese says it will come inside of two days," replied the man, glancing at the hazy mist which was gradually darkening the sky.

"Oui, monsieur, rain sure," cried Bateese from the end of a log he was hewing. "Dem leetle clouds lak sheep-wool all de sam, wid haze where she touch de ice sure sign, sure as shooting, sure as de diable."

"How can you tell? You were never here before, Bateese."

"Sure all de same. Place make no difference. Jess as it was in Kebec."

"You had better push things anyway, Blake," said the Captain. "He is probably right. Come what will, we must have both houses shingled before the storm breaks."

"And so we shall, if the good Lord will only keep it off a bit longer. But there's a pile of work to do

yet. The shingles are ready, but the roof slabs have to be split. We'll need more men, sir."

"You can have twenty more for the barrack gang," said Payne.

"That's all we've room for, but they'll be needed. Let us have 'em soon, sir."

"All right, my man."

At this moment there was a wild yell in the woods, following a crash among the trees, and from different directions men rushed to the spot from which the sound came; while at the same time a messenger hurried in.

"What's the matter?" cried Sir George.

"Teddy Barnes is killed. He is dead sure! Oh! where is the Doctor?"

But Beaumont had heard, and with long strides was hastening to the spot. Though unconscious, the man was not dead. A big shingle tree in falling had brought down a slanting spruce, pinning Teddy down in the snow without killing him outright. When the Doctor arrived the men were trying clumsily to extricate him.

"Sacré," screamed the Doctor. "Stop, I say! There's only one chance to save him. The log must be cut. Bateese, you are the man. Swing your axe for your life. Now, all take hold and lift the tree bodily till he cuts it loose."

The shrill words of Beaumont calmed the excitement and brought order out of chaos. Every one sprang to his post and the mighty effort of the men in direct line preceptibly raised the upper end of the heavy tree. On examination, the Doctor was convinced that the deep snow in the hollow in which he lay had saved the man from instant death.

With prodigious energy Bateese swung his axe. Every blow sank deep in the soft, green wood. Quickly the bevelled notch in the one side was cut, followed in similar fashion on the other. In a few minutes the work was done, the axe penetrating from side to side through the upper half.

"Now, reedy—leeft, garçons, leeft!" cried Bateese. "Steddy."

With a bound the Frenchman was at the Doctor's side, and while the men lifted till the timber snapped, the two gently drew out the body of the boy; but an ominous sound jarred upon their ears. The bones grated upon each other. Then on a stretcher covered with blankets they gently laid the lad and bore him back to the camp.

"Will he live?" Sir George asked in deep concern.

"No," said the Doctor. "The poor fellow's pelvis is smashed. He may not even become conscious again, for his skull is fractured as well."

"Pray God he may not, then," said Sir George, fervently. "Better to die than live in hopeless agony."

By the time they reached the men's quarters every one in camp knew. They gathered together in groups and discussed the sad event, the first calamity since their arrival in Penetang. A more careful examination corroborated the Doctor's opinion. Consciousness never returned, and by sundown he was dead.

"What about the lad's burial?" Chaplain Evans asked of Sir George before retiring for the night.

"To-morrow is Sunday, let us have it then," was the sorrowful answer. "Reveille at eight, breakfast at nine, full parade at ten, funeral at eleven. Preach the Sunday sermon, Chaplain, and let the boys have a good one. They deserve it. Then we'll give poor Barnes a full rifle salute and taps as well."

"You are right, Colonel," returned the Chaplain; there was moisture between his eyelids; "but it is too bad to have a death in our ranks so soon."

CHAPTER XXIV.

They buried the broken body of Teddy Barnes in a little oak grove on the lower plateau, and the dead leaves on the branches sighed in gentle requiem to the words:

"Dust to dust, ashes to ashes," as they fell from the clergyman's lips.

With serious faces soldiers stood around the open grave. Earth dropped upon the coffin. The boom of guns echoed over forest and lake, and then, as the sounds died away, the shrill note of the bugle told of a spirit that had gone too soon to the God who gave it. The funeral service was ended.

"My men," said the deep voice of the Colonel as he glanced at the faces around him. "This sad duty is over. We have buried a comrade who fell, not fighting in battle, but doing his duty; and in his burial we have given him the honors due the bravest soldier when struck down at the cannon's mouth.

"But, my men, we do not live for the dead, but for the living. We are still practically without shelter, and though it is Sunday, I must bid you work with might and main. Every man must be at his post. The quarters for the officers, and barracks for the men, must be built and have the shingles on before the rain comes. Otherwise we must face disaster. So I ask you to disband until after dinner, and then, at one o'clock sharp, your work must begin again."

Standing around the grave of their comrade the two companies of the 100th sent up a rousing cheer for their Colonel, and then, scattering, each man went where he listed.

"That Colonel of yours is well named," said Latimer to Helen in the afternoon, as he entered the little coop of the *Bumble Bee*, where she was writing. "He's got a mighty good headpiece. Those fellows of his work like niggers when he tells 'em to."

"And should they not?" she asked, looking up from her folder.

"Of course, it's their duty, and all that, but I've often seen fellows shirk right again orders the moment the captain's back was turned."

"Perhaps they didn't have the right kind of a captain."

"That's about it," returned Latimer, nodding his head. "Though it's not their regular dooty, and it's Sunday, them sojers are workin' like all possessed—one lot sawin' an' choppin' an' splittin' an' haulin'—t'other lot havin' a reg'lar raisin' bee. They'll have the walls o' both them housen up by night, or my name ain't Latimer."

"I don't think Sir George would have the men working that way to-day if it were not necessary," said Helen, seriously; but she remembered a note in her diary, written in the days of their long march.

"It's necessary, sure enough, or they wouldn't have a shingle laid before the flood comes. But the funny part of it is that the boys should put on their best lick to-day. I reckon that speech of the Colonel's did the bizness. If I'd been one of them, I'd ha' done my best, too."

For some time Latimer stood beside the little stove without further comment, and Helen resumed her writing.

"Say, Mrs. Manning!" he exclaimed at last. "Do you think the Colonel has any idee how the war's going? In a week or two the snow 'll be all gone, an' the ice broke up, an' to me it 'pears like he must be 'specting the Yankee ships up to the bay here, or he wouldn't be buildin' a fort."

"You should ask the Colonel," replied Helen, diplomatically. "I can't tell you, perhaps he can. But about our buildings, the sooner they go up the better. This terrible winter seems to have lasted a year at least."

"Golly, no. It has just been the ordinaire. Still, I'll be glad to have it open up an' get my boat out agin. Do you know it's jess bootiful out yon' on the water when the spring comes. The hull east side of the bay is chuck full o' islands, and they're as purty as a pictur. There are thousands of 'em, little bits of fellows and great big ones, scattered up and down like lambs on a pasture field or hickory nuts in the woods. An' then they're all covered wi' bushes and trees like. What I've seen of 'em allus looked like the place my old mother told of, where the fairies lived, and, by jove, nobody but fairies could live there, anyway, for they're nothin' but solid rock, the hull kit of 'em."

"Now you're talking sense for the fust time," said Mrs. Latimer, from the other side of the cribbed little room. "It's one o' the most dangerous lakes you could find anywheres. Nawthing but rocks, rocks, rocks, an' many a boat goes to smash on 'em every year, an' no tellin' how many lives are lost, for they never come back to tell the story."

"I didn't say they warn't dangerous," returned Latimer, sagely holding his head to one side. "I jess said they was bootiful, and so they is. It ain't every one can tell a purty thing when they see it; and more than that," he added sententiously, "the bay is prolific."

"Of what?" his wife asked in supreme contempt.

"Why," he replied in disgust, "of fishes."

"Awh!" she interjected.

"I don't think there's a place on the lakes where the fishin's as good as Georgian Bay. There's whitefish an' salmon trout, an' bass, an' pickerel, an' sturgeon, an' muskilonge, 'an goodness knows how many others. Oh, you can talk as you like, but when the sun is settin' in big gold flashes—green islands all around you—clear water, still as glass, beneath you—an' then the bass catchin' your hook as fast as you throw it in, life's jest about worth livin'!"

"Ned's on one of his tangents again," said Mrs. Latimer, with a shrug. "If the *Bumble Bee* ever gets stranded on the rocks it'll teach him sense, but nothin' else will."

"Don't be hard on a fellow, Meg," replied the man good-naturedly. "Many's the time the *Bumble*

Bee's taken in fish by the bushel, an' she never got stranded on the rocks yet; please God, she never will. She can run agin the wind as fast as any smack I know of, an' I guess Ned Latimer understands her gearings."

"It was runnin' her gearings put us in this blessed hole, I reckon."

"We might have been wuss off. Lots o' firewood, lots o' fish and venison, friendly Injuns for neighbors, an' not so terribly cold after all, even if we was friz up in the ice."

And the philosophical skipper went off to take another look at the progress of the "Raisin'."

"Latimer's allus easy goin' and onreasonable," said the wife, as she watched him through the little window, while he ascended the hill.

"It must have been hard for you to spend the winter locked in here," said Helen. She felt like reconciling the incongruities between the ill-mated pair, "but I shouldn't think Mr. Latimer an unreasonable man. He may have made a mistake in letting his boat drift into the bay so late in the season. Still, he has made it comfortable for you, and I wonder what I could have done if your homelike schooner had not been here, with a kind hostess in it to welcome me."

"I suppose things is never so bad as they might be," said Mrs. Latimer, her face relaxing a little. "And I'm glad to do something for ye—even if it ain't much."

Again Helen was startled. It was when the hardness wore off the woman's face that the forgotten expression came back again. She had surely seen it before, and the softened tone seemed familiar. Could she trace it back through the years to the days of her childhood? It could not be black-eyed Susan, who pinched her when she cried, and threatened to pinch harder if she told? This woman's eyes were grey. Nor red-headed Molly, who in her afternoon walk invariably left her with her mother to be stuffed with black toffy, while she went off to gossip with the barber's son? Her hair was too black ever to have been red. Nor the maid who frightened her with ghost stories. Nor the namby-pamby one who cuddled her with kisses and called her beatific names, until in childish indignation she wrathfully rebelled.

All these in rapid movement of memory were set aside, but the more she thought, the more convinced she became that in the big medley of domestic servitors of the long past, this woman somewhere played her part. But the cobwebs were lifting. She would find her soon.

"You have not always lived on the lakes, Mrs. Latimer?" she asked at last.

"I never did till I married Latimer."

"And before that?" said Helen.

"I was from New York; but that's ten year ago, and Latimer was a British subject."

"And did you never cross the ocean? One would think that, living so much on the water, you would be sure to go over the sea."

"So I have, mum, so I have. I went over twenty year ago come June as servant to a New York lady and stayed there for a year, but I didn't like it, so I come home agin."

"Twenty years ago. And did you live for some time in South London, near the Thames?"

"Yes I did," answered the woman, with a start.

"And worked as nursemaid for Mrs. Brandon, of Russell Street, near Battersea Park?"

"Good gracious alive, yes! Did you know her? Be you—"

"Yes, I am little Helen Brandon, the child you put straddle-legged around your neck to run a race with another nurse-girl from Henley Street, at the other end of the row."

"Land sake! Be you that child? Who'd a'thought it! An' then to meet you here out in the wilds o' the wilderness!" The woman rose, and, with flushed and agitated face, came towards her.

Helen extended both hands, and Mrs. Latimer grasped them within her own.

"It was rough play, and weren't the square thing to do, I reckon; still, I don't think I hurt you, child."

"You didn't hurt me much, but I was terribly afraid you might fall. If I remember right, the other little girl screamed frantically at the last."

"And well she might," returned the woman with a grin, "for Ann did the very thing you were afraid of. She stumbled and rolled over, and I won the race."

"I must have been sadly frightened, for I remember crying over it in my little bed that night, and my mother insisted upon knowing the cause—so I told her—and I never saw you afterwards."

"Oh, she gave me my *congé* next morning, but I didn't care, for I had decided to come back to the States as soon as that month's work was up."

"You did not take another place, then?"

"No; I sailed on the next ship, and then worked out in New York until I came across Latimer—and

was fool enough to marry him."

"I hope you don't regret it."

"Humph! don't I? But I'm glad to know who you are. There won't be no more races, but I'll do all I can for you, an' help you to fix things, too, when they get your house built. I took an awful fancy to you when you was a kid, even if I was a leetle rough."

"I felt sure I knew you from the first," said Helen earnestly. "I must again thank you for your kindness, and I am sure we shall be very good friends."

"It is just a joy to see you when I think it out. The long ago is only like yesterday. Just to think that the first white woman's face I should see in four months should be that of the little rosy-faced darling that I dangled in my arms and round my neck twenty long year ago. Ah, there comes Latimer agin!" And her face hardened. "What does he want now, I wonder? Why can't he let us be?"

CHAPTER XXV.

The woman went out to interrogate her husband, and Helen returned to her writing, but in a few minutes Latimer came in again.

"Is them letters you are at?" he asked, as she folded a sheet and slipped it into her reticule.

"Yes," she replied. "I hope to send them away when the lake opens."

"Your post will be long in going," he said, wagging his head. "It may take a month to clear the ice off the bay, and there ain't a single post-office anywheres this side o' Little York, and being as the Yankees fight well on the lakes, it might be dangerous to send letters that way even when they was open."

"Letters will keep," replied Helen, serenely, "And the Americans cannot always have it their own way."

"I didn't say they could; only what you have writ down will be an old story before you get it off your hands."

"Old stories are said to be the best, you know."

"So I've heerd. It's none of my bizness, anyhow, an' as I tell my old woman, you can do as you durned please."

He threw back his head and cackled in apology for his rudeness, while Helen folded her tablets and put on her wraps to go out. The hazy sun was still an hour high. On the hill she could see her future home, with walls up and rafter poles in place, and not far from it sounded the "yo-heave" of the men who, with long pikes, were raising the logs of the larger building.

Gathering up her skirts to keep them out of the melting snow, Helen hastened over to the scene. Harold was superintending the men on one side as she joined him.

"That'll be our new home, sweetheart," he said, nodding toward the farther building. "How do you like it?"

"Logs all round, it looks queer," was her answer.

"Yes, but the shingles have to go on yet."

"What about doors and windows?"

"They will cut holes in the sides to-day, and put them in afterwards."

"What a ninny I am not to think of it! How hard the men work!"

"Yes; this house, too, has to be up to-night, and made ready for shingles as well."

"Oh, if the rain would only keep off!"

"Yes, that would be grand. In the meantime we are all doing our best."

Some men were splitting pine logs into slabs and hewing them down for roof planks, and already they were being laid on the rafters of Helen's house. Others were preparing shingles, chinking walls and cutting apertures. Doorways, jamways, chimneys, were all being made. Every one was busy.

By the next afternoon much had been accomplished. Each man's coat was off—work was unabated—no rain had fallen—but heavy clouds covered the sky—and Bateese's prediction

seemed likely of fulfilment.

The shingling of Helen's house had been finished. A log fire was burning on the andirons to dry the dampness and take away the green, while men were doing their best in many ways to make it habitable.

"Can I have my boxes brought in now?" Helen asked of Harold. "There's the first drop of rain."

"Yes, if the rubbish can be cleared out of the way."

"Emmiline and I will see to that."

Then Bateese and the soldiers brought over what was personal for Helen's cottage; while she, her faithful Emmiline and Harold, did the rest.

In the preparations of the officers' house progress had been slower, but as it was evident that rain would be upon them heavily by night, the energies of the men were taxed to their utmost. Bit by bit the place was put in order, and load after load of goods were brought in and piled at random even before the roof was closed in.

"The shingling must be finished, no matter how it rains," cried Captain Payne, "and every man shall have an extra ration of grog when it is done. The officers will occupy this house to-night, no matter what happens."

The promise of extra liquor, for all were wet, stimulated to greater exertion, and valiantly the men obeyed orders. By night rain came down in torrents. Though drenched to the skin, the shinglers continued their work until the last one was laid, and beneath the sheltering roof of their new cottage Sir George and his officers gathered together before the night closed in.

Still, the walls of the barracks were only partly up, and for that night the men, notwithstanding the rain, were obliged to return to their old quarters. So with the women in the *Bumble Bee*, Harold and Helen in their new cottage, the officers in their house, and the men in their old camp, the night wore on.

By-and-bye the east wind veered to the south. With warmer air and rain the snow and ice melted rapidly away. But toward morning another change came. The wind swept to the west and increased to a hurricane; savagely the frozen surface of the bay broke up, toppling huge waves over each other in fury, and forcing the ice blocks out to the freer space along the eastern shore. So mad was the wind, so wild the elements, bursting free from the icy grip of winter—that the lake at Beausoliel tossed mountains high in a white-capped sea of foam. The trouble, however, was not in the distance, but at hand.

During the earlier hours of the night, tired out by their day's work, the men slept soundly, notwithstanding the tempest. The pine-needle padding of the roofs of the camp in some measure protected the bunks from leakage; and, as the soldier heeds not the storm, save when summoned to duty, on they slept. By-and-bye the wind increased in savage fury. Stakes loosened, camp poles swayed, and at the earliest dawn the sentry sounded the alarm. But it was none too soon. The men had scarcely time to spring to their feet and don their jackets before the crash came. There were oaths and yells and confusion; clashing of timbers and popping of heads through the debris; while not a few derisive laughs rang out above the sound of the screeching wind.

"What a devilish row!" cried Corporal Bond to Hardman, as they fell over each other in making their exit. "A complete flattener. Pray God, none o' the boys are killed."

"It beats all," returned Hardman, as a flying stick struck him on the head and knocked him over. But he was up in a moment, vigorously rubbing the place. "Jimminy Isaacs! Lucky the women are in the boat," he yelled out.

"Is it, though?" cried the Corporal, as a wild shout came from the stormy bay beneath them.

"Ba gosh! Vat's de matter wid de *Bumble Bee*?" yelled Bateese, who, after crawling from beneath a stack of pine poles, rushed to their side. There was commotion down there, no doubt, though what it was the darkness hid from view. Away went Bateese, running with tremendous strides and followed by others, realizing that possibly the women might be in danger.

Protected from wind and wave by the island already mentioned, the ice between the latter and the shore withstood the force of the tempest the longest. At the northern end of the protected channel lay the *Bumble Bee*, and while stationary in the ice, the storm failed to rouse the occupants. The sudden veering of the wind, however, changed the flattened surface into a boiling cauldron. Tumultuously, the ice, worn thin by the prolonged thaw, was broken into fragments, and the little ship, frozen solid at her moorings for the whole of the winter, was suddenly cast loose upon the waters.

Latimer and his wife were both roused by the lurch of the boat. As an old seaman, he knew at once what had happened. The rudder, too, was gone, and he called loudly for assistance. At the same moment the women screamed, for the boat tossed like a cockle shell beneath them.

"Be easy, now," cried Latimer. "Don't make fools of yourselves! This ain't the first sail the *Bumble Bee* ever made."

"If it ain't the first, it's the last," retorted his wife, fiercely.

"Bet your bottom dollar she'll make many another yet. Hello, Bateese! Ketch this rope when I throw it."

But the distance was too great.

"Hold on, wait a meenit," and Bateese ran to a pile of young beeches that had been cut as pike poles for building.

"That 'tarnal Frenchman," muttered Latimer. "The rudder's broken, and we'll drift out of reach before he's back again."

But Bateese knew better.

"Tie loop on rope," he yelled as he hurried back. "Den we catch heem wid pole."

"Here's one for ye," and with tremendous effort Latimer threw out the line again. As it uncoiled the end fell between fragments of ice ten feet from the shore.

"Dere, I tole you. Him no reach de bank, but nevare min', we catch heem all de same." And stretching out to his utmost he hooked the fork of the beech into the open end of the cable and drew it in. Being taut, there was barely enough to reach the shore.

"Give us more rope," shouted Bond. Another yard was paid out.

"Not another inch to spare," cried Latimer.

But the men had got hold of it and were pulling with all their might. Still, the force of the current was a match for them, and it was not until reinforced that they succeeded in drawing the boat in and lashing it to a tree.

Necessity for self-control was now over, and Bateese sprung excitedly on to the *Bumble Bee*.

"Oh, ma Emmiline. Mon cher ami!" Throwing his arms about his wife: "Mine sweetheart—vive ma reine."

"Oui, oui, Bateese!" she replied, the tears running on each side down her face, "but don't be so fooleesh."

The Englishmen were not so demonstrative. Hardman extended his hand to help his wife to terra firma, she vowing that she would "never sleep on that old thing again"; while Bond chaffed his wife good-naturedly for "rasin' such a din in the fo'castle of the bloomin' boat."

By this time it was daylight. The bugle sounded the men to mess, and the day promising to be fine, orders were given to push the barracks for the men, and to occupy them the coming night. All of which by diligent effort they were able to accomplish.

Having followed our heroine and the officers and soldiers of the two companies of the 100th through their long and arduous march, locating them finally at Penetang, and watching with interest their efforts at the establishment of a fort, we must bid them adieu for a time and return to the east in order to record other incidents which have an important bearing upon our story.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Only twice did Maud Maxwell receive letters from Dr. Beaumont during the months that followed that memorable morning when the companies started out on their long march. One was from Quebec, in which he gave details of the journey and an account of the dance at the Citadel, but he made no mention of his meeting with the beautiful Louise de Rochefort. On the whole, the letter, to Maud's mind, seemed cool. At this she felt piqued, more than she cared to acknowledge to herself. The devotion declared by the ardent lover on leaving, notwithstanding the coolness with which she had received it, seemed scarcely to be adequately sustained. Why so sudden a change? Had he forgotten her already? Was he contented to woo nature in the wild woods of the west, in place of the maiden to whom he had so recently declared his passion?

But the next letter from Montreal was more cheering, for although the canny Scotch, inherited from his mother, seemed, in the first part of the letter, to have thrown a damper upon his passion, the conclusion was in better form. There was a warmer ring—a plea for the future—a touch of genuine sentiment. "You may not think of me," he said, "or if you do, only as one whose presence is not missed; but I think of you as my guiding star, my beacon light, urging me onward through the forest—over ice and snow—along river and lake—to a little spot in the west which is to be my home and, please God, yours also." Then he signed himself: "By all that is holy," as one "who will ever be true."

The coolness of the one letter, followed by the renewed passion in the other, had a good effect upon Maud. Although she read the latter a little indignantly and laid it aside, before long she took

it up and read it again.

"He has no business to write me in that strain," she commented to herself. "So cool at first, and, then almost as if we were betrothed; when there is really nothing between us. Still, I do not dislike him. He is such an independent fellow, and so strong and true." And, although her eye flashed, she heaved a little sigh.

It was the beginning of April—the very time that the men were pitching their first camp on the bay of Penetang, and she speculated much about the Doctor and Mrs. Manning.

"If he had only remained in Halifax," she soliloquized, "I would have done my best to be her companion. I am sure I am strong enough." And seizing hold of a horizontal bar, placed at the end of her room, she drew herself up with both hands and placed her chin above it, repeating the exercise several times until she was tired. "Colonel Mason says I am a good shot, too."

"At it again!" exclaimed her sister Eugenia, who at this moment entered the room. "I consider such exercises exceedingly indelicate for a young lady. To think of a daughter of Judge Maxwell gesticulating and throwing her limbs about in such a wild way is simply shocking."

"You are about the only person who has the opportunity of being shocked by my gymnastics," said Maud, elevating her eyebrows. "It cannot be such a dreadful thing or Dad would never have had the bar put up for me."

"You were a spoilt child, and he just humored you."

"Bless the dear man for doing it. Come now, Eugenia, just try it once. You've no idea how delightful it is to pull yourself up on this cross-bar."

"How dare you ask me? I couldn't think of such a thing." And the large blonde tried ineffectually to look severe.

"Oh, yes you could; and what's more, I've something interesting to tell you. Still, I shan't say a word unless you try my bar."

"What impudence!"

"You know the conditions," said Maud, commencing to put on her hat. "It's quite easy to try. You can keep your feet so close together that a cat couldn't see between them. All you have to do is to hold on and pull yourself up. See, even with my coat on I can chin the bar with one hand. You surely can with two."

"Don't be silly!"

"Bah! it's just the finest exercise."

"But what's your secret, Maud, without this silly nonsense?"

"If you try my bar I'll tell you."

"And won't you if I don't?"

"Not while water runs nor grass grows," said Maud in mock solemnity, buttoning on her gloves.

With an air of resignation Eugenia walked up to the pole. She was taller and heavier than Maud. Consequently, when she stretched out her long arms and took hold, her knees bent ungracefully a foot above the floor. Maud slipped behind her sister to hide her amusement.

"Now, draw yourself up with all your might," she cried. "You must put your chin on top of the pole."

"I can't!" exclaimed Eugenia, who, with all her tugging, could only raise herself a few inches and then let herself suddenly down again.

"You must!" said Maud; "any child could do better than that."

After another strenuous effort Eugenia stopped in disgust.

"There," she exclaimed, sitting down to rest. "I have humored you in your childish folly, what have you to say to repay me for my trouble?"

"Well," returned Maud, unbuttoning her coat and taking a seat opposite her sister. "It's about Captain Morris. When I was at Pennington's last night he was there. From pure accident we were alone in the library for a short time, and he proposed to me."

"Humph! that's the third young man who has been silly enough to do it already this year."

"I can't help that," said Maud, gravely. "If they have no better sense than to be enamored with my poor face, I am sure I am not responsible."

"You are not, eh? And what was your decision this time?"

"Just what you might expect. After declaring the grand passion, instead of asking for a return of his love, he requested permission to at once ask father for my hand. I suppose that's the English way of doing it."

"And what did you say to that?"

"That my surprise was very great, I couldn't think of such a thing, and that I was too young and inexperienced even to dream of love."

"Captain Morris is of good family and very wealthy," said Eugenia, reflectively. "His father left a fine estate in the south of England, I understand; and the Captain is his eldest son and heir."

"I don't care what estates he has," was Maud's quick rejoinder; "if I ever marry a man it must be for what he is, not what he has."

"Very true, my dear," returned Eugenia, who viewed things generally from a material standpoint. "Quite correct sentiments, but I have sometimes noticed that incidental fortunes are not necessarily a bar to matrimony. Usually they are the reverse. And Captain Morris himself is irreproachable."

"I know that he's nice and all that," said Maud, "and has charming manners. I expect his regiment will remain here for a long time yet, as all the troops have been ordered to the front, so I shall have ample opportunities of seeing him again."

"Well, my impression is that he is the best of the lot, and when desirous of winning your hand you should give him the chance——"

"Of winning my heart?"

"Certainly. Another thing, it is not a bit fair to entangle so many men, and then throw them overboard one after another."

"But, my dear, I don't wish to entangle them. If they cannot control themselves it is surely not my fault."

"Don't talk nonsense, Maud. You know very well it is not your face that does it."

"Pon my word, am I so ugly as all that?" interrupted Maud, with seeming surprise.

"It is your manner and what they call your character," said Eugenia, with attempted severity.

"Well, Eugenia, I wish you'd leave me to myself. I really like them all. I can tell you candidly that I have not positively refused any of them, and they are still my friends."

"And how long is this condition to last?"

"Ask me a year hence and I will tell you." And with a flushed face Maud left the room.

CHAPTER XXVII.

From the time he was stationed in Halifax Captain Morris had always been a welcome visitor at Judge Maxwell's. The possibility of being a suitor for the hand of one of the daughters only increased the cordiality of his reception, and notwithstanding Maud's seeming refusal, he still availed himself of every opportunity to press his suit. Social functions of one sort or other were also of frequent occurrence, and Maud accepted his attentions, although she effectually parried any direct renewal of the offer of marriage.

Captain Morris had seen a good deal of life. Having abundance of means, as well as his commission, he had always been lionized on returning home from the wars. Yet each time he had gone away again heart free. Perhaps he was getting a little bit blasé. Possibly he overestimated his importance in his own particular set, when he imagined that much of the kindness extended to him was with an ulterior object.

Be that as it may, the first look he had of Maud Maxwell was a beatific vision to him—a picture that would not be blotted out. It planted itself on his inner consciousness, leaving an impression that deepened each time they met.

There was a freshness, beauty and mental vigor in this young maiden that were new to him, and the fact that his personal influence over her matured so slowly, made him all the more desirous to win her love.

As May opened, Halifax became additionally alive from the arrival of more troops from England. It was but a little place in those days, not numbering more than eight thousand people. Consequently, what interested one interested all, and the whole place was astir to witness the landing.

Colonel Battersby, the commanding officer, was under orders to remain in the Lower Province if necessary, but if not to push on by boat to Quebec, and from thence to Montreal. The first interview he had with Sir John Sherbrook and Colonel Mason settled the matter.

"We are well defended already," said Sir John. "War vessels command our harbor and coast line, and the regiments stationed here are all the Citadel needs. No, my dear Colonel, I am glad to say that in the east we do not require your services; but in the west, particularly in the Upper Province, we do. That part of the country has a good future before it, and we must stick to it, for when settled and developed it is destined to become the garden of Canada."

"One of the chief reasons why the Yankees want it, and why we are bound to keep it," returned Battersby. "Will the St. Lawrence be clear of ice now?"

"Yes," replied Colonel Mason. "The season is early and the river open. Molson's steamers can tug you as far as Montreal. If not wanted there, you can march overland to Kingston."

"Sir James Yeo has had two new vessels built this winter," said Sir John. "This will help our Ontario fleet, and when you arrive he will be able to transfer you to any point along the coastline that may be necessary."

"I am glad of that," replied Colonel Battersby. "I have always had a desire to go west. At home we are just beginning to realize what Canada is, but before this war commenced you might go from January to December without hearing the name even mentioned."

"What you say is true enough," was Mason's comment. "They send us poor devils out here and then forget us. We might almost thank the Americans for bringing on the war and opening the eyes of Englishmen to the fact that we have half a continent here still under the old flag."

"Is now and ever shall be," said the Governor.

"To that I say Amen," said Battersby. "But we must not forget that the fight is not over. The Americans are a strong people—like ourselves of Anglo-Saxon blood—and they are making a stiff fight to enlarge their territory. They have not forgotten their victories of '76."

"I grant that, Colonel, but they will never succeed in this northern region, whatever they did in the south, if Englishmen can help it."

"Not while England can send out her continental regiments," said Mason. "So far this year our men have done well. Witness the defeat of Wilkinson at the famous old mill of Lacolle."

"Yes," said Sir John, "but that would not have happened if Major Hancock had not received timely reinforcements from the Fencibles and Voltigeurs."

"What is Sir James Yeo likely to do on the lakes this year?" Colonel Battersby asked, looking alternately from one to the other.

"We are too far off the scene of action to know exactly," said Sir John, "though I believe he intends with his raw recruits, aided by a force under General Drummond, to attack Oswego as soon as the lake opens. By-the-way, Mason," he continued, turning to that officer, "could you not spare Battersby a couple of companies out of one of your regiments?"

"If he has room on his troopships to take them, we could," was the answer.

"Thank you; the more we have the merrier. You know we had several hundred emigrants in our voyage out. They land here, so we can easily take your men."

In the afternoon of the next day, in a field below the fortress, a review of the troops was held, and it was decided to close by selecting from the garrison brigade the companies who were to go west. The day was bright and warm, and the news having got abroad that a division from the Citadel was to accompany Colonel Battersby's regiment up the St. Lawrence, many of the townspeople hastened to the commons to witness the parade, and among them the Misses Maxwell.

"There is room, young ladies, in our carriage," said Mrs. Mason, who drove up with another lady, "and with us you will have a better view."

The offer was a welcome one, and they drove to the top of a little crescent commanding a full view of the parade ground. Colonels Mason and Battersby stood a short distance away watching the evolutions, which had already commenced.

"Your men have lost nothing of precision by their four weeks at sea," said Colonel Mason.

"No," responded Battersby, drily, "they seem to hold their own, even with troops accustomed to discipline on land."

"Our garrison men are always well drilled," said Mason, a little stiffly.

"Of course! Only I am astonished that soldiers fresh from the ocean should lose their sea legs so soon."

"Well," said Mason, in better humor as his own regiment swung around and marched past over the green sod on the double quick, "your men are a credit to their Colonel, and I don't see why you should not personally choose the two companies you want to take."

"Thank you kindly for the honor," said Battersby.

"That is all right. Have you a choice?"

"Pon my word, of the men, no. They all look like well-drilled fellows, with clean jibs, straight backs and honest mugs. It would be hard to make one."

"Of the officers have you?"

"Not from the way in which they command their companies. Still, you have one man I would like to have on my staff, if you can spare him, and taking him I should expect to take his company also."

"Who is that, pray?"

"Captain Morris. He made a record for himself in Spain, and would do excellent service out west if he had the chance."

"By George, you have touched the apple of my eye!" exclaimed Mason, who in making his offer had in mind the efficiency of the companies themselves, without reference to the officers who led them. "Captain Morris is the best officer we've got. He has seen the enemy's guns in many a campaign and, between ourselves, is recommended for promotion."

"Promotion will come quicker if taken out west than here at the Citadel," said Battersby.

"Sure enough. I gave my word and shall stand by it. If you will form the squares I will speak to Morris now."

The ladies in the carriage had not been inattentive listeners. The unexpected announcement startled the Misses Maxwell. By-and-bye, while the final manoeuvres were being accomplished, Colonel Mason joined them.

"So you are going to send our brave boys away," said Mrs. Mason.

"Yes, a few of them. It will prevent the fellows from rusting, and give those that remain a little more to do."

"Unfortunately, our brightest man is captain of one of the companies you are sending off," said Mrs. Mason.

"That's usually the case. The office seeks the man, and not the man the office," returned the Colonel, with a glance at the occupants of the rear seat. "And men of promise are always favorites with the ladies, I notice."

"If I were a man I'd like to go, too," said Maud. "I only wish I were one."

"I'm afraid you're not tall enough, my dear," said the Colonel, looking gravely into the flashing eyes of the girl. "Five feet five inches is the lowest height at which I could enlist a soldier."

"I would put on high-heeled boots."

"No use, Miss Maud. Recruits are always measured in their stocking feet."

And he went away laughing.

The troops were formed in lines four deep, facing the crescent; and on a signal from the Colonel, Captain Morris approached. For a few minutes the two were in earnest conversation. Then, with a salute, Morris returned to the head of his column and attention was called.

"Men of the Garrison Corps," said Colonel Mason, in ringing tones. "We welcome to our midst the officers and men of Colonel Battersby's column. We are always glad to see comrades from over the sea. Their stay with us, however, will be short. To-morrow they sail for the St. Lawrence River. But they will not go alone. Our garrison is a strong one, and much as we dislike to part with our men, we can spare some. So I have to tell you that the officers and men of companies C and D will go with them to help to fight the battles of our Country and our King. Three cheers for companies C and D."

Loud hurrahs followed, and with cheers for the visiting and garrison corps, the review ended.

The ladies drove back in the carriage together—Mrs. Mason having invited the Misses Maxwell to a cup of tea before walking home. Consequently, on leaving the Citadel, they were overtaken by Captain Morris and Dr. Fairchilds. The latter already had been captivated by the blonde and availed himself of the opportunity of leading the way with her.

"Were you surprised at the Colonel's announcement?" Maud asked of the Captain as they dropped into line behind the other two.

"A soldier learns never to be surprised," was his answer. "We expected some would be ordered west, for the garrison is so full, but who would be chosen was an enigma."

He looked straight into Maud's face.

"I heard Colonel Battersby give you great praise," she said, "but perhaps it is a military secret."

"Not necessarily, if said in public," was his answer. "Still, I may not specially deserve it. The army is full of brave men."

"Your name would not have been mentioned unless there had been good reason."

"Well, even granting that, what good can come of it, when the maid I adore cares not a jot or tittle?"

"Much good," was her answer, but she did not return his look. "A larger life and promotion would be sure—the very things I would want if I were a man."

"Do you wish you were?"

"What is the use?"

"Your words should stimulate one, anyway, but can you say nothing more, Miss Maud? We leave so soon—to-morrow—a soldier's life is in his hand. Give him something to hope for and fight for as well."

"Am I not trying?" she replied, with one of those bright flashes which did such havoc with the men. "Higher rank and future glory!"

"Fudge!" he exclaimed, impatiently. "I could buy a colonelcy if I wanted it, without drawing a sword or leading a man to battle, if that is all."

"The Captain Morris, Colonel Battersby was talking about, could not," said Maud contracting her eyebrows and looking grave again. "He was a genuine man, and every inch a soldier."

"Thank you for your approval," and notwithstanding his effort at self-control, Morris' face flushed with pleasure.

Dr. Fairchilds and Eugenia had paused at the doorstep. For a moment the four chatted on.

"Will you call again, Captain Morris, before you leave?" Maud asked.

"I have only to-night, and it may be late, but I shall be very glad to come."

The door opened and in another minute, returning the bows of the gentlemen, the ladies entered.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Are you still playing fast and loose with Captain Morris?" Eugenia asked as she and her sister were dressing for dinner.

"I never play fast and loose with anyone," was Maud's answer. "I explained everything to him a month ago, why repeat it again now?"

"He is devoted to you, surely you must have a preference."

"Not necessarily, my dear, but that reminds me. This will give me a good opportunity to send a letter to Mrs. Manning. I promised to write her. They say the troopships will carry the mail with them; and taking mine as far as Montreal, perhaps Little York, it can be forwarded overland to Penetang."

"Have you written your letter already?"

"No, but I shall have time immediately after dinner. Captain Morris does not come until nine."

The meal over, Maud repaired to her room and took out her tablet, quill-pen and horn inkstand. For weeks she had been hoping for a second letter from Helen, but none had come. Still she had much to tell, and the hour was nearly gone by the time her letter was finished and the envelope addressed.

She did not, however, seal it at once. Alone in her room she sat for a moment tapping her forehead. Then she took out another sheet and commenced writing again. This time it was to Dr. Beaumont, in reply to the two she had already received.

While writing she was in deep thought, carefully weighing her words. She put them down more slowly than in her longer letter to Helen. As she finished, the big bell in the church tower struck nine. For another moment she paused. Then placing the letter in a small envelope, and addressing it, she put it in the larger one to Mrs. Manning, and sealed the latter in three places after the manner of the time. As she finished a message came that Captain Morris had arrived.

"Montreal will be your headquarters, no doubt," she heard her father say as she entered the room.

"It will be farther west than that, I hope," was his answer. "Still we are willing to go anywhere. My men are quite excited over it. Being veterans, one would think they would be indifferent; but it is so long since they were in battle, that they are just itching for a fight."

"Human depravity—human depravity!" exclaimed the judge. "It can't be over a year since you left

Europe. Surely they had enough of it then."

"You forget, sir," said Morris, "that it is the soldier's life. His daily occupation—his meat and drink—and that a long interruption from everyday occurrences only gives zest to a return to old conditions."

"Still it is lamentable! however essential to our glory," said the Judge, shaking his head.

"It should not be lamentable when the cause is just. For that matter empire was always maintained by the sword and always will be."

"No, no!" said the Judge. "The arts of peace are winning their way. We may not do without the cannon yet, but please God the time will come when 'The lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the wolf and the lamb shall lie down together at the cockatrice den, and a little child shall lead them.'"

"Will that time ever come?" said Maud, her brows contracting. "I suppose it would be grand if it did."

"Not in our time," said Morris. "But the strength of the sword may hasten it."

"The inevitable paradox."

"Paradoxes are the truest lessons of life."

"The soldier's life is an instance. He fights that peace may reign."

"He is an enigma," said Maud.

"No, he is the most human of men," said the Captain. "Though true hearted, he can love as well as hate. He can face the cannon's mouth without flinching an inch, and the next moment shed tears over a comrade's grave. When storming a stronghold, he can see his best friend shot down by his side, and step over his body without even giving him a look."

"I can understand that," said Maud gravely, "and a woman could do it, too, if it had to be."

"I know one woman who could," said Morris, and Maud's face flushed as she turned away.

At this moment the knocker sounded and Miss Maxwell ushered in Dr. Fairchilds.

"Knowing how fond you are of whist, Captain," she said, "I asked the Doctor over for another rubber before you go. I hope you and Maud are both agreeable."

"Eugenia is fond of surprises," said Maud with a sharp glance at her sister; "but I shall be glad to have you for my partner, Captain, if you can spare the time."

"Thank you, but our game must be short. I am due at the Citadel at eleven, and a soldier has to obey orders to the minute, you know."

Soon the table was arranged and the young people sat down to play.

In cutting for deal the choice fell to Maud; and when she turned up Queen of Hearts, Eugenia smiled significantly. By-and-bye the first two games were over, each side scoring one.

"Now for the rubber," said the Captain. Again it was Maud's deal, and again Queen of Hearts was trump.

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed Fairchilds. "Your hands have been red all evening."

"Not only that," said Morris, smiling across the table, "but my partner's have always been hearts."

"Peculiar," said the Doctor.

"Very," said Eugenia.

Maud bit her lip.

For a while the game was played in silence, she and the Captain gradually winning. Finally, his deal came, and cutting, the King of Hearts turned up.

"I score you one better!" he exclaimed to Maud. Their eyes met and a ripple went round the table. The game was soon finished. They had won the rubber.

Refreshments were served, and half an hour later the gentlemen rose to go.

"My Queen of Hearts," said the Captain to Maud in a low voice as she accompanied him to the hall.

"To-night you were my King," she replied with a little laugh. "King of Hearts in our little game."

"And what is life but a game," he answered, "with hearts for trumps, which we all try to win?"

"Oh Maud!" exclaimed Eugenia, coming out of the drawing-room with Dr. Fairchilds. "Could not Captain Morris take your letter for Mrs. Manning? He could put it in with the rest of the mail."

"I shall be delighted," said the Captain, turning again to Maud; "and for that matter will post it at

Montreal instead of here."

"Really, I wouldn't put you to that trouble for anything," said Maud, casting a glance of annoyance at her sister. "The post will go by the same boat as you do, and if I take it to the office in the morning it will be sure to be in time."

"I am not certain of that," said Fairchilds.

"It takes twice as long to send a letter to Quebec or Montreal by mail as it does to go in person. Putting it in the office will not guarantee a quick delivery, I assure you."

"Still it is unimportant," persisted Maud, who shrank from making the Captain the unconscious bearer of a message to Beaumont. "I am sure Captain Morris will have quite enough to attend to without burdening himself with my paltry despatch."

"No trouble at all," reiterated the Captain. "I have a number of documents to take care of anyway, and I will just put yours with the others in safe keeping."

While the rest were discussing, Eugenia had gone for the letter, and now handed it to Morris. Maud saw that further resistance was useless, without being disagreeable. The address ran:

"Mrs. Manning,
Wife of Lieutenant Manning,
Under command of Sir George Head,
Harbor of Penetanguishene,
Georgian Bay,
Upper Canada."

In those days letters were matters of importance even to persons unconcerned, and outer wrappings were the public property of all. Hence, the reading aloud of the address caused no comment.

"Yes, Miss Maud, I am delighted to take charge of it, and shall forward it to the end of its journey as soon as I possibly can. While in my possession it will be a reminder of the one who wrote it; and the moment it leaves my hands I shall send you word, telling how soon I expect it to reach its destination."

Maud with throbbing heart murmured her thanks.

The Captain tried unavailingly to secure another minute to themselves, and with an indefinite understanding that they might speak with each other the next day he took his leave.

But circumstances were not favorable. Every moment of his time was occupied, and it was from the deck of the ship that he again saw her in the distance. The vessel had parted from her moorings and was floating out into the harbor when he discovered her among the crowd on the wharf. Instantly his helmet was raised—a little handkerchief fluttered for a moment in the breeze, and gradually the distance widened between them.

CHAPTER XXIX.

On a bright May morning, later in the month than the sailing of the ships out of the Halifax Harbor, the sun shone at Penetang in vivid warmth and splendor. The people were glad. Earth was putting on her newest garb of green. The trees of the forest, tired of monotonous nudity, were clothed in many tints; and even the tardy ones, the annual laggards, were being roused from their lethargy.

Part of the barracks had been finished and made comfortable for habitation, and the foundations of the fort had already been laid. By judicious division of labor in the soldier settlement, men were portioned off in accordance with their special aptitudes, and every one was busy. Blacksmith and carpenter shops stood side by side, and in them forge, hammer, saw and chisel, did their work persistently from morning until night. Under habitant direction, too, the first fallow had been cleared, the brushwood and timbers piled up to dry for burning, and the land made ready for the seed.

In front of the cottage on this special morning, Helen was busily arranging her little garden. Harold had dug the ground for her and planted the seeds she had brought from England. She was examining the little shoots that had already appeared very tenderly, as a link to the far-away beyond the sea.

"Good morning, Mrs. Manning," said Sir George Head as he approached. "Your little flower beds are full of promise."

"My fear is that the sun will burn the plants before they have a chance to develop," said Helen;

"the English climate is so different."

"That depends," said the Colonel. "My gardener used to say that if plants were watered at night, and shaded during the heat of the day, they would stand the change from a cool to a hot climate very well."

"Thank you, Sir George. I am glad to know. These little plants are very dear to me."

"You must not make too much of them," he said gently. "And how do you like your new house?"

"Better every day. The floors of those rip-saw planks have all been laid, and it is such a comfort. I don't know how to thank you for having the carpenters make them for us."

"My dear, they are just getting their hands in. They may have to rip the floor boards for the fort for all we know. Latimer tells me that the nearest sawmill is on the east side of the lake a hundred and fifty miles away; and when we can get them by boat from there is a question."

"I may consider myself very fortunate, then."

"Indeed you may."

"And the *Bumble Bee* sails—"

"To-morrow, I think. It was badly damaged in that ice storm, and our men have repaired it in return for Latimer's services."

At this moment Dr. Beaumont joined them.

"Latimer tells me," he said, "that the wind indicates a brisk land breeze, and he purposes sailing to-night."

"A sensible idea," echoed the Colonel. "The sooner he starts now the better. I have engaged him to bring in fresh supplies if he can get them. He wants to take our mail matter, too, but it is too risky a venture. We must send it by help of Indian guides overland to Little York."

"Latimer has great faith in his own ability," said Beaumont. "He thinks he can run down the whole coast line without being caught."

"Perhaps he might, the eastern shore being out of the war arena, but toward St. Clair and Detroit, unless they are again in the hands of the English, his boat would be sure to be captured."

"Would they attack a little boat like his?" Helen asked in surprise.

"An enemy will take any prize he can get, whether great or small," said the Colonel. "Still Latimer may secure supplies of some kind from the shore settlements; and I will see that he does not run too much risk." With these words Sir George returned to his quarters.

"Shall you send a letter to Miss Maud this time?" the Doctor asked, pulling his moustache first on one side and then on the other.

"I think I shall. Not being official I might risk it with Latimer. I have written a long one for her. She's a charming girl, and in the short time that I had the opportunity I grew very fond of her," she replied, looking up into his face. "Unfortunately I did not remain long enough in Halifax to get acquainted with many of the ladies; but I had more than one long talk with Maud, and I assure you I admire her very much."

"You do not overestimate her, Mrs. Manning, and I am glad you like her."

"I could not help it," she responded as she bent again to arrange her plants. "She has high ideals and wonderful self-control, a true index of noble character."

"Yes, and she is as beautiful as she is good," said Beaumont impressively. "One of the women men rave over, but cannot win."

"They might as well cease their ravings—but not every one."

"Do you think so, Madame? Strange that you should learn in days what has taken me years to discover."

"Perhaps one woman can read another woman's heart quicker than a man can."

"Mon Dieu! Je ne sais quoi. I would give a fortune to read hers."

"Spare your ducats, Monsieur," said Helen with a light laugh. "But I can tell you something without money. In one of our talks she said she would never marry a man unless she loved him so much that she would gladly go to the ends of the earth with him; but that he must rise to her ideal before she would think of him at all."

"Is that ideal very high? Can no one reach it? Mon Dieu! I know one man who will do his best, give him only the opportunity."

"Make the opportunity. Make the effort," said Helen earnestly. "Remember, she is the only woman, he the only man. Both seek ideals, and the divine is still above them."

"Dear Madame, how good you are! You give me hope. Heaven knows how I love her!"

She had never heard him talk so before, and as they reached the cottage she held out her hand.

"Thank you, Dr. Beaumont, for your confidence. I wish you well. Yes, and I believe, also, that you are worthy to win."

The Doctor had the gallantry of his race, and bowing low, he raised her fingers to his lips.

"Harold is busy with his men at the new bridge," she said, looking over in the direction of the island.

"Yes," he assented. "He and Captain Cummings will be there with a large force all day."

"Please tell him, when you go down, that I shall be at the wharf to see him before they leave for dinner."

As the Doctor withdrew she entered the cottage. Emmiline was busily preparing wheaten dough for the oven. Her sleeves were turned up, her neck bare, and her dress fastened loosely at the girdle. A bright fire burned in the open fireplace, and in it a square sheet-iron oven had been placed to heat for the baking.

"How is the bread, Emmiline?" she asked as she opened the window a little wider.

"Oh, 'tees bon, Madame. Salt risin' good to-day. Yesterday mauvais bad. Oven nice heat. Put right in now." And she dropped the dough into a square tin, patted it on the back, and placed it on the shelf in the oven.

"Now," she went on, "Je vatch de fire—not too 'ot—not too cole—jes' de tres meedle."

"You must not work too hard, Emmiline."

"No fear, Madame. No fear 'tall. You jes' like Bateese; he al'us say tak' car', Emmiline, tak' car'. I only laugh. I strong an' work all de same."

"Still I want you to be wise. Mrs. Hardman will do any heavy lifting for you; and we cannot have you hurt yourself."

"I know dat—an' it ees nice to have de vemin's house so close. Dey be goot fellahs, bot'."

"When are they going to finish the room upstairs for you, Emmiline?"

"Oh, vere soon. De floor all right, de leetle window all right, and de laddare work goot. Bateese say not much mattare for more, now summare tam come."

Emmiline's cheeks were rosy again. She had not the sallow complexion so often seen; and moving so freely about the room, Helen's care for her seemed almost groundless.

The internal arrangements of the cottage were very simple. At one end were two rooms; the one, Harold and Helen's bedroom, the other, the store room, and in it the ladder to the upper story. The balance of the floor space made the living apartment; and, in the meantime, Emmiline and Bateese would occupy the upper room until after the event was over.

After giving directions about dinner, Helen put on a Quaker sunbonnet, and tripped over the green turf down to the edge of the water, where men were driving cedar posts to support the crossbeams of the island bridge. One gang were working close to the shore, another from a raft on the water, while a third were at similar work on the island beyond.

Captain Cummings had charge of the shore gang and Harold the island one. Helen did not know it until almost on the spot. If she had, she might have turned back.

"This is cheering, to be visited by the lady of the fort!" exclaimed Cummings, lifting his hat, "a delightful and unlooked-for compliment."

"Thank you," returned Helen, lightly; "but I'm afraid the compliment was unintended. I thought Harold was on this side, and ran down to have a word with him."

"What? to have words with your husband? Lucky for him he is so far away," returned the Captain with a laugh.

"Oh, they will keep till he comes to dinner!" said Helen, declining to see his meaning.

"Madame!" exclaimed Bateese at her elbow, "I tak' you ovare in mine leetle canoe. See!" and he pointed to a birch-bark that he had bartered with an Indian for a few days before.

"Won't that be fine?" she returned, as she hastened to its side. "Are you sure you won't upset me?"

"Bateese nevare upset canoe, no nevare."

"Oh, I remember, you are the man that never upsets anything!"

Bateese's eyes twinkled. He remembered too.

In another minute they glided over the water to the spot where the men were working.

"And Helen—alluring comes across the briny deep!" exclaimed her husband.

"Quite a mistake, Harold! I tasted the water and there isn't a bit of brine in it."

"How intensely practical! Don't you know that canoeing in Penetang should be poetic?"

"So it is," she replied. "Coming over made me dream of canoeing with you in the long evenings over this very bay."

"Yes, dearest. That's one of the delights in store for us. But come and see where Sir George has decided to build the magazine."

Parting the underwood they were soon upon a little hill, the highest spot of the island. To the north was the mouth of the harbor; while to the south, over the tops of Chippewa wigwams, lay the upper end of the long, narrow bay.

"Can those Indians be trusted?" Helen asked.

"Yes, perfectly. They arrived and put up their tepees a few days ago. They come here to fish every spring and go away again in the summer."

"So they will remain for a while," said Helen with a slight shiver.

"Probably. But they are nomadic and may go any time. Some bright morning before you even think of it, they will fold their tents and glide away."

"What a lot of them there are!" said Helen, prosaically.

"Yes, there must be fifty at least, counting braves, squaws, papooses and all. Latimer says the men will be very useful to us, while they stay, as runners and guides."

"I suppose Sir George meant these Indians this morning when he spoke of sending the mail through the woods to Little York. But did you know that the Latimers intend to sail to-night?"

"Not positively, though I suspected as much."

"That is one reason that I came to see you. Would it be safe to send one of my letters on the boat; or must they all go by Little York?"

"It would be safer by land than water, even if slower. Still a non-committal letter might be risked if you are careful in the wording."

"It is just a little message to Maud Maxwell and could not implicate any one. I do so want to send a few words and get news from there. It seems like an age since we left; and if it is lost it will not matter much. I only sent one before, and that was from Montreal."

"Well, do as you like, dearest. But my men are wanting me. They don't know how to place that plank."

They parted the bushes and in another minute were at the water's edge again.

"V'eell Madame go back right vey?" Bateese asked.

"Wait a moment; those squaws want to speak to me."

Two Indian women, clothed in blanket, short skirt and moccasins had been waiting her return. The older one, with long black hair loose over her shoulders, resembled the tall handsome girl beside her, and looked old enough to be her mother. She touched Helen on the arm.

"Pale-face squaw want moccasins?" she asked, holding out a pair decorated with beads and quills.

A strange thrill went through Helen as she felt the touch, and saw the dark, fierce face of the Indian woman so close to hers. But with an effort she controlled herself and answered:

"Yes, I want moccasins. These will fit me. How much are they?"

"Waupatheca not know. Pale-face tell her," said the squaw throwing up her hand.

"What shall I give her?" Helen asked of Harold, who turning from his men watched the scene with amusement.

"A piece of cloth, some needles and thread would be better than money," he said.

"But I haven't them with me."

"Give the moccasins back and tell her you will come again this afternoon. The Indians must not come to the house. Not so soon at any rate."

A dissatisfied expression came into the squaw's face; but she nodded and turned away, as her daughter, also unsatisfied, pulled at one of the strings of Helen's bonnet.

"Little Moon want it!" she exclaimed eagerly.

"Little Moon can't have it," returned Helen, arranging her hood and shaking her head, "but I will bring you something too."

The girl clapped her hands and laughed.

"Where did you learn English?" Helen asked.

"In Detraw," was her answer.

"How did you get there?" she questioned.

"Jibway Indians and squaws go in canoes every summare," was the answer; "sell skins, sell wampum, sell moccasin, sell fish, too."

The black eyes of the girl wandered restlessly toward the men who were working.

"What is your name?" Helen asked.

"Metsemee. It means Little Moon," she replied.

"What a beautiful name!"

"Pale-face squaw like it?" questioned the girl with a smile.

"Yes, it is like the silvery moon itself. And your mother's name, she did not tell me its meaning?"

"Waupatheca means White Swan; she came from the setting sun—the daughter of a Shawanee chief by the Wabash."

"And your father?"

"He is Big Thunder, Chief of the Ojibways. My mother calls him Pepapaunway-Nenimkee, because the lightning flashes when he is angry."

"Well, good-bye Metsemee," said Helen. "I will not forget my promise."

Little Moon again flashed a look at the men. Then turning she followed her mother to the tepees; while Helen, taking her seat in the canoe, was paddled across the channel by her faithful servitor.

CHAPTER XXX.

In plain clothes, without letters or despatches but well supplied with funds, Corporal Bond was chosen by Sir George to accompany Latimer and his wife on the first trip of the *Bumble Bee*. The order was to go no farther than was necessary, but to purchase provisions from the settlers living along the shore of the lake; and to return with the proceeds to the fort with all possible speed. This was outside of the ordinary scene of conflict, and the trip could be accomplished, Latimer declared, with safety.

Mrs. Bond, accustomed to the vicissitudes of military life, took the parting from her husband philosophically. She was proud of his selection for the trust, and hoping for his early return wished him God-speed, almost without a tear.

Perhaps of the two women, Helen was the sorrier. She betrayed more feeling, and with much reluctance parted with her old nurse again. When the women were so few, the absence of one, particularly this one, seemed like a desolation to her.

"I shall soon be back again," said Mrs. Latimer, as Helen wrung her hand. "So do not worry, child." She was thinking of the London days of long ago, when she nursed her and carried her so often on her shoulders.

"I wonder if she'll ever come back or is this the last I'll see of her?" was Helen's thought as she brushed away a tear.

The little brig spread its canvas, and by the darkening was speeding outside the harbor into the open lake.

A day or two later preparations were completed to forward official despatches and letters overland to Little York—the party to consist of Nenimkee, one of his Indians and two men of the regiment; and by arrangement the chief reported himself at Sir George's quarters, the evening previous to their departure, to receive final instructions.

The sun had just set among pillars of sapphire and gold. The day had been hot but the leaves were rustling upon the trees, for a gentle coolness was coming. Still the mosquitoes were too many to be blown away, and a smoke fire helped to nullify their ardor. Around it Sir George and his officers seated themselves to await the arrival of the chief.

Nenimkee was a typical Indian—tall, middle-aged, with high cheek bones and restless black eyes. To do honor to the occasion and his mission he dressed in native costume that night with wampum belt, girdle, tomahawk and knife.

"Glad to see you," said Sir George, extending his hand. "These are my officers, and this is Big

Thunder, Chief of the Ojibways—one of his Gracious Majesty's most loyal chiefs."

Gravely and silently the Indian shook hands with the men as they rose. Then he seated himself on a block by Sir George's side, and Lieutenant Manning handed him a pipe well filled with tobacco. The smoking was general and for some moments there was silence.

"Good tobacco," was Neninkee's first comment.

"Yes," said the Colonel. "We always give the best to our friends."

"Neninkee take some on his journey?" were his next words.

"Yes, you shall."

"White chief good—always good to Indians."

"Thank you, Neninkee," said Sir George. "Are you long back from the war path?"

"Seven moons," was the answer. The Indian shrugged his shoulders and for some moments again there was silence.

"Tell us about it," said the Colonel.

"Does Sir George want to know how the English were beaten, and driven back, and the Indian Prince and his men slain?" Big Thunder asked with flashing eyes.

"Yes," said Sir George. "The story must be a sad one. The English soldier does not like to hear of being beaten, but if true it is better for him to know it."

"And tell you about Tecumseh, and how Tecumseh fell?"

"Yes. Tell it all."

For some moments the Indian pulled vigorously at his pipe, and the men around the fire could hear his heavy breathing, as he drew in the fumes of the tobacco, and expelled them with every breath through his distended nostrils.

The last rays of the setting sun had disappeared, the wind had ceased, and the air was silent again, save for the croak of the lake frogs and the twang of a whip-poor-will in a neighboring tree. By-and-bye the Indian laid his pipe to one side, and fixing his eye on a bright star in the west far above the horizon, he commenced his story:

"The Ojibways are of the Algonquin race," he said; "a people that roamed, before the white man came, from the rising to the setting sun. I will not tell you of our wars with the Iroquois and Hurons, and with the people of the Great Father—which made the number of our braves less and less, and our women so few that you could count them like tassels on a little field of corn. But twenty moons ago, war sprang up from a little cloud no bigger than a man's hand; and the people to the south of the lakes dug up the hatchet and hurled it against the white men and the red men of the north. So the Indians in council buried the hatchet among themselves, and chose Tecumseh, the greatest warrior of the six nations, to be their chief, and swore by the Great Spirit, that they would stand side by side with their white brothers. Then it was that Algonquins and Hurons and Iroquois united as they never did before; and with the pale face Britons fought the common foe.

"Tecumseh led three thousand Indians to the fight, while White Chief Proctor led the British. For a while the enemy was driven back, their warriors fell by hundreds, and many of their scalps hung at the belts of Indian braves.

"Then the foe got mad and gathering more men together drove our people back to Amherstburg, where we fought them to the teeth. But the Great Spirit forgot that we were his people—our day turned into night—our victories into mourning. The Great Father's warships melted like snow beneath the sun, and American cannons mowed down our men like grass."

The Indian was growing excited. He sat erect, with hands gripping the block beneath him, and eyes fixed afar off as if in a vision.

"Did I say the Yankees whipped the English?" he commenced again in hollow tones, forgetful of everything but the graphic outlines of his terrible story. "Yes, but the big white chief was a coward and a squaw, or it would not have happened. Tecumseh said so, and Tecumseh never lied. Neninkee stood by him when the news came that all the captains and half the men on the lakes were dead, and the ships gone to the bottom. Then the Great Chief's heart shed drops of blood in anguish, but his eyes were dry, for an Indian never drops a tear.

"For a time the war-whoop was over. White men and red men fled back to the woods. Night and day they tramped through the forest back from the lake and on by the river. But the Yankees were after them, and scorning to die like dogs the Indians turned to meet their foe. Although the coward Proctor forsook him, Tecumseh shouted the war-whoop of the nations, and surrounded by his warriors with their tomahawks, met the horsemen from the south. Man after man did Tecumseh slay. Covered with blood and his body full of bullets he sprang at last upon Chief Johnson, the Yankee foe, and dragged him to the ground. Then he drew his knife to strike him to the heart—but it was too late—he had gone to the spirit land and half his warriors went with him."

"This is horrible!" exclaimed Sir George with a strong effort at self-control, for excitement was depicted upon every face. "I knew nothing of it. Not a word has reached me. But it is terrible to lose so brave a chief as Tecumseh."

"There was no one like Tecumseh," continued Neninkee in tones like the thrilling blast of distant thunder. "No arm so strong, no eye so true, no heart so soft when his little ones and his Laughing Fawn were with him. His bullet went straight to the bull's eye, and his arrow to the heart of the moose. His tomahawk never wavered, but as lightning from the eagle's eyrie strikes the tepee of the Indian, so his axe cleaved the skulls of his enemies, while his knife spilled their life blood at his feet. Now it is all over, and while the red man's blood cries for vengeance, his heart bleeds for his chief."

"How did you escape when so many were slain around you?" asked the Colonel.

"The sun went down as Tecumseh's war-whoop ended and Neninkee led his warriors deeper into the woods."

"Did you lose many men?"

"Forty braves went—only twenty came back."

"You did not join the troops again?"

"What use? All is quiet in winter. The Ojibways went straight to their wigwams."

"Do you know how the war goes this year?"

"Only that the fight is toward the rising sun."

"You will bring more news when you return?"

"It will not take many days," said the Indian. "But the woods are thick, the rocks many, and part of the way there is no trail."

"Still you will find the nearest road?"

"Does the crow fly crooked, or the nighthawk backward?" Big Thunder asked, sedately resuming his pipe.

"Nor does the Indian forget his cunning, nor the white man to reward his friend," said the Colonel, gravely. "You are going on the business of the Great Father, and he will expect his red brother of the forest to do his best."

"It is well. We will go quickly, and blaze the trees on the road, so that a fool, though blindfold, could find his way back again."

"Could not a bridle path be made through the woods to carry provisions overland from Little York to Penetang?" suggested the Chaplain.

"A good idea," returned Sir George. "We need them badly enough, and it will not do at present to depend upon securing supplies by water."

"A good trail can be made, but it will take two or three suns longer," was Neninkee's comment.

"We will leave it in your hands, then," said Sir George, rising to close the interview.

"The white chief shall be satisfied." With this, Neninkee left them, and at sunrise on the following morning he started with his party for Little York.

CHAPTER XXXI.

If it had not been for the game shot in the woods and the abundance of bass and pickerel caught in the bay, provisions would have been scarce at the new fort before summer opened. The heavy stock brought overland during the long march had served them well, but it was drawing near to an end, and all awaited with interest, not to say anxiety, the return of the messengers from York. When they did come, they reported that the trail was open for pack horses, and that supplies already purchased would soon be on the way.

In the meantime progress went on in the little settlement. The soldiers' quarters were completed and made comfortable; the pile-driving for the prospective bridge was finished, and even the stone walls of the new fort were in progress of erection. In agriculture something had also been done, for Indian corn and potatoes were growing well in the habitants' clearings.

What little they heard of the progress of the war was satisfactory, and during the long, bright evenings, the day's work being done, the stringency of discipline was often relaxed. Then officers and men, with the exception of those on duty, would give themselves up to relaxation and

pleasure.

Canoes had been purchased from the Indians, and swimming in the bay, as well as spinning over its waters, soon became of nightly occurrence, and none among the men enjoyed the sport better than Harold. So one evening, when the woods were green, he took Helen for their first long paddle. Captain Cummings and the Chaplain occupied a second canoe, while Sir George and Captain Payne enjoyed a quiet smoke as they strolled along the shore. The two birch-barks struck out past the northern end of the island and paddled abreast toward the mouth of the harbor. In the west the sun was setting in a golden flame behind the trees, while above them the blue vault was dotted with little grey clouds, fretted with spangles of silver. Scarcely a ripple disturbed the lake. Now and then a white gull flew from side to side, and a sportive pickerel splashed the water as he rose above the surface.

In a little while, Lieutenant Smith and the Doctor joined them, paddling over from the opposite shore. They had been hunting for partridge.

"What success?" called out Harold.

"Only two brace," was the answer.

"Why not come with us for an hour's run?"

"All right," and they dropped to the opposite side of Harold's canoe.

"What a solitary outlook!" said Helen, casting her eye from shore to shore. "Not another boat to be seen, and on land nothing but woods."

"It's a mighty picturesque spot, though," said the Chaplain, who was using his paddle a few yards to the right. "It is like the sea of glass spoken of in Revelations, reflecting the sky of the Orient."

"Or like the paradise of the houries," cried Captain Cummings, "where the wood nymphs bathe in the lake and bask in the golden sunlight."

"It is the promise of a fertile country," said Lieutenant Smith, "which needs the woodsman's axe to clear it, and the toil of the settler to cover it with happy homes."

"Yes, and to make it yield its thirty, sixty and a hundred fold," echoed the Chaplain.

"Mon Dieu! but you are all wrong," exclaimed Beaumont, taking off his hat and shaking his curly head. "It is just the forest of Penetang, where the Iroquois and Hurons fought for ages, and where the Jesuits of my people shed their life's blood and died among a race of unbelievers."

"That means, Doctor, that it resembles itself," chimed in Helen, with a laugh. "You are echoing ancient history—I would say it is like a Quaker's hood, the water is the face of the wearer, the tall trees all round it are the edge of the bonnet, the mouth of the harbor is the chin, and the little islands beyond are the untied strings."

A general laugh followed.

"Bravo!" shouted Cummings. "But what are you going to do with my nymphs in your Quaker bonnet?"

"Put them behind the island where they cannot be seen," was her answer.

"There are nymphs there already," cried the Doctor, "but instead of behind the island, they are in front of it."

And, glancing back, they could see the Indian women bathing.

"I suppose the time will soon come when this little harbor will have ships on it," said Helen, to change the subject.

"Yes," returned Harold. "Sir George brought instructions with him from England to build here the first brig."

"And when will he commence?"

"As soon as a saw mill can be built—not long to wait."

"So there are lots of things in store for us, Mrs. Manning," put in the Chaplain, with a laugh, "even if we have taken up our abode in a wooden country."

"Not a wooden country, Mr. Evans, but a country of woods."

"And pray, what is the difference?"

"As much difference as there is between a horse chestnut and a chestnut horse."

Again a ringing laugh was carried far out over the waters.

"We men should always have you with us, Mrs. Manning, to keep away the blues!" exclaimed the Chaplain, "and to that end I am just praying for that castle of ours to be speedily finished."

"One would think," returned Helen, elevating her eyebrows, "when the builders work so hard, that the castle does not need your prayers. Would it not be better to pray for the arrival of a lady

companion for the only lady in the camp, lest she might get the blues?"

"That's what I say," cried the Doctor, energetically. "It's a deuced shame to have Madame alone at the fort without a single lady friend, and the sooner we secure a suitable companion for her the better."

"Rather rough on you, Manning!" exclaimed Cummings, serenely.

"Pon my word, Doctor, I'll have to call you out, even if you are a Frenchman," said Harold, with a laugh.

"You know what I mean," returned the young man, his face flushing. "It was a Frenchman's thought. I cannot think fast in English, you know."

"Worse and worse!" exclaimed Cummings, with a laugh.

Harold bit his lip.

"How pretty that sunset is, with its deep golden yellow, so different from England!" said Helen, who did her best to repress a sigh. With all these men around her, even with her husband by her side, she was still alone.

"Yes, and with forest and lake, and sky and island, there is a fascinating beauty."

"The Indians say that to the north and west throughout the Georgian Bay the islands are like the leaves of the forest, they cannot be counted," Smith remarked.

"Still new fields to conquer," added Harold.

"New beauties to explore," said the Chaplain.

The canoes had almost reached the "glittering sands" to the right of the mouth of the harbor. The sun had set, and the gloaming was coming upon them with the placid stillness of a summer night.

"Suppose we return," suggested Helen. "It will be dark by the time we reach the shore."

"Paddle gently," ejaculated Smith in a low voice. "Let us wait a bit. You see those bushes beyond the sandy beach. Three deer come down there every evening to water—a buck with growing antlers and two does. If you sit still and do not speak they will not notice you. The Doctor and I will creep up a little nearer."

Smith, who was the crack shot of the party, picked up his rifle, while Beaumont, the skilled canoeist, paddled noiselessly toward the shore. The former had only time to creep under cover of the bushes to a spot where an open view could be obtained, when the deer, with heads erect and led by the stag, marched slowly down to the water's edge.

Not a paddle of the watchers moved, and scarcely a muscle. Beaumont sat in his canoe grounded on the beach, with eyes fixed on the deer, for he could just discern them beyond a stretch of sand. But Smith was invisible. A few moments of silence and suspense. . . with head bent forward the stag waded into the water, a doe on either side. Bang! went the rifle. The stag reared and fell forward with a splash. Quick as lightning his mates turned and fled to the woods, while a cheer rang out from the men in the canoes, as they paddled over to the spot.

"It was pitiful to see the poor does," said Helen, sensitively.

"But it was a capital shot," returned Harold. "I was doubtful if Smith could do it in the gathering darkness. It will make a good addition to our vanishing larder."

When they drew near Beaumont and Smith had dragged the handsome buck further on to the beach.

"Will it be safe to leave him here until the men come for him?" Smith asked, as he received the congratulations.

"I doubt it," said Beaumont. "Hark! yonder are wolves howling already. They must be hungry to be out so soon."

"The buck is too heavy to take in our canoe," said Smith, "unless the Doctor, the lighter man, can return in one of yours."

"Have him come with us," said Helen, turning to Harold.

"Certainly," was his answer. "There will be no danger with such a perfect canoeist."

In a few more minutes they were paddling homeward. The half-moon was hovering directly above them, and its sheen glowed in silvery light upon the water.

"Give us a French boat song, Doctor," said the Chaplain, who knew that he had a rich tenor voice.

"Not before miladi," was his answer. "If Madame will favor us first, I will follow."

"What will you have?" said Helen.

"A song of the chase or a boat song, we don't care which," said Smith.

"Well," replied Helen, with a smile at the ardor of the men. "If you can imagine it is morning

instead of evening, perhaps Scott's 'Hunting Song' will do."

The paddles almost ceased plying, and in the still night, her sweet contralto voice filled the air from shore to shore.

"Waken lords and ladies gay,
The mist has left the mountain gray,
Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming;
And foresters have busy been
To track the buck in thicket green.
Now we come to chant our lay,
'Waken lords and ladies gay.

"Waken lords and ladies gay!
To the greenwood haste away.
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot and tall of size;
We can show the marks he made
When 'gainst the oak his antlers frayed.
You shall see him brought to bay,
'Waken lords and ladies gay.

"Louder, louder, chant the lay,
'Waken lords and ladies gay!
Tell them youth and mirth and glee
Run a course as well as we;
Time! stern huntsman! who can balk,
Staunch as hound, and fleet as hawk?
Think of this and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay!"

Sweetly the echoes died away over the water, thanks of appreciation were murmured, and they were calling upon Beaumont to fulfil his promise when another song was wafted from the shore towards them.

"Why, that's Bateese," cried the Doctor. "He can sing better than I can. Listen to him to-night, mine will keep for another day."

"Hearken!" whispered Helen. "How quaint it is!"

Plus jolie femme ees nice an' neat,
I sorry ven I leave 'er,
Mit eyes so blue an' lips so sweet
She's cunnin' as de beaver.

She love me well, dis gal of mine,
For her I toe de scratch, sir;
Ba gosh! her name is Emmiline
An' I will be her match, sir.

For she was reeche, wid pater's gold
An' farm down by de rivare;
But mon cheval, it had be sold
An' all my tings, pis aller.

But now I work so hard again
To make up for my losses;
An' nevare more will give her pain
But cover her wid kisses.

An' from dis time I'll work and wait
As never yet did lover;
An' pray Mon Dieu to bless our fate
An' make her mine forever.

Den my sweet vife, ma fille so true,
Wid my fond arms around her,
Vill bless ma life, sweet entre nous,
An' make me still de fonder.

An' when de leetle garçon come
An' fille so p'tite an' jolie,
We bless de Lord an' for de same
Will give him all de glory.

The last verse almost took Helen's breath away, and, forgetting all about Beaumont's song, she bade the officers good-night, and with Harold hastened on shore to their own dwelling.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It was July before Colonel Battersby's column, after a long march from Montreal, reached Kingston and joined the forces of General Drummond, and none too soon, for word had been forwarded of the disastrous invasion of the Niagara frontier under Brigadier-Generals Scott and Ripley. Fort Erie had been taken, and Commander-in-Chief Brown, with a heavy force, had advanced against Major-General Riall and defeated the British forces at Chippewa. The country was ravaged, St. Davids burned, Niagara threatened.

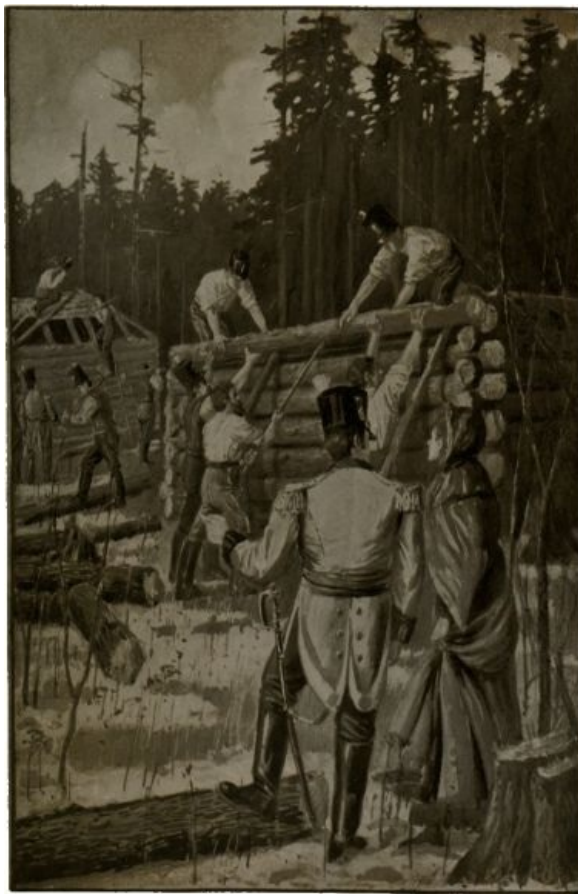
With all possible speed General Drummond pressed forward his troops, but it was the 25th of the month before Niagara was reached and Riall reinforced. Part of Colonel Battersby's command was left with the veterans stationed at Queenston, to oppose the landing of American troops there; while the balance, including Battersby himself, as well as Captain Morris and his company, continued with the main force in the advance toward Lundy's Lane.

At six o'clock of that memorable night, when Drummond's forces met Riall's at the junction of Queenston Road and Lundy's Lane, they were retreating before the superior force of the enemy. Countermanding the retreat, the Generals at once placed their guns in strong position on the hill. Eight hundred soldiers, however, added to the British troops still came short of balancing the forces. Nevertheless, the famous battle of Lundy's Lane commenced, and before night it was fiercely raging. As it progressed, reinforcements were received on both sides. This only added fuel to the flame, and it was not until midnight that the battle ceased.

Among orchards laden with fruit on hillside and summit, in little copses of woodland, in open plain, throughout that long twilight, until the pale moon sank in the west:

"Roar of baleful battle rose
And brethren of a common tongue
To mortal strife like tigers sprung."

What gave enthusiasm to Canadians and British in the contest was that they were fighting for home and country. The attitude of defender and invader can never be the same. The struggle of heart and soul against mere mentality cannot be equal. The one has virile force in every fibre of its being, ready to sacrifice life and limb to principle; the other mere elusive energy, begotten of baser metal.



"That'll be our new home, sweetheart"

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Still, the American infantry fought with gallant determination. With unflinching energy they made charge after charge to capture the British guns. General Riall, now second in command, was wounded and captured, and at nine o'clock it seemed as though the Americans would win. Then reinforcements poured in on either side. Though tired from long marches on that hot summer day, they at once rallied to the support of their respective commanders, and lighted only by the faint moonlight and the flash from the rifles, the struggle continued with redoubled fury.

The English gunners stood manfully at their posts and swept with deadly fire the lines of Brown's battalions. The carnage was terrific. White men of the same blood, the same language, the same religion, nay, in the highest ethics of the same race, shot each other down by hundreds, as if life were of no moment, bayonetting each other to death in the light of the silvery moon.

At last, spurred on by the determination to carry the battery at any cost, Colonel Miller, of the Twenty-first, made an impetuous rush, and for a time captured the British guns.

Now began the wildest scene of all—a hand-to-hand and bayonet-to-bayonet struggle for mastery. General Drummond's men rallied on every side, determined to fight to the bitter end, and hour after hour the slaughter continued. Everywhere the fight went on. The shouts of command, the thunder of artillery, the continual flashing of powder, the clashing of steel, mingled with the roar of Niagara and the groans of the dying, made it seem as though the demons of hell had been let loose to ravage the earth.

But six hours of mortal conflict were enough. Seventeen hundred men, Britons and Americans, lay side by side, dead or wounded, on that field of battle. The position of the British was too strong to be taken and held, and the invaders, realizing the futility of further effort, withdrew from the field, returning to Fort Erie, which they had already captured, and where they more adequately intrenched their position.

Left to themselves, the British were not long in making a change. Lights were lit, and at once men were dispatched to examine the field and search for missing comrades.

Colonel Battersby, although he had led his men in the thickest of the fight, had come off unscathed, but he knew that some of his officers had been slain or wounded. To his horror, Captain Morris, the man of his own selection, was missing. Eager to know the truth, accompanied by orderlies, he went carefully over the field. Headless trunks, disembowelled bodies, the dead, the dying, the wounded, were everywhere. Agonizing groans came from the fallen, both English and Americans, while side by side with them, stoic Indians with impassive faces did not utter a sound.

As they passed on, limbs were straightened, a comfortable position given or a wound staunch, while now and then a few drops from a pocket flask were poured between the lips of a life fast

ebbing away.

"Colonel, here's a captain's epaulets," ejaculated one of his men at last. A light was thrown upon a body whose face was hidden in the moss beneath an oak shrub. The man, though unconscious, still breathed, as he lay in a pool of blood. Wiping his face, they gently turned it upwards.

"My God! It is Captain Morris," exclaimed the Colonel.

Tenderly they placed him in an easier position. Blood from the scalp and side and leg were freely flowing.

"Tell one of the surgeons to come at once," was the Colonel's order, while he knelt to loosen his clothing.

In a few minutes the doctor came and made an examination.

"Suffering from concussion, as well as loss of blood," were his words. "Let us lay him on a stretcher and carry him to quarters."

In a few minutes they reached a vacant house on the lower side of the hill, which they purposed using as a temporary hospital.

"Who is it?" enquired General Drummond, as they approached.

"Captain Morris, sir."

"Ah, another brave man! One of our best officers! How many we have lost in this terrible fight! Will he live, doctor?"

"I hope so. He is not conscious, but he opened his eyes just now."

"Thank God! You must do your best for him."

"I will, sir."

They placed him on a settee on one side of the room, and the doctor dressed his wounds.

"I saw him fall," came in a low tone from a man in the opposite corner, whose foot had been shot off. He had fainted from loss of blood and the leg had been bound up until it could be properly dressed. "I belong to his company. Twice we were driven back—half our men had fallen—but he drew his sword and rushed on again, calling us to follow him—then a Yankee officer struck at him, so he knocked his sword back and ran him through—but a couple of sogers came at the Captain with their bayonets—that's the last I saw, for I got dizzy and fell—I didn't think I was hurt."

"You've said enough," said the doctor sharply. "We don't want you to faint again."

"All right, sir."

There was a deep flesh wound in Captain Morris' thigh and a bayonet thrust in his body, while the top of his scalp had been torn to the skull by a bullet.

"Pretty badly knocked out," said the doctor, "but not hopeless. His pupils are still sensitive."

The General expressed satisfaction as with Battersby he left the house. Several other shanties near by were being utilized for the wounded.

"I suppose the owners all fled on the approach of battle," said the General to Colonel Scott, who had charge of the relief department.

"Yes," was the answer. "This battle has been impending for days, and orders were issued to the people to escape to the back districts without delay."

"They may as well stay away now," said Drummond. "There are hundreds of wounded, and our first care must be for them. We may have beaten the enemy, but it has been at terrible cost."

"Your arrival, General, was a God-send. If your men had not come I don't know where we would have been."

"Your own vanguard helped to save us though. But the horror of it all—a thousand men have bit the dust."

"If we have fights like this, thousands more may do it yet before we are through."

"True, but it is a fight to the finish. We must hold our own. Never relinquish an inch."

For more than an hour Captain Morris remained unconscious. His continued insensibility caused much concern, and Sergeant Dennis, his faithful subaltern, was placed beside him to watch.

After a while, he opened his eyes and looked vacantly around him through the dim light. Gradually he took in the situation.

"Ah!" he exclaimed at last, fixing his eyes on Dennis and looking at his bandages. "I got hurt—did I?"

"Yes, Captain, a trifle," was the answer.

"And the battle—is it over?"

"Yes, Captain; keep still."

"Thank heaven!"

For a time there was a pause, and the Sergeant put some whiskey and water to his lips.

"I must be badly knocked out," he ventured again, after a while.

"Not so bad as some," was the answer.

"Bad enough."

"I will call the doctor or Colonel Battersby," said the sergeant. "I had orders to report."

"Wait a minute, Sergeant, it can't be three yet."

"It is, nearly."

"There is something you can do for me."

"I will do anything in the world for you, Captain."

"Thanks—you will be with me all night, won't you?"

"Yes, till daylight."

"Well, I'll tell you later—after the doctor comes."

"He's here now."

So the communication was delayed.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Half an hour later, the Sergeant again had charge of the Captain. He was weak and pallid, but his mind was clear, and he fixed his eyes on the Sergeant's face.

"Now, I can tell you," he said at last, with some difficulty.

"You had better not," returned the man. "The doctor says you must sleep before you try to talk again."

"It will only take a minute—I've got to say it now," said Morris.

"Very well," said the Sergeant, bending over him. "Speak low, Captain. Don't say more than you can help."

"It is only about two letters—they are in my wallet, and I want you without fail to send them on. One is directed to Penetang—I intended to forward it from York—but it was in the bottom of my wallet—and in the hurry of leaving I did not do it. The other is one of my own to Halifax. It, too, should have been sent on before we crossed the lake—but the order to march was so sudden that I had not time. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"I might have given them to the Colonel—but I did not want to bother him. Whether I get well or not, I want this off my mind."

"All right, sir. I will have them forwarded by the very first chance. You may depend upon that."

"Thank you, Sergeant."

The Captain pressed his hand and closed his eyes. Soon he was asleep.

The Sergeant, while he decided to carry out his instructions faithfully, thought it singular that so trifling a matter should occupy the attention of so sick a man.

"Well, I have something for you at last," said Miss Maxwell to her sister, one bright morning, several weeks earlier than the tragic events of the last chapter. She had just returned from the Citadel, and holding two letters high above her head, shook them gaily at Maud.

"I am so glad," returned that young lady, holding out her hand. "Who are they from? One from Mrs. Manning, I am sure."

"Who do you suppose the other is from? Which of your lovers has written you a letter?"

Handing over one she still held the other aloft.

"How foolish you are, Genie! This is the one I want to read first anyway."

Sitting down she broke the seal and commenced reading Mrs. Manning's letter, apparently unconscious that the other was waiting for perusal. The letter was a long one, and Maud's face glowed with pleasure as her eyes ran rapidly over its pages. Parts of it she read aloud, and other parts to herself. By-and-bye, when she had finished, she put it back within its cover, and held out her hand for the other one.

This was from Dr. Beaumont, and a slight flush suffused her cheek as she perused its contents. Gravely she read it through to the end without speaking a word.

"Are you not going to read it to me?" Eugenia asked as she sat opposite, quietly watching her sister's face.

"You may read all of Mrs. Manning's letter and welcome," said Maud, "but this from Dr. Beaumont I must keep to myself, for the present at least"; and she slipped it into her pocket. "Was not Mrs. Manning brave?" she continued.

"Indeed she was. She tells all about the journey and the new settlement, and the trials she had to endure."

"Yes," said Maud, "but there's an undertone through it all—even in her account of that terrible march along the Madawaska."

Maud turned to the window and looked dreamily out, while unconsciously she took the Doctor's letter from her pocket again and tapped the sill with it, as if to keep time to her thoughts.

"Dr. Beaumont comes in for his share of praise," said Eugenia as she read on. "I don't see how they could have done without him."

"Would not Dr. Fairchilds have done as well?" Maud asked in a low voice.

"He did not get the chance," was Eugenia's quick response.

"I always had doubt as to the real reason of that," said Maud.

"Mrs. Manning says," continued Eugenia, "that she sent a letter a few days before this one by a man in a sailboat, round by Lake Huron, but that this would be sent through the woods by Little York. Did you get the first one?"

"No. Possibly it may not come at all, and if it does it will be later, as the way by Georgian Bay would be much longer than the overland route."

"Have you been studying geography lately?" Eugenia asked, drawing down the corners of her mouth.

"It is not long since I left school, Miss Inquisitive."

That afternoon they called upon Mrs. Mason, and as they expected, found her loquacious upon the subject of Penetang. She said that Sir John Sherbrooke and Colonel Mason had both received despatches from Sir George.

"I understand that you are a favored one, also," she continued good-humoredly, turning to Maud. "Two letters all for yourself from the little new garrison, while not another lady in Halifax has received one."

"All owing to my fortunate meeting with Mrs. Manning," returned Maud with a slight flush. "Nearly all the troops were fresh from England, so their letters would naturally be sent home instead of here. Mrs. Manning's letter is very interesting. I brought it over for you to see."

"Thank you, and may I read it to Colonel Mason?"

"Certain parts, but not all. You will know what I mean."

"I'll take care, my dear. Trust me for that—but was there not another letter?—ah, ah, my lady—but I will ask no more questions"; and Mrs. Mason, with twinkling eyes, laughed softly to herself.

"Did not a ship come in to-day?" Eugenia asked.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Mason, "with another regiment. The Colonel says it is imperative for it to leave at once for Montreal as the war is not over yet, and it has important letters to carry."

"When will it sail, or did you hear?" Maud asked.

"To-morrow, I believe."

Maud's candle burned late that night again, and when the ship left for Montreal the next evening the mail bag contained two letters for Penetang, one to Mrs. Manning, the other to Dr. Beaumont.

More than a month passed away. The fortunes of war had been ebbing and flowing first on one side, then on the other—the belligerents on neither being as yet satisfied. Still the conflict was nearing the end. News travelled slowly then; but word of battle, even when three weeks old, was just as interesting as it is now when the happening was only yesterday.

The news of Lundy's Lane had arrived. The Citadel and all Halifax were excited over it, for although the British claimed the victory, yet two of the companies that had served in the fort for years, had been in the heat of the fight, and had lost more than half their men.

In small garrison towns, stationary troops soon become identified with the people, and the results of battle fill them with intense interest. Having once heard the rumour of the conflict, the people were anxious to hear more, and soldiers off duty were asked repeatedly for the latest details. At every street corner the battle was discussed; while in the homes it was the one absorbing theme.

With the news also came that letter to Maud forwarded by the Sergeant, but as already noted, written before the conflict.

"Captain Morris' name is in everybody's mouth," said Judge Maxwell to his daughters that evening. "The people are wild over him. They say he is one of the bravest officers in the service. What a pity he was so nearly killed!"

"Nearly killed! Is it so bad as that, father?" Maud asked with trembling voice.

"The news is three weeks old, and we cannot tell what may have happened in that time, but he was shot in the scalp and bayoneted in the body and the leg. What is more, he was leading what remained of his men for the third time, and struck down his opponent with his sword the very moment that he fell. If that is not bravery you will have to search the pages of history to find it."

Maud's eyes flashed, and she shot into her father's face a look of mingled exultation and anguish.

"But his wounds, father, are they dangerous?"

"Colonel Mason says, from the despatches, that he would not anticipate serious trouble from one of them by itself—but from the whole combined, particularly with midsummer heat, there might be. Still, without doubt, all will be done for him that is possible."

"Where are they keeping him, father?"

"In a cottage near the battlefield, on the Niagara River. If they can hold the place they will retain the settlers' houses for the use of the wounded until they are well enough to be removed."

"Who nurses the men, I wonder?" was Maud's next question.

"There won't be much nursing," replied the judge. "The men will do what they can to carry out the doctors' orders, but the poor fellows will have a tough time of it no doubt. It is always the case in a military campaign, no matter where you go or who is injured."

"And can we do nothing?"

"Nothing whatever, my dear. It is beyond the pale of civilization, one might say. Throughout that region there are few settlements and no good roads. Supplies are taken in with great difficulty, and often have to be carried in on the backs of the soldiers. As for people here going over to help, by the time they got there, the whole place might be deserted."

"You are a Job's comforter, father."

"Father's quite right," said Eugenia. "But it is terrible to think of poor, brave Captain Morris suffering so frightfully. I wish those dastardly Yankees were in——."

"Not in Halifax," interrupted the judge with a smile. "We don't want them here even if we could whip them, which I am not so sure about. But you are on the wrong tack Genie. The Yankee soldiers are not dastardly. They are just as brave as ours are, and in that very battle lost as many men as we did."

"But when the battle was over, and the Americans retreated," said Eugenia, "who looked after their wounded?"

"The British, of course."

"And dressed the wounds of their enemies just the same as those of their own men?"

"Certainly. That's the only bit of civilization in it."

"And what would the Americans do if they were the victors?"

"Just as the English do."

"There's Christianity in war after all," said Maud.

"Another paradox," said the judge. "It is always the Christian nations that do the most fighting."

"Were not Napoleon's wars an exception?"

"Not by any means. It was the Christian nations that opposed him; and half of his own men professed the faith."

"But how soon do they expect to hear again of the wounded?" Maud asked somewhat impatiently.

"The way is open now and word will come every week," replied her father. "And thank God the war will soon be over!"

Captain Morris' letter affected Maud differently to Dr. Beaumont's. It stirred the martial enthusiasm in her nature to know that he had been a hero in the fight. But the feeling changed as she thought on. He had fallen bravely, probably without a murmur, but it was weeks ago. How was he now? and in any case how intensely he must have suffered! And then to know that he had written that letter, the only one she had ever received from him, only a day or two before the fight that may have cost him his life. Over and over again she read it; every word seemed to have a new meaning. Was it not sad in tone—premonitory of coming evil? Was there not a shadow behind the hand rendering dark the future, filling his life with the elusiveness of love, and producing in his heart passionate disdain?

She shivered when she thought of what might have happened to him there, and while proud that such a man should give her his confidence, she was carried away with a passion of feeling that at the time she could neither analyze nor understand.

Would a letter reach him? If it only could? At any rate she must do her part and send him a message. This time she wrote rapidly. She seemed to be under physical obligation to do her most and her best, without a thought of anyone but the wounded captain. After a while she finished the letter and went to bed.

Notwithstanding the restless tossing and wakefulness that followed, she rose early to post it. Then her mind wandered off beyond Niagara to Penetang; and, taking out another letter which she had often read before, she thoughtfully perused it again.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The ebb and flow of battles on sea and land in the War of 1812 and '14 do not belong to this story. Sir John Sherbrooke's despatch of men fresh from the European wars to Eastport, Castine, Bangor and Machias, Maine, and the retention of the *Penobscot* and *St. Croix* by the British till the war was over, are matters of history. So also is the victory of the American General Macomb at Plattsburg, where with five ships of war and fifteen hundred men he drove back twice as many British vessels and troops under the command of their weak and incapable head. No wonder that officers broke their swords and vowed they would never fight again under such a leader. But on the war dragged, sometimes with success on one side, sometimes on the other; and if it had not been for the harassing blockade of the Atlantic seaboard, when Britain's navy, let loose from European conflict, came over to fight the battles of her colonies, it is hard to tell where the fratricidal war would have ended.

Month after month passed by. Villages were pillaged; forts were captured and recaptured; cities were bombarded and wasted; York was ransacked; Niagara was burned; Washington was stormed by shot and shell and its buildings set on fire. Even after peace was declared, the final battle of New Orleans still had to be fought, where two thousand of the flower of the British troops were lost within the trenches, their general slain and the remainder put to flight, while only a handful of the American defenders in their entrenched position were either wounded or slain.

Such is war with its mighty agony, its seas of flowing blood, its tumultuous passion, its frenzied rage, the most inhuman of all human things; and yet withal, the purifier and ennobler of the races of men, who would not do without it, and thank God that it was abolished? And yet, when rights are trampled on, when liberty is invaded, when oppression is rampant, with Empire in the van, who would not draw the sword again, and thank God that by its glitter and fury, wrong could be righted and truth made plain?

At last peace was declared, and the tired people of both nations but of the one race, wondered what they had been fighting about.

Without solving the question they smoked the calumet, offering up the fumes as incense while they fervently prayed that the tyrannies of life should never again force them to draw swords against each other.

To Penetang, however, the din of battle did not come. Month after month during that first long summer, the troops revelled in the ways of peace; and it was astonishing what progress they made in the practice of the mechanical arts. In Captain Payne's engineering corps were carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, saddlers, tailors, and men who had followed a dozen other trades—all useful, aye, more than useful—in the founding and establishment of the new garrison.

By the end of August the walls of the stone fort were up and an army of men were working with energy towards its completion. The design was to have it ready for occupation before winter arrived. The trail cut through to Little York had also proved of service, for as the months passed by, mail matter and goods were carried regularly over to Penetang.

While all else denoted prosperity, the non-return of the *Bumble Bee* caused much anxiety; for

throughout the long summer nothing was heard of it, not a single word came from either Corporal or Skipper. Many were the conjectures, and night after night was the subject discussed around the camp fires of the little garrison.

Mrs. Bond had a little room in Mrs. Hardman's quarters, and from her larger experience and fuller confidence in her husband, she was the more hopeful of the two.

"Whatever has happened to Latimer, Peter Bond will be sure to come back. He's the honestest man alive, and he'd die before he'd turn traitor," were her words.

"That's true; but suppose the Yankees 'ave shot the men and cabbaged the boat?" suggested her pessimistic friend.

"It might be," returned Mrs. Bond, tightly drawing in her lips, "but the *Bumble Bee* wasn't a fighting craft. Yankees might steal her, and all she 'ad aboard, but it wouldn't be natural for 'em to kill the men. They'll both turn up sometime. I'll warrant that."

"She's just right," returned Private Hardman. "They may 'ave taken 'em prisoners and looted the craft, but that's the worst that could 'ave 'appened 'em."

"An' vat about de voman?" asked Bateese, who had just come down from Helen's cottage.

"They'd set her free, and she's hanging round till her ole man gets off," said Hardman.

"Mebbe," commented his wife.

"Yes, mebbe," said Hardman. "They're not dead anyway. The Corporal will come back again in time, but Latimer and his wife mayn't. Why should they? They're gone three months. What 'ud be the use?"

"We'll miss the woman worst," said his wife. "She's like one of ourselves. It's too bad, when there's so few of us."

"If my man turns up I won't care much about the rest," said Mrs. Bond. "Though I did hear Mrs. Manning say that if it hadn't been for Latimer's wife, when she first come, she didn't know what she would 'a done. But my! She had a sperit. She kep' the ole fellow in his place I tell you."

"Vas she de boss?" Bateese asked.

"Inside that little box cabin of hers she was."

"What about the obeyin' bizness, as the prayer book says?" enquired Hardman.

"Inside he did the obeying—outside, she did."

"By Gar, dat's about vat it should be!" exclaimed Bateese. "Now, my Emmiline she boss me inside always. She say, 'Bateese, you come here.' I come. 'You go dere.' I come too. She say, 'Bateese, vous garçon, vat you make dat splash on de floor?' I say, 'Pardonnez moi, mon ami,' She say, 'All right,' an' I don't make it no more. Den I go outside and make splash all over eff I want to."

"And do you want to?" said Hardman. For answer Bateese shrugged his shoulders.

"How is Emmiline tonight?" Mrs. Hardman asked. "I 'aven't seen her since morning."

"She be nice—but I stay 'most too long—she vant you to come and see her again right away."

"And how is the boy?"

"Fine! Oh, mon fils, he beeg bouncing garçon. Doctare say he weigh ten pound—an' he so goot he almost laff."

"Bateese, you're crazy."

"Veil! he open his eye and try to laugh—den—cause he can't, he cry."

And Bateese hurried off, after his long wait, to tell Emmiline that Mrs. Hardman was coming.

One Sunday morning several weeks later, the Chaplain was waited on by Bateese. Breakfast was over, and having arranged his books and notes, he was putting on his surplice in preparation for the service he was about to hold in the barrack yard.

"Good morning, Bateese," said the Chaplain.

"Goot mornin', Padre," replied the habitant, pulling his forelock.

"What can I do for you?"

The exceeding gravity of Bateese's countenance made his mission very uncertain.

"Nothing wrong, I hope. Is Madame Bateese well?"

"Oui, oui, Padre."

"And that big bouncing boy of yours?"

"Yes, he tres bien, Monsieur."

"Well, my man, I'm glad to hear it. Tell me now what you want. You see I haven't much time to lose. The men are gathering for the service."

"Veil, Monsieur, it ess about de boy. Ve call him George after de Colonel, and Emil after me, and Emmiline want to have him baptize, vat you call christen."

"I'll be glad to do it, but you are too late for this service."

"Dat all right—we don't vant no service—we vant it done all by hisself."

"But the Church does not baptize its children that way. They are done in the congregation before the people."

"But, Padre, me an' Emmiline goot Cat'liques. Ve no Engleese. Only no priest in de troop—and Emmiline go clean crazy if ve no get it done. You know, Padre, ve loss our dear petite babees. Ve no vant to loss dis wan too."

"I see," said Mr. Evans. "You want me to christen the child privately."

"Yees, Padre."

"Well, bring him over to my quarters at three o'clock and I will do it then."

Bateese, while expressing his thanks for the Chaplain's kindness, still appeared nervous and stood twisting his hat as before.

"One more ting, Padre, Emmiline always goot Cat'lique. Always go to church, always count her beads at night. Vell she see de curé before she leave Kebec, and he say—if she ever have child again, an' leeve vere dere is no priest—she must burn holy candles and have holy vater—an' den some minister of some oder church could baptize de boy all de sam."

"And have you got the candles and the holy water?" the Chaplain asked with a smile.

"Oh, yees—Emmiline bring everyting."

"So she got them from the priest six months ago and brought them with her to celebrate the christening."

"Oui, Padre, she did."

"She's a good woman," returned the clergyman, laughing heartily, "and although its against the rule to use holy water and candles at a christening, tell her I will do my best—and shall baptize the boy as well as any priest could do it in Quebec—and to please her I will use both."

A halo of light spread all over the little Frenchman's face, and happy as a king he hastened away to tell the good news to Emmiline.

So that Sunday afternoon was celebrated the first christening among the troops at Penetang. It was made memorable, too, in more ways than one, for at the request of Emmiline, Mrs. Manning acted as godmother, while in honor of its priority and from the fact that the child was named after himself, Sir George accepted the position as godfather; both of which events delighted not only the parents of the child but the whole garrison as well.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The first summer at Penetang was full of new experiences for Helen. The feminine loneliness was very trying, and if it had not been that her hands and mind were always busy working and planning, she would have felt the solitude even more than she did. The summer was half gone before the first letters came; and the monotony of waiting was broken only twice afterwards before the season was over. Fortunately, however, they never came singly, and each bore reading again and again, before the succeeding budget arrived.

The absence of congenial companionship of her own sex was what she felt most keenly. Still the presence of the little French woman, Emmiline, gave a break to the monotony. Her lively chatter whiled away many an hour; and with little Emil came new life; for Helen was deeply interested in the welfare of her little godson. Possibly, also, the best substitute for an absent friend may be the presence of that friend's lover; and as Maud Maxwell was the one who had expressed a desire to be with her in her western home, she longed for her the most.

After Dr. Beaumont made Helen his confidant, they had many long talks, and the more they talked the more she became convinced of his genuine devotion. One afternoon this was particularly impressed upon her. It was the day of the regular drill, and she was seated alone under an oak tree in front of her cottage, re-reading one of her letters. Everything was still around her, when being deeply absorbed, she was startled by the approach of footsteps.

"I beg your pardon, Madam!" exclaimed the Doctor. He had just returned with a string of bass from the bay. "I am sorry if I have disturbed you."

"Don't mention it," she replied with a smile. "Everything was so still. Why, what a catch you have had!"

"They bite well to-day. Aren't they beauties? Two of them will weigh three pounds apiece. Why is it so quiet here? Are all the men away?"

"The soldiers, as you know, are drilling, and the habitants are finishing the fallow."

"I thought it peculiar to find you entirely alone."

"None but the women and the sentinels are about."

"I saw you reading a letter," said Beaumont, laying his fish behind a log in the shade, and taking a seat beside them. "Is it a new one, may I ask?"

"No, I am sorry to say. I am foolish enough to read all these old ones more than once."

"More than once," he echoed. "Why, I read mine every day, sometimes over and over again."

"You extravagant man! You will wear them all out before the next supply arrives."

"Ah, but I am careful!" he laughingly replied, "and then I have only had two from her. They both came with yours."

"I hope another will come soon," she returned, following his wistful gaze over the water.

"Oh, yes, mon ami," he cried passionately. "Eight months since we left Halifax, and only two letters."

"It is three since our first ones went over the York trail, so we are sure to receive others soon; and I know from the way Maud writes she is interested in Penetang."

"Interest is one thing and love is another," said the Doctor, dubiously. "If I felt sure that the first would develop into the second, I would praise the gods. But what is there to make it possible? A thousand miles between us! I did not think an *affaire du coeur* could be so serious; but now I know it. When so distant she may never care."

"You do not know the ways of a woman's heart, Doctor. She might not love you then, but she loved no other; and before another man could win her heart he would be weighed in the balance with yourself. Although absent, rest assured you are not forgotten."

"But to be remembered is not to be loved," said Beaumont again, "and a present suitor may win what an absent one has lost."

"Did it never strike you that distance itself might fan the flame of love. My mother used to say that 'absence is the furnace in which true love is tried! It tries the man but it tries the woman also.'"

"If absence has increased hers as it has mine, I shall be more than satisfied," said the Doctor.

"Something in you appealed to her, that I know," said Helen.

"Ah! She is divine," cried Beaumont, again becoming ecstatic. "I can never forget her."

"Did you never forget her?" asked Helen, demurely.

"No, never."

"Not even when dancing at the Citadel with Louise de Rochefort?" she asked mischievously.

Beaumont's face flushed.

"Pardonnez, Madam, that was a little break—an hour's amusement—une petite Mademoiselle of my own people, and in my own old city! What harm? Surely you will not ask a Frenchman to stand at one side and allow all the beauty and élite sweep past him in the gay valse without saying a word. No, no, Madam, that would never do"; and he finished by shaking his curls in a merry laugh.

"And you think you are deeply, earnestly, sincerely in love with Maud?"

"I swear it. She is divine, I say. Her glorious eyes, her ravishing beauty, her inflexible will, her exquisite soul, make me her slave, and I cannot help myself. Madam, I adore her. She is my patron saint, my heavenly jewel on earth!"

"You deserve to win her," said Helen, gravely. "Why not press your suit by letter more strongly than you have ever done?"

"That I cannot do. I gave her my word not to attempt it any more until I see her. Of course I write; my letters are full of love. Mon Dieu! How can I help it? But I am never to ask her to be mine until I see her."

"In that case you must keep your promise, and as a true woman she will think all the more of you. But there is one thing I wanted to ask. Have you anything to keep a wife upon besides your salary

as surgeon? You see how practical I am."

"Thank the Holy Virgin, I have. My father left me independent of any income I may receive from the army."

"One other point, Doctor. As your confidant you must excuse my queries. How can you, a Roman Catholic, expect so staunch a Churchwoman as Maud Maxwell to consent to be your wife?"

"Truly a serious question—and one that I have not forgotten, but do you know that religion is much more to a woman than it is to a man?"

"It ought not to be."

"That is true, though I am sorry to say it was not so in my mother's case. My father was a French seigneur of Lower Canada and a Catholic, while my mother was a Scotch Presbyterian. Why she joined my father's Church I could never tell, except that my father was a dominant man, and that there was no Presbyterian church within fifty miles of where we lived. Consequently, my brothers and sisters and myself were all brought up in the Catholic faith. What is more, Agatha, my sister, being disappointed in love, entered a cloister, and is now a nun in a Montreal convent."

"That is sad."

"Perhaps it is. Yet I would not say a word against the sisterhood or the Romish Church. They are both maligned. But I am sorry that my only sister, a bright and beautiful girl, should be hopelessly consigned to the life of the cloister."

"I appreciate your feelings, Doctor. But will this influence your own future?"

"It may. A sensible man should look to the future as well as the present. If Maud Maxwell should ever become my wife, I would never ask her to renounce her faith; I might even be willing to espouse Protestantism, for which so many of my mother's ancestors died."

"And if you don't marry Maud Maxwell?"

"There's the rub!" exclaimed the Doctor, shrugging his shoulders. "I shall probably stay where I am, for as I said, religion is not so much to a man—I am broad enough to believe that if a man lives up to the best that is in him—an upright and honorable life, and acknowledges the eternal Fatherhood of God with Christ as his Saviour—whether he believes in the Blessed Virgin or not—he is all right. He can follow any creed he likes, from the simple Quaker faith of New England, right up to that of the great Roman Church—the mother of them all."

"I congratulate you on the breadth of your creed, Doctor."

"A man's life is his creed."

"That will be in the doctrines of the future, but it is not now, unfortunately," said Helen.

"Ah, hear the rifles, the target practice has commenced."

"Yes, and it is time my fish were looked after; bon jour, Madam," and he took them off to the cookhouse at the officers' quarters.

In a few minutes Sir George and Captain Cummings came up from the target field, leaving the other officers in charge; and as Helen had not yet returned to her cottage, they joined her.

"And how goes the shooting, gentlemen?" she asked, looking at the Colonel.

"Oh, bravely!" returned Sir George. "Your husband is one of the best shots among the officers. They all take a round at it, you know."

"What of Lieutenant Smith? Some one told me he was a capital shot."

"So he is, the best in the regiment."

"Hurrah for the two lieutenants!" exclaimed Helen, with a laugh. "What of your own success, Captain Cummings?"

"I don't profess to be an expert," he replied evasively; "if an officer keeps his men up to the mark, he adequately fills the bill—Smith and Manning have both done excellently, though."

Cummings was smiling serenely, but there was an accentuation in his words that grated on Helen's ear.

"Do you know, my dear?" said Sir George, turning towards her, "that our Fort will be ready in a week, and that we must have a grand opening to do honor to the occasion?"

"With torchlight procession, grand ball and finest orchestra of the season?" suggested Helen.

"Yes, more than that. We expect every lady within fifty miles at least to accept our invitation."

"I' faith, that will be fine"; but her animation was gone. There was dew upon her eyelids.

"I was joking," exclaimed the Colonel, "pray forgive. It is solitary enough for you now, but it won't be for long. 'Twill be better by-and-bye."

"Please excuse my foolishness," returned Helen, bravely keeping back the tears, "but do you

really mean to open the Fort then?"

"Yes, and joking aside, we intend to celebrate it with all éclat possible, and we want you to do what you can to assist us."

"You may rest assured of that, Sir George," she replied, "however little that may be."

"And I take this opportunity," he continued, swinging off his helmet with a graceful bow, "to invite the first Lady of the land to be my partner at the opening quadrille?"

Helen had conquered her emotion and, although amazed, was equal to the occasion. With a sweeping courtesy, she replied:

"Your request is granted, sire." Although what in the world he could mean by such an invitation she could scarcely imagine.

Captain Cummings gave the Colonel a sharp glance and bit his lip. Helen noticed it and so did the senior officer.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Two afternoons later Helen went with the women Bond and Hardman to gather blackberries, which were ripening in rich profusion upon bushes scattered along the southern border of a copse of hemlock. The women had been gathering the fruit for days, and on this occasion Helen had arranged to go with them. For a while all laughed and chatted and picked the berries side by side; but as the good patches became more scattered, they drifted apart, each working on in silence.

Helen's pail was almost full, and she was on the point of hailing her companions to return to the garrison, when the report of a gun in the adjacent woods startled her. There was a tramping, a rustling, a dividing of the bushes, and the huntsman appeared.

"This is a surprise! I hope my shot did not frighten you," exclaimed Captain Cummings, who carried a brace of partridges in one hand and his fowling-piece in the other. "I had no idea that there was anyone so near. It was lucky that I was not shooting in this direction."

"I am as much surprised as you are," replied Helen. "I thought all the officers were in consultation this afternoon at the island."

"Oh, yes! we gathered together for an hour. Sir George wanted to discuss the arrangement of the guns and port-holes of the magazine. Then some of us were detailed to duty; Lieutenant Manning to the men at the bridge, Captain Payne to planting the guns, Smith to the fort works, and myself, for a wonder, for an hour's sport. Don't you think I'm doing pretty well for an amateur? This bird was not by any means near, yet I took his head clean off."

Helen acquiesced. She had not forgotten the conversation of the previous day, but was gathering herself together, while thoughts innumerable chased each other through her mind.

"That magazine block-house will be a credit to Captain Payne," she commented. "Its timbers are so large and square and smooth. One would think they should last a century."

"So they will. The funny point about the little island, just now, is the presence of Indians at one end, while the building of the citadel is going on at the other."

"But the Indians are friendly."

"Yes, and the chief has the reputation of being as great a warrior as his daughter, Little Moon, has of being a beauty. Some of our men are wild over her."

"I wish they would leave Little Moon alone!" exclaimed Helen, angrily. "She is a sweet girl, and I sincerely hope she has sense enough to keep them in their place."

"I am sure she has," returned Cummings, with a laugh. "It would not be safe for any of them to trifle with his daughter's affections while Chief Nenimkee is around. But one of the fellows is in genuine earnest, and has already asked the Colonel if he could make her his wife."

"Who is that, pray?"

"Oh, that handsome young Irishman, Patrick O'Neil."

"Did Sir George grant his request?"

"Yes, conditionally, on good behavior during the next two months, coupled with the consent of the chief."

"And what about Little Moon herself? Does she care for him?"

"I think she does, but she is a proud girl, and will need winning—a part of the bargain Pat is ready for."

"My pail is full now," said Helen. "Will you call the women, Captain? It is time to return."

"Wait a moment, please," said Cummings.

Helen turned a questioning look toward him. Again she met that peculiar expression in his eyes which she had seen so often. It was furtive yet piercing, and gave her a little thrill.

"I just want to talk with you a moment," he said lightly. "I so rarely get a chance that I feel like thanking my stars when one does come in my way."

"Well, what is it?" she asked, reverting her gaze to the women, and regretting to herself that they were nearer to the Fort than she was.

"In the first place," he said with another laugh, "I wouldn't bother the women about the pail. I can carry it myself until we catch up to them. And in the next, why do you always take me so seriously? What have I done to offend you? I am the captain of your husband's company, yet apart from Sir George, with whom I often see you chatting, you talk with the Doctor, or the Chaplain, or Captain Payne, or even Lieutenant Smith, on the freest terms, while you almost avoid myself. Come, Madam," he exclaimed, with a forced attempt at gaiety, "give an account of yourself."

Helen felt those piercing black eyes fixed upon her, although she was not looking in his face, while a soothing, dreamy influence seemed to be stealing down from her brain over her body and limbs, which required all her strength of will to resist.

"Well," she replied, with a supreme effort to control herself and keep her eyes from involuntarily meeting his. "In the first place, I am picking berries to assist the women, and must insist upon them taking charge of my pail. In the second place, am perfectly aware that you are the captain, and that my husband is only the lieutenant, but I have never had the slightest desire to be discourteous to you. It would be unreasonable for me to be so."

"Nevertheless, by my faith, you might have been kinder," he returned, with a deep modulation in tone, that was much akin to his look.

"I am sorry if I have not been." There was a slight tremor in her voice. "But I am sure the officers should not expect too much from the only lady among them."

"Do not mistake me, my dear Mrs. Manning," were his next words, in the same deep undertone. "Give me, I beseech you, an equal chance with the rest, and I shall be more than satisfied."

Helen could scarcely control herself. His manner and bearing, some inner potentiality, were producing an agitation upon her that would have been impossible from the words only.

Cummings saw this and was satisfied, and to add gratitude to the other effects of the interview, he waved for the women to join them. They had been expecting the signal for some time and hastened to obey, but were too far off to have any idea of what was passing between Captain Cummings and the sweet lady whom they all loved.

"Mrs. Manning wants you to carry her pail of fruit," he explained to them. "It is very full and she is tired. Good-bye, Madam," he continued, again lifting his hat. "I want to get another brace before I return if I can."

In another minute he had disappeared.

Helen's face was calm again, although her heart thumped wildly, and forcing herself to speak to the women, she talked to them about the berries.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

To Helen Captain Cummings was an enigma. She could not understand him, and in search of a solution her mind persistently returned to the interview in the woods, and the conversation that passed between them. The more she thought of it, however, the more convinced did she become that there was truth in the Captain's contention, and the question of exhibiting equal cordiality in her relations with the officers of the garrison presented itself to her mind in a new light. Possibly, she had been less impartial than the conditions called for, and if so she was willing to make amends.

Yet there was another side to the question: the other officers were spontaneous and candid in their dealings with her, while obscurity and indefiniteness always seemed to have been impelling forces with Cummings. There was something in his actions and manners that she could not comprehend. Still, the fault might be in herself. All men were not open-minded; and with a desire to be just, she determined to conquer, if she could, that peculiar nervous tension which his

presence when alone with her always produced.

There are things which every true woman fights out for herself. As a complete entity, she does her own thinking, unguided and unaided, revealing her inmost thoughts to none. Helen told Harold of the shot she heard in the woods, and of Cummings' appearance immediately afterwards in the berry patch beside her—even of his offer to carry her pail—and then of his return to the woods to resume his shooting. But, paradoxical as it may seem, she said nothing of the real nature of her difficulty with Cummings. Of mental impressions received, she alone had the record. Then why sow distrust between her husband and the Captain? No good could possibly come of it. So unless matters became worse, she would refrain from letting him, as she still refrained from showing him her diary.

In a few more days, amid general rejoicing, the stone Fort was ready for occupation. Order out of chaos had come at last, and it presented a fine appearance on that memorable first of October, when its wide door was thrown open for the first time to admit its future occupants. Above the roof the Union Jack unfurled before the breeze, while the bugle boy, with shrill piping, summoned all—officers and men—to join in the celebration.

Here and there around the building were little groups of soldiers, while the Indians had gathered in front of the Fort to see how white men conducted themselves on occasions like this.

Early in the day, the last of the goods from Helen's house and the officers' quarters were carried in and arranged, for it had been decided by the Colonel that she must be queen of the citadel from the first, so when three o'clock arrived, and Sir George took his place on a little stand in front of the Fort to address the people, everything was in order, and loud and prolonged cheers greeted him.

"Officers and men of the 100th, French-Canadians and Indian brothers," he commenced. "We may all congratulate ourselves on the progress made since we came to Penetang. You have done your best. You have worked with a will, and we have every reason to be satisfied with what we have accomplished. Right through the summer we have had comfortable quarters to live and sleep in, and now through the management of Captain Payne, after six months of working and waiting, we open our garrison—our little stone castle—of which every one of us is proud. Here we have a home for the officers of our troops, and the upper storey, when supplied with arms and ammunition, will enable us to defend our harbor against any foe who may dare to invade us. As you know, too, to strengthen our position we have built a bridge across to the island. On that island stands our newly erected magazine, armed with the cannon which we dragged through the woods all the way from Halifax—and over that little magazine floats our country's flag (loud cheers).

"Right in front of me, too, I am glad to see so many of the warriors of the Ojibway tribe. To their brave chief Nenimkee we owe much. I would have them remember that the white men never forget their red brothers, and the Great Father across the sea thinks of them still. When word was sent to him of the death of the brave Tecumseh, the Prince of the Six Nations, while fighting the battles of the King, the command came back: 'Build me a ship at Penetang; make its masts strong; let its timbers be of the best woods of the forest; let its braces be of the toughest iron; let its cords be of the purest hemp, and its sails of the finest flax. Then it shall be manned with the guns that I will send you, and it shall be called by the name of the mightiest of all warriors, Tecumseh.'"

A wild yell filled the air, every Indian bounded off his feet, and for a few moments the terrific war-whoop of the Ojibways deafened the ears of the astonished listeners. The unexpected announcement was only understood by the chief and a few of his men, but the effect upon them was magical. They forgot their accustomed reserve, and in the excitement of the moment showed their appreciation by a note, the most intense that they could utter, and every other Indian took the utterance as the command of his chief. Quiet, however, soon returned, and Sir George concluded his speech.

"In the name of the Great Father," he continued, "I thank our red brothers for their approval. A ship will be commenced very soon. Captain Payne will build it, and next summer it will be launched."

"Of one other thing I would remind our officers and men. A sweet lady, whom you have all learned to love, will be mistress of our castle, and I know you will treat her with that courtesy and kindness which she so richly deserves. She will adorn the office with grace and dignity, and it will be our pleasure to make her life happy, and to show our appreciation of her bravery in so willingly casting in her lot with her husband and ourselves."

Again the applause was long and loud, and in this even the Indians joined.

Night came. A score of candles lit up the white timbers of the entrance chamber of the Fort. All the ladies within fifty miles of Penetang had honored the Colonel's invitation by a kindly acceptance, but they numbered only one.

Painted wooden chairs, imported by Indian trail from Little York, stood around the walls of the room, and the oaken table, hewn out of wood from the forest, and covered with damask from

England, had been lifted to another room to clear the floor for the opening quadrille.

The bugle boy, who had played his violin for years in the old land across the sea, had brought it with him, and with his old boots polished and buttons shining, stood ready to play again; while officers in full regimentals were chatting over the event, awaiting the entrance of the lady who was to adorn their citadel.

But Harold and Helen, in their own little room, were slow in coming. The former had finished his toilet and was affectionately fastening a necklet of pearls around his wife's neck.

"I am sorry you are so nervous, dear," he said, noticing that her hand trembled.

"How can I help it, Harold?" she asked. "It is no light ordeal to be the only lady, and Sir George tells me he wants to open the Fort in the old English fashion with a quadrille."

"If you cannot bear it, darling, I will ask him to omit the dance."

"Oh, no, not for the world! I will be all right after we start. How do I look?"

"Just as you are—the dearest and sweetest woman that ever lived," was his answer, as he pressed upon her lips a passionate kiss.

Helen threw her arms around his neck, and something like a sob broke the stillness, but it was only for a moment.

"I am better now," she said, looking up with a smile. A couple of glittering tears were hanging between her lashes, but he kissed them away.

As Helen and Harold entered the large room, all the gentlemen arose. But there were only seven in the whole company—the two lieutenants, the two captains, the doctor, the chaplain and the commander of all.

Sir George was attired with rigid punctiliousness, as though attending a ball at St. James. A massive gold chain, which he rarely wore, encircled his shoulders above his epaulets, while medals presented by his Sovereign, for services in eastern wars, adorned his breast. With the gallantry of an old courtier he bowed to Helen and offered his arm.

"Permit me to have the honor," he said, and accepting his escort, together they walked around the room.

"Our pictures have not yet arrived," he continued gaily. "You know our London artists are slow coaches, and I will have to prod them to their duty when I get over there."

"That will be very kind," said Helen, with glistening eyes. "But just now we are very glad to get the white walls without the pictures."

"Very true," was his comment. "Even glorious old Rome was not built in a day; but I will not forget. Gentlemen," he continued, with a bright smile around the room, "choose your partners for the opening quadrille of Penetang."

Immediately the officers took their places. It had been prearranged. Captain Cummings and the Chaplain were their vis-a-vis; the Doctor and Harold to their right; Captain Payne and Lieutenant Smith to their left.

The twang of the violin was the signal for the first step, and with their hands on their hearts the gentlemen bowed to their ladies fair. Soon a ripple of laughter went around the room, and Helen was herself again.

Since meeting Captain Cummings in the berry patch she had been careful to be cordial with him, and this evening was particularly gracious. As his vis-a-vis, she smiled up in his face as he took her hand, and did her best to meet his piercing look of admiration without shrinking. Perhaps it was in recognition that he pressed hers, retaining it for a moment. Then, with stately dignity, following the example of Sir George, they stepped through the figures of the dance.

But it was soon over and, leading Helen to the best seat in the room, Sir George exclaimed:

"Now I declare the Fort duly opened for the honor and defence of our King and country."

"And let all the people say 'Amen!'" cried the Chaplain.

And a chorus of "Amens" echoed through the room.

A couple of games of whist followed, and songs were sung by Helen and Dr. Beaumont. Then they had coffee and cake, and a glass or two of old Madeira. But by midnight the revelries were over, and the opening of the Fort which for so many years overlooked the bay of Penetang, was successfully concluded.

After all was over, some of the men went out for a smoke before turning in for the night, while Helen and Harold retired to their own room, but Lieutenant Smith, the accurate shot, the daring soldier, the interested observer, wandered away by himself. Since Helen's care for him when wounded in the beginning of the long march, he had cherished an almost filial affection for her, and the events of the past months had not been unnoticed by him.

Moodily, he wandered down to the water's edge and away along the shore.

"She's an angel on earth," he muttered to himself, "and he's a miserable hound. I wonder her husband don't see it. By my faith, I'll not forget her goodness to me, and rather than see her wronged, I'll call him out whatever comes of it."

The young man stopped speaking, but went thundering along the shore, as if to stifle the anger he could with difficulty repress. By-and-bye he quieted down and turned to walk home again, but the muttering came back and was bound to have its say.

"The devil of it is," he soliloquized, "Cummings is to be the captain of the Fort, of higher rank than Manning, while both are to live under the one roof; but never mind, Tom Smith, keep your eyes open, and remember that truth and right are high as heaven." Then, whistling softly to himself, he went in to pass his first night with the rest of the officers in the new Fort.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

By November the war was over in Canada, and the declaration of peace heralded far and wide. Moreover, it was whispered among officers and men at Penetang that Sir George would soon be leaving them, and that the wet earth, due to the fall rains, was the chief cause of his delay. He had, in fact, received orders to transfer himself and body-guard over land to Little York as soon as the road was favorable for the march.

This matter, however, he kept for a time to himself. In some things he consulted his staff before acting, while in others, perhaps equally important, he kept his own counsel. It was this trait in his character that gave him the reputation of possessing a bit of the will of the Iron Duke. Possibly for the same reason he had been chosen to lead the midwinter march to Penetang. Hence the officers of his staff rarely questioned him concerning his plans for the future; although they talked among themselves pretty freely about any prospective change.

In the meantime Helen did her best to fill her position to the satisfaction of all at the new Fort. Sometimes the strain was very severe upon her, notwithstanding the kindness and courtesy of the men. In this regard Cummings surpassed them all. He hovered around longer, was the first to come and often the last to go; would read her thoughts, forestall her actions, and often, when unobserved, that piercing look of his would appear for a moment. Still, agitation would not have time to occur, as with bow and smile he would pass on.

Gradually the aversion which Helen felt for him became less poignant. Yet, as the weeks followed each other in quick succession, she felt more and more unhappy.

Harold was much concerned about her, and dreading the approach of illness desired her to consult the Doctor; but she only laughed, and declared that it was the extra duty of being Lady Bountiful that was wearing upon her, and that when winter arrived, she would be well and strong again.

Sir George also watched her keenly. In a bantering way he often tried to read her thoughts, but his efforts usually ended in the relation of some amusing tale to make her laugh and forget.

But Sir George was not the only observer. Lieutenant Smith had his eyes open, and at last, seizing an opportunity when alone with the Colonel, he decided to have his say.

"May I have a private talk with you this morning, Sir George?" he asked, with some trepidation. It was a bold thing to interview his superior officer upon such a subject—and this he well knew.

The Colonel gave him a keen glance for a moment before he answered:

"Yes, but not until noon. This morning I want you to summon all the officers to my room immediately after drill. I have something important to communicate."

There was much speculation among them during the next hour or two, and punctually at twelve o'clock they were all present.

Sir George cast his eye over each as he entered.

"Gentlemen," he said in a decisive tone, as he took his seat, "the time has come when it is advisable to make a change in our arrangements here. I find that to carry out orders from England it will not be necessary to maintain quite so large a force at Penetang. The war is over. We have not had any fighting since we arrived, and a smaller body of men will be sufficient to man our garrison. It must be remembered also, that one of the main objects to which Penetang will be devoted will be ship-building for the lake service. Our engineer, Captain Payne, will require to remain, and in the coming year his force will be increased. But as our garrison is now in a satisfactory condition, we can afford to part with some of our men without in any way sacrificing its interests. After thinking the matter out carefully, I have finally decided to leave the Fort under the command of Captain Payne. The rest of the officers will remain with him, with the exception of Captain Cummings, who, with fifty men, will accompany me by trail to Little York,

and from there to Montreal. Weather being favorable, we shall march in three days."

"Egad, sir!" exclaimed Captain Cummings, "I always understood that I was to have command of the Fort whenever you left. Why so sudden a change?"

"I have already explained," said the Colonel, coldly. "The movements of a body of infantry are never regulated by cast iron rules, neither are those of its officers."

"Can no change be made, sir?" said Cummings, his face flushed and angry. "I would much rather remain and do what I can for the growth of the place than go east again."

"My orders are decisive," said the Colonel, rising to his feet, indicating that the conference was over. "In three days everything must be ready for the march of fifty men under the command of Captain Cummings for Little York, now known as Toronto. I shall also march with the company. As many details have to be attended to, all officers will require to assist at once in carrying out the arrangements."

In a very few minutes Sir George was alone in his room. He folded his papers, put them away and, opening the door, said to Emmiline:

"Tell Mrs. Manning that I wish to speak with her."

Helen soon appeared. She suspected nothing of what had occurred. Still, her eyes were bloodshot. She had been weeping.

"My child," said the Colonel, taking her hand. "Come into my room for a moment." As he closed the door, she looked up into his face with questioning surprise.

"You are a brave girl," he said, "and if you were my own daughter I should be proud of you; but there are some things even you cannot bear. As you know, I have decided to place the care of the Fort in younger hands, but I am not going away alone. Captain Cummings will return to the east with me.

"Oh, thank God, thank God!" she exclaimed with a sob, and unable to restrain her feelings any longer, her face flooded with tears.

"Hoity, toity, my dear. I didn't expect all this," cried the Colonel in distress. "If I had known things had come to such a pass I would have sent the rascal away long ago."

With a strong effort Helen controlled herself.

"Oh, do not mention it again, please," she pleaded, "or his name either. Harold even does not know it. I just thought it was something I had to bear, but it was killing me. How can I ever thank you enough?"

For answer the good old Colonel stooped down and kissed the weeping woman.

Three days later, the fifty men with Sir George and Captain Cummings at their head started for Toronto. Adieux were said, but somehow Lieutenant Smith did not find it necessary to have his conference with the Colonel.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

It was a beautiful day in the autumn when the frigate *Beaver* passed McNab Island and sailed up the long harbor to Halifax. Wonderful tints of the forest, from russet brown through red, orange and yellow, to the dark green of the juniper, stretched out beyond the little city, while orchard trees laden with fruit, pasture lands cropped by the cows, and stubble fields still golden from the harvest, added zest to the outlook of the tired soldiers coming home from the war.

On the deck of the frigate sat Captain Morris, surrounded by a number of men. The sick, the wounded, the well, were there; but they numbered all told scarcely a third of the force that went out hale and buoyant for the conflict only a few months before.

It had been heralded that the Halifax column was returning, and people gathered at the dock to welcome them as they neared the landing. Among the little groups of red-coats standing close together many a face was recognized, and when Captain Morris, aided by a subaltern, rose to his feet, the whole company were greeted with an enthusiastic cheer.

"Another for Captain Morris," called out a soldier fresh from the Citadel. And they gave it.

"A tiger," was the next shout.

Again the yell was loud and long. This time the Captain, with long beard and haggard face, limped forward, and with his left hand raised his helmet in acknowledgment.

"It is good to have you home again," said Colonel Mason, whose carriage was waiting for him. "You've lost in flesh, Morris, but, egad, you've got it back in glory."

"How many of my men are dead, though," returned Morris, with a ghastly smile, "and the poor devils who were wounded. See yonder man with both legs shot off by a cannon ball, and the two at the side there, each minus an arm."

"True enough," said Mason. "I'd rather be shot off the face of the earth than maimed as that poor fellow is. But it's been rough on yourself, Captain."

"I was lucky to get off as well as I did," said Morris, more cheerily. "A month or two's rest and a sea voyage will do wonders for a man."

"Are you going so soon?"

"It won't be long."

That afternoon the Misses Maxwell called to see him. Maud wanted to postpone the visit to the following day, but Eugenia insisted that it was the right thing to do, and she would go alone, if Maud would not accompany her.

"You have written to him twice," she said, decisively, "and as a friend, if nothing more, it would be heartless to defer the visit."

Colonel and Mrs. Mason were with him when the young ladies were announced. They were both shocked at his attenuated form, although heightened color improved his appearance for the moment.

"You will excuse my rising," he said, as they shook hands. "The doctors tell me that this pitiable limb of mine should not be moved more often than I can help. I am a sorry scarecrow, too, and a left-handed one at that."

"We are glad you are home again, and in Mrs. Mason's care," said Maud. Her voice trembled and her face flushed, for his thin fingers held her hand tightly.

"We'll feed him on the fat of the land," said Mrs. Mason, who had the reputation of being an excellent purveyor for the sick.

"Captain Morris deserves all we can do for him," echoed the Colonel, with a smile, "and what is more, I have it on good authority that his name will appear in the next issue of the *Gazette*."

At this moment there was a rap on the door and the maid handed in a paper.

"Here it is," said the Colonel, adjusting his spectacles. "First on the list of promotions—'To the rank of Major, Albert Edward Morris, of C Company, of the —th Royals, for distinguished bravery in the Anglo-American campaign.'"

"This is news to me," was Morris' comment.

Maud's eyes flashed, but they were looking out of the window and not at him.

But the Major made slow progress toward recovery. The diversity and extent of his wounds prevented rapid healing, and Christmas was long past before the pain and the limp were gone. By March, however, he was well again. Even the cicatrix on his scalp was invisible, for his hair was made to cover it. Then he commenced to visit his friends as of old, and there was no house in Halifax that he went to more frequently, or in which he was more welcome than that of Judge Maxwell.

That he was a devoted admirer of Maud the whole family knew, but their progress as lovers did not seem to be rapid. At least so thought Eugenia.

"You have no heart," she said to Maud one day, indignantly. "You know that he loves you, and yet you never give him an opportunity to declare himself."

"If he desires he can surely make one," returned Maud, "but he is too wise for that. What is the use of doing useless things?"

"Do you mean you really do not care for him?"

"Caring is not loving."

"You might say the same of Dr. Beaumont, and yet you correspond?"

"But I gave him a promise—"

"That you would not become engaged to anyone for a year," interrupted her sister.

"Yes."

"That year expired months ago. You are free now to do as you please."

"Yes, and free to remain as I am. Is it not my own affair?"

Eugenia looked perplexed.

"But has Dr. Beaumont pressed his suit in his recent letters?" she asked.

"He certainly has not. He is biding his time, nothing more."

"Surpassing his time, you mean. If in earnest he should have been here before now, or at least have given good reason for delay."

"Don't be absurd, Eugenia, I did not say he hadn't given a reason."

"Well, reason or no reason, Major Morris is the better man of the two—a brave soldier—a gallant officer—beloved by his men—of fine old family—a good Churchman—and owner of a beautiful estate. Goodness gracious! what has Dr. Beaumont to show in comparison with Major Morris as an eligible match?"

"My dearest sister, you might be a scheming mamma, selling off your daughter to the highest bidder!" exclaimed Maud, with a laugh. "Pon my word, though, it must be something else. Has Dr. Fairchilds so tied you up that you are afraid another medico might do the same with me? Would the double 'Vis Medicatrix,' as they call it, be too much for us, altogether? Is that the issue?"

"Don't be unreasonable, Maud. You acknowledge that there is nothing serious between you and Beaumont. He's a thousand miles away, living in a little garrison in the woods without prospect of change. Major Morris, on the other hand, is right here, and, although devoted to you, will be ordered home again on one of the first ships. Now is an opportunity for you that will never occur again."

"It is a serious question," said Maud, once more becoming grave. "When is your marriage to take place? I have forgotten the exact date."

"The last Thursday in May."

"I doubt very much if the companies of the —nth Royals will sail before then. There is still time enough, and rest assured, Genie, I despise a woman who willingly entangles a man in order to throw him overboard."

"The very thing you are doing, though."

"Genie, you are unjust to me."

"The deed may not be wilful but the end is the same," persisted her sister.

And Major Morris did not remit his attentions. Being off duty he frequently doffed his uniform and appeared at the Judge's in laced coat, knee breeches and silk stockings. Sometimes he had a spicy bit of news to relate, a story from the camp, or an item from over the sea. It was always interesting. He did not often find Maud alone; and he soon discovered that he succeeded better in strengthening her regard by not being too exclusive in his attentions.

He knew well that he had a rival; and although a touch of jealousy might have been the real cause of his retention of that letter until reaching Lundy's Lane, for he suspected that there was another one inside; yet, he was too true a gentleman to make unwarranted capital at the expense of the absent lover. If he could honorably win her hand and heart, and carry Maud back to England on his return voyage as his wife, he would be the happiest man alive; but to accomplish this by attempting to weaken her regard for Beaumont, was not in his line. He must make her affection for himself grow stronger. That was all.

When both he and Beaumont were away from Halifax, honors were easy, and each could strive alike. But actual presence gave him the advantage, and if he could not succeed in winning her love fairly, now that he had the field to himself, Morris felt that he deserved to be vanquished.

Men do not die of broken hearts, however. The wound may be deep, but in time it will heal; and he was willing to abide by the truth of his philosophy.

"What luxuriant tulips, Miss Maud!" said the Major. This time he found her alone, gathering them from a bed by the lilacs in her garden.

"Yes," she said, laughingly. "They stand shoulder to shoulder like soldiers on a battlefield. You see how ruthlessly I am slaying them."

"Scarcely that," was his comment; "you are simply carrying off the wounded."

"Ah!" she said, shaking her head; "but how many of the wounded will live?"

"All of them; judging by your habit, they will simply die a natural death."

"How do you make that out?" she asked, looking up quickly.

"Simply, that by putting them in water in the shade, as is your custom, the flowers will live as long as when left on their stems in the garden."

"Have you found the philosopher's stone yet?" she questioned with an arch look.

"No," he replied, "only the observer's; but have you heard the latest news? It only came an hour

ago."

"No, what is it, please?"

"Sir George Head, who has been stationed with the men in Montreal all winter, will be here in a week; and, with what remains of the —nth Royals, will sail at once for England."

The announcement dropped very quietly from the Captain's lips, pregnant though it was with so much to himself. Maud started and turned pale. The mention of Sir George and the Captain's company in the same breath, placed the Doctor and the Major in a relationship that she had heretofore declined to realize. Something seemed imminent, she hardly knew what.

"Which means that you will go with him," she said at last avoiding his eye.

"Yes, Miss Maud, that is what it means; and besides the gruesome and terrible things that have happened, the beautiful and happy days I have spent in Halifax will be at an end."

"If the gruesome things have surpassed the pleasant ones, you will rejoice when all is over," said Maud gently, regaining her self-control. "In such case I know I should."

"Women are different from men," was his comment. "Perhaps men do not balance things so clearly. With us I fear every experience of life stands alone. The terrible reality of the slaying of a thousand men in a night may be one thing; but the presence of a single thread of sunshine which enthralls you and penetrates your whole being is another."

"You are very poetic as well as practical, Major Morris, and I think you are right," said Maud, determined not to understand him. "What you say of the soldiers is terribly sad; but about the sunshine, we have many threads of sunshine here. I was born in Halifax and never even crossed the ocean; but from all I hear we have five times as much sunshine in Nova Scotia as you have in England."

"Egad! I suspect you are right," was his answer, as she went off in a little ripple of laughter, her cheeks aglow with color. "It must be the sunlight that freshens your beauty and puts that damask upon your skin."

"Now you flatter. But 'pon my word it is a good thing. It makes you brown as a berry in March, red as a rose in June, and blue as a plum in November."

"I thought it was the wind that did the first as well as the last," he said, watching her ever-changing face.

"It helps," she replied demurely. "But Old Sol always does his share."

"Well," he said dryly, "in my case the order will have to be changed. I expect to go into the plum business in June."

"It is said to be a very fine industry," she said, looking downwards and pulling the petals from the twig of lilac that she had broken from a neighboring bush; "but in all conscience, I always thought you army men looked down upon trade."

"No, indeed," he returned, smiling broadly, as he took in the humor of the situation. "I don't believe in looking down upon any honest calling, even raising plums."

And they both went off in a peal of laughter, though before she was through, Maud's eyelids glistened with tears.

CHAPTER XL.

"So he thinks that a flower severed from the soil and placed in the shade will flourish as well as in its native sunlight," Maud mused after he went away that morning. "Had he a special meaning I wonder?—and about balances, his words contained one sure enough. What is that English home of his like, anyway? And his people, sedate and punctilious, just as my mother says hers were? No wonder he talked about the shade. They say over there it rains seventy days and shines seven. If I had let him he would have asked me to give up our glorious sunshine again. Ah, me, life is a funny problem anyway! There's the east and the west, and here I am in the middle. Gadzooks! as my father would say, I wish I knew what to do. I suppose the Doctor will be coming back soon—to buy new clothes of course! Funny, how he took me at my word when I set him down last year. Since then, although endearing enough, he never talks out and out of love—waiting till he comes, I suppose—and not very definite upon that either. Perhaps some dusky maiden in the west may yet steal the young man's heart away. What of Little Moon, the Ojibway chief's daughter, that he raved about in one of his letters? Pshaw! She would never suit Beaumont! Well! I like Major Morris with his English drawl, his bravery, his knee breeches, and his shade out of sunlight. And I like Dr. Beaumont with his passion, his Mon Dieu's, his life in the

glorious west, and his controlled faithfulness. But by my faith, do I love either well enough for marriage? Ah, there's the rub, Maud Maxwell! What a little minx you are anyway, not to know your own mind better than that!"

Impatiently she tossed off her hat and finished fixing her tulips. But she did it with unusual care that morning, and an hour afterwards her mother said she never saw them so beautifully arranged before.

The preparation for Eugenia's wedding monopolized the long hours during those May days; and Maud did not have much time for thought. There were clothes to select, gowns to make, milliners and dressmakers to see, boots and gloves fresh from England to be examined and selected with a connoisseur's eye; and in all Maud did her part.

Eugenia, too, had set her heart on seeing her sister marry the Major, and having settled all the preliminaries of her own nuptials in her own decided and placid way, she was prepared during the little time that remained to devote herself to furthering her sister's interests. Hence, instead of retreating to a quiet corner each evening with her lover, the Major and Maud invariably made two of her party; and so intense was Dr. Fairchilds' devotion, that anything that Genie suggested immediately became law.

In the evenings they played whist, or visited the Art Loan Exhibition, which the good people of Halifax had got up for the benefit of the orphans and widows of Canadian soldiers. Or they went to the music hall to see amateur artists, officers of the garrison, and the young people of Halifax, perform in the name of the same good cause. And so each evening the four inseparables were almost invariably together.

Maud enjoyed it too, for the Major's visits would soon be over; and by judicious fencing she succeeded in parrying anything like a direct declaration again. Each night she went to bed thankful that the end had not yet come; and yet suspicious of what the future day might bring to pass.

One evening, however, fortune favored Morris. He had gotten himself up with elaborate care, for this was the last night they could devote to whist; and probably the last evening that he would be off duty, for Sir George's ship had been sighted and would be in harbor that night.

"It grieves me to disappoint you," said Maud, after the usual greeting. "My sister and Dr. Fairchilds are out driving. They expected to be back early, but a messenger has just arrived with the news that the Doctor was detained professionally on account of an accident, and it will be impossible for them to return for an hour yet."

"Ah! I am sorry for ourselves as well as the injured," said the Major, smiling. "But can we not utilize the time? Just the chance for a talk, the very thing that I have been praying the gods to grant us this long time."

"I did not know that your prayers were so earnest," she laughingly returned, as she picked up a trifle of needlework to help her thoughts run smoothly.

"Yes, and I must speak again," he continued. "We can be serious as well as jolly."

"My dear Major!" exclaimed Maud with a light laugh. "We have the jolliest talks every time we meet. Don't talk of seriousness, please."

"One cannot be merry forever," was his answer.

"Genie says we should always pursue the even tenor of our way," was her quick response. "So I propose that while I use my needle you read aloud either 'Young's Night Thoughts,' or Gray's Elegy,' as a tonic to our gaiety.

"Not a bad idea," said the Major, picking up a book at random. "Perhaps this will do as well."

And he commenced to read Burns's sonnet:

"Oh, wad some power the Gifty gie us
To see ourselves as ithers see us."

"That's just it," interrupted Maud. "Now I'll express your sentiments with which I entirely agree. 'She's a rollicking, jolly girl, full of dash and nonsense, doesn't care a fig for anybody; as for falling in love, that's impossible, for she hasn't a heart any bigger than a chipmunk.' How will that do for a commencement?"

"Only fairly well. Pray go on."

A spark of fire flashed from her eyes as she continued:

"She's got the crazy idea that she lives in a glorious country, where the sun shines ten months in the year, and she'd rather die an old maid in it than go to another one for all the wealth of Ind."

"How eloquent you are!" he said, stroking his moustache over compressed lips and looking toward the ceiling. "Should my rendition come next?"

"That would be delightful!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands in well-assumed mirth. "You tell me what I think of you, which will be your own sentiment of yourself."

"Well," he said reflectively, "he's an arrant fool, filled with the old-fashioned notion that men were brave and women true—that love nestled in the heart of every woman, and that it only required the right man and the right place to make it blossom as the rose. He fondly imagined that old England was the Queen of the Seas, and that her homes were the freest, the fairest, the loveliest in the wide world, and he dreamed of wooing and winning a fair damsel with flashing eyes, generous impulses, daring heart, and making her the wife of his bosom, the goddess of his love, the mistress of his home in the mansion and groves of his forefathers. But he was a daft and silly wight, and didn't know what he was doing."

What answer Maud would have made to the flowing speech it is difficult to tell, but there was a rap at the outer door, a hurrying along the hall and a mingling of voices that riveted her attention.

"An officer wants to see you, Miss Maud," said the maid.

"Show him in, Catharine," was her astonished answer, for the hour was already late.

"Dr. Beaumont!" she exclaimed, with flushed face, as she quickly rose to meet him.

"Maud Maxwell," was his only answer, as he grasped her hand in both of his, and looked down into the face that was ever near him, and of which he had dreamed so often.

In another moment she remembered that they were not alone.

"Major Morris—Dr. Beaumont"; and the two men clasped hands. Morris' expression was one of honest but pained surprise; Beaumont's, one of pleasure that needed no questioning. Maud's eyes told him that he was welcome. That was enough.

The Doctor's old regimentals had stood long and hard service, while his face was bronzed with travel and his hair unkempt. Still Maud thought—as he stood in careless attitude, so different from the dapper young man of long ago—that he was handsomer than ever. The contrast with the Major was marked. His clean-cut features, lace coat and silk stockings would have ornamented a drawing-room in London; while anyone could see that Beaumont had been a denizen of the woods.

He might have waited until his tailor had made him new again, but he would not; and with the wild freedom that the west had given, must be taken for himself, or not at all. Standing there, quick as a flash, he had taken a fresh grasp of life and knew his bearings.

The two men met again as old friends.

"I am proud of you, Morris," said the Doctor. "Slow as news travels in the west, word came at last, and your name was in everybody's mouth."

"Thank you," said the Major, forcing a smile. "But it's an old story now. When did you arrive?"

"Less than an hour ago. As luck would have it, I reached Quebec just as Sir George Head was leaving for Halifax on the *North King*."

"The ship he came out on with the 100th Regiment," said Maud.

"Yes," said Beaumont, "and he returns home to England on the same vessel."

"It will surprise the people here as much as your arrival," said Maud. "Did no one know you were coming?"

"No one in Halifax knew until I landed," said the Doctor. "My opportunities were so uncertain that I took advantage of the first one that offered."

"And who is looking after your patients while you are away?" the Major asked.

"Oh, we don't have many! It is a healthy place, and as luck would have it, Dr. Sparling, of Little York, came over the trail with a party of friends, so the officers being willing, I persuaded him to take my place for a couple of months, and here I am."

"How delightful!" said Maud, "and what of the brave, devoted Mrs. Manning?"

"She's the queen of our colony, loved by everyone; the same forever. And I must not forget, she sent her warmest love to you, and with it this letter."

"I will write her to-morrow, and tell her how well you have delivered her message."

"Well, I'm glad to see you, Beaumont," said the Major, rising and extending his hand. "I shall be at the old quarters for a day or two yet, but it will not be for long, as my company sails with Sir George when he leaves for the east. But come and see me any time, and welcome until then."

Maud accompanied him to the door. He took her hand without a word, and for a moment their eyes met.

"Believe me," she said earnestly, "I did not know it."

"I do believe you," he replied in a low voice, "but what of my faith in women?"

"Surely you have not lost it?" she said, grasping his hand in both of hers, and looking earnestly into his eyes.

"What else can one do? Wounds of the flesh are nothing, but what of the heart—the spirit of the man?"

"I am sorry," she spoke in a still lower tone, and her voice trembled. "But you will not give way. Your soul is as brave as your heart is, and you will live to love and win a woman more worthy of you far than I could ever be."

Suddenly, he threw his arm around her, pressed a kiss upon her cheek, and was gone.

CHAPTER XLI.

A lump rose in Maud's throat, and a spasm crossed her features as she closed the door. Then she stopped to put a tray in order, making a noise in getting it even. It took her more than a minute to arrange it properly, but when she entered the parlor again her face was as though nothing had happened.

For a moment Beaumont looked at her keenly, but her features told no tale. The human heart is inscrutable, and a true woman never tells everything, even to her dearest. So, hidden in Maud's bosom was a little story of man's devotion, which ever after remained unspoken, and unforgotten, too.

Beaumont bowed over her hand and led her to a seat again.

"For months and months I have longed for this hour," he said. "Even after I started, three weeks of a journey seemed almost like years; but now that I see you, I know that I have not come in vain."

"Please don't talk in that way," said Maud, with a half-frightened look in her face. "Speak of anything, but not of that to-night."

"Mon Dieu! Surely I am not wrong?"

"Oh, something else, just for to-night," she pleaded. "You came so unexpectedly, without a moment's warning," and then she added archly, "You expect too much, sir, you must remember that I am the same Maud Maxwell that I was a year ago."

"Mon ami, forgive me!" he exclaimed, penitently. "I will do whatever you say."

And they talked of many things, but chiefly of Penetang, of the journey to York by trail, then by schooner to the St. Lawrence, down the rapids in a rowboat, guided by Indians, to Montreal; schooner again to Quebec, and then on the *North King* with Sir George.

"The dear old Colonel! I quite learned to love him through Mrs. Manning's letters," said Maud.

"He's a brave commander, as well as gallant gentleman," returned the Doctor, "and we missed him terribly after he left. Still, our Fort was established, and taking fifty men away from the new quarters gave the rest more room."

"The winter would be the hardest upon you," said Maud.

"On the whole, we did well though. The frost was keen but we learned how to meet it, and another winter we'll be better prepared."

"How did you secure supplies?" she asked. "You are so far away from the east."

"They were brought chiefly by trail from Little York, except fish and game, which our own men always secured."

"It must be the hunter's paradise," said Maud, enthusiastically.

"The whole northern country is like a preserve," replied Beaumont, keenly watching her animated face. "When you come to Penetang you, too, must learn to follow the chase."

"Oh, what became of Corporal Bond?" she suddenly asked. "Did he ever return?"

"Yes, he came back at last. Latimer's craft was captured by an American gunboat when entering the St. Clair River, and everything was overhauled. Corporal Bond was retained a prisoner until the war was over, while Latimer, who declared himself to be an American, was allowed with his wife to go free and keep the boat."

"Under what plea did they retain the Corporal?" Maud asked.

"On the ground that they knew he was an English soldier, notwithstanding his plain clothes. Still, they treated him well, and after the treaty was declared, gave him a pass to Little York."

"There would be great rejoicing when his wife met him again."

"Yes; and there was throughout the garrison, for Bond is a genuine soldier."

"One other thing I want to ask. It is about the pretty little Indian maiden you wrote of so charmingly."

"Oh, Little Moon is now a soldier's wife—growing contented and civilized in a little cottage which the two have to themselves."

"How romantic!"

They chatted for a while longer. Then they parted—but her last words were like her first:

"Not to-night—not to-night—you must wait until to-morrow."

Three days later the white wings of the *North King* unfurled as they swept out to sea. Good old Sir George had come and gone. On the bridge beside him stood the Major, whose brave face, kindly eyes and compressed lips told of nothing but the brave and gallant officer. Silently they watched the receding shore.

"Another chapter of life closed," said Sir George at last; "though full of story, it will never be opened to me again."

"Yours was a chapter worth living," said Morris. "You have founded a fort and established a colony, which will go on growing, and may last forever."

The Colonel shook his head.

"Simply my duty," was his answer. "And what will become of the place in the end, God only knows. So far as military fame is concerned, you beat my record. That fight at Lundy's Lane was the turning point in the war, and your valor there is too well known to be forgotten."

"Pshaw, Colonel! I was only one of the many. Every man did his duty, and with all that, the bloody horror of it takes away the glory."

"We'll turn the leaf down, anyway," said the Colonel, wheeling around and looking out to sea. "Now, blow ye winds for Old England, where wife and children await with eagerness the old man's return."

"Oh, yes," assented Morris, "and I don't think my dear old mother has forgotten her soldier boy."

By night the shore was out of sight, for the wind was from the west and they were far out at sea.

The good town of Halifax was not by any means dull during those closing days of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred and fifteen, for the double wedding was in everybody's mouth. Judge Maxwell's daughters were both to be married on the same day.

The bell of the little English church rang merrily out on that bridal morning, and for hours before the ceremony fair maids were decorating with spring flowers and evergreens the aisles and chancel; for never before had the marriage of two sisters been celebrated within its walls at the one time.

Major Morris, though now far out at sea, had not forgotten the brides, for that very morning was delivered to each a little package bearing his name. Eugenia's gift was a resplendent ornament of sapphire and gold, which enriched the beauty of her golden hair. But Maud's, though less brilliant in its setting, was more unique. She was alone when she unpacked the parcel and read the enclosed note. It ran thus:

"Miss Maud. I do not expect to see you again; but as I leave, there is something you can do for me. I desire you to accept with my sincerest wishes this little necklace as a token of my love. It was made of jewels of India in the days of Clive. It bears a noble and honorable history, and I know by your acceptance, its record will go on untarnished. God bless you! Farewell."

Without looking at the costly trinket, Maud with glistening eyes read and re-read the words. Then she kissed them passionately over and over again. Another moment was spent in thought—but only a moment, for time was precious—then with decisive hand she tore the little letter into a thousand fragments and dropped them into the open grate.

Beneath the letter was a card containing the congratulations of the donor. Then she picked up the dainty little gift. It was a beautiful circlet of jewels and golden beads, with carved clasps of wonderful formation. In the centre was a large translucent opal, and as Maud looked into its silent depths, she fancied she could read its hidden history through the long generations of the past.

For a few minutes before leaving for church Beaumont was with her.

"See," she said, as she handed him the card and necklet, "I have something else to show you. It is a pretty little thing that came this morning. May I wear it?"

"Certainly, my darling. How unique it is! Mon Dieu! Where could it come from? Possibly from the banks of the Nile. Mayhap from India. How very handsome it is! Morris was always a good fellow. Pity he couldn't have stayed for our wedding."

"Pity, indeed," said Maud, contemplatively, as the bridegroom fastened the jewels about her neck.

Six weeks later there was rejoicing at Penetang. The Doctor had overstepped his time, but as he brought his winsome bride with him, the *locum tenens*, as well as the garrison, were willing to forgive. They had come out with tourists from York, and Maud, for the first time in her life, had the satisfaction of camping for a couple of summer nights in the woods.

The experience of this western trip was full of joy for her, and with the eagerness which was part of her nature, she looked for new pleasure in each day's journey. Beaumont had told her the wolf story in which Helen and Harold were the heroes of the hour, and during the second night from York, while the wolves were howling in the distance, she lay awake for awhile actually longing for a similar experience.

Of all the denizens of that little northern garrison none yearned for Maud's arrival as did Helen Manning, and when the two women met they stood for minutes in a long and close embrace, while tears ran down their faces.

"This is foolishness," said Helen.

"Is it?" said Maud.

"But how good of you to come."

"Of Henri to bring me."

"Yes, you both deserve credit," said Helen, laughing—laughter and tears are very near akin—"but how could he help it, when Harold set him so good an example?"

"I once told you I would go to the ends of the world with a man if I loved him—just like yourself."

"So that is your reason. A very good one, too."

"Yes, I came first for my husband, second for you, dear, and third," her eyes flashed as she looked around, "well, for the people of Penetang."

Then they all clapped hands and laughed, settling her place forever in the hearts of the little community.

The afternoon's sun was nearing the horizon, and the little bay lay before them surrounded by trees of wondrous tints—a thing of beauty.

"Oh, how delightful!" exclaimed Maud; "and this is to be my home—a veritable fairyland."

"We will make it one for you if we can," returned Helen, with a bright smile.

Maud's eyes wandered quickly over the quaint buildings which already stood here and there upon upland and shore, until finally they rested upon the island.

"And what is that little white house standing among the trees?" she asked.

"That is our magazine," said Harold, who stood hand in hand with his wife. "The little citadel that guards our bay."

"And that scaffolding down at the water's edge. It looks as if they were putting up the masts of a ship."

"So we are," said Captain Payne. "The war is over, and we may never have to fight again, but in memory of a great chief and brave warrior, we are building the *Tecumseh*."

"And you see that pretty cottage," said Beaumont, gently taking his wife's arm and pointing towards it. "That is our own little home. La bonne madame has made it ready for us. Won't you come to it, darling; you need a rest."

"Yes, Henri, I shall be glad to; I am very happy, but very tired."

FOOTNOTES:

[1]The original name of Sparksville, after a while, was changed to Bytown, and finally to

Transcriber's Notes:

original hyphenation, spelling and grammar have been preserved as in the original

Page 4, "heart. I shall do" changed to "heart. "I shall do"

Page 12, "it would would be" changed to "it would be"

Page 48, 'watching the Delaware,'" changed to 'watching the Delaware,'

Page 73, "conscientiously ad vise" changed to "conscientiously advise"

Page 86, 'prayer; but shall' changed to 'prayer; "but shall'

Page 89, "with a smile," changed to "with a smile."

Page 97, "miles, I think," changed to "miles, I think."

Page 112, "tremenduous fire" changed to "tremendous fire"

Page 112, "call the dhrivers" changed to "call the drivers"

Page 118, "up by daylight," changed to "up by daylight."

Page 126, ""Ardman never look" changed to ""Ardman never look"

Page 155, "known-how determined I was she-would" changed to "known how determined I was she would"

Page 160, "a oboggan slide" changed to "a toboggan slide"

Page 163, differ from you," changed to differ from you,'

Page 169. "s'ill vous plait" changed to "s'il vous plait"

Page 172, "hold four people," changed to "hold four people."

Page 188, from'beats me.' changed to from beats me."

Page 190, 'to the coast?' changed to 'to the coast?'"

Page 192, "past was aroused" changed to "past was aroused."

Page 203, "an' sturgeon an'" changed to "an' sturgeon, an"

Page 219, 'You are about changed to "You are about

Page 244, "noble character?" changed to "noble character."

Page 246, 'she went on,'" changed to 'she went on,'

Page 250, "a little messsage" changed to "a little message"

Page 265, "end I I am" changed to "end I am"

Page 266, "'Smith, who was' changed to 'Smith, who was'

Page 268, 'a perfect canoeist.' changed to 'a perfect canoeist.'"

Page 268, "Hunting Song' changed to 'Hunting Song'

Page 269, "her match, sir;" changed to "her match, sir."

Page 279, "Its is only" changed to "It is only"

Page 281, "within its cover." changed to "within its cover,"

Page 294, 'pulling his forelock.'" changed to 'pulling his forelock.'

Page 295, "'Bateese, while expressing' changed to 'Bateese, while expressing'

Page 297, "The femnine" changed to "The feminine"

Page 300, 'the woman also.'" changed to 'the woman also.'"

Page 303, "Fatherhood of of God" changed to "Fatherhood of God"

Page 307, "while the buildng" changed to "while the building"

Page 320, "although the talked" changed to "although they talked"

Page 324, "Adienx were said" changed to "Adieux were said"

Page 338, "trifle of needlewok" changed to "trifle of needlework"

Page 339, "agree. "'She's a" changed to "agree. 'She's a"

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