

The Homesteader

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By
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Author of "The Cow
Puncher," Etc.

HOME, SWEET HOME.

"And we shall build our own home, and live our own lives, and love each other—always, only—for ever and ever?" she breathed.

"For ever and ever," he answered.

"Because it would seem like trying to prove you are innocent. And you don't need to prove anything to me. You understand? You don't need to prove anything to me."

And then, between the iron rods across the open window of the jail, his lips met hers.

In the foregoing the first love words are those of John Harris and Mary Allan when they plighted their troth and resolved to homestead in Manitoba. In the next love scene the second generation is making its vows. It is Beulah Harris and Jim Travers who have sealed their pact with a kiss. And in between there is a like-real-life story of the homesteading of John and Mary Harris, well told by Robert J. C. Stead, novelist, poet and Canadian official, author of "The Cowpunchers" and "Kitchener and Other Poems."

PRELUDE.

Six little slates clattered into place, and six little figures stood erect between their benches.

"Right! Turn!" said the master. "March! School is dismissed," and six pairs of bare little legs twinkled along the aisle, across the well-worn threshold, down the big stone step, and into the dusty road, warm with the rays of the Indian summer sun.

The master watched them from the open window until they vanished behind a ridge of beech trees that cut his vision from the concession. While they remained within sight a smile played upon the features of his strong, sun-burned face, but as the last little calico dress was swallowed by the wood the smile died down, and for a moment he stood, a grave and thoughtful statue framed within the white pine casings of the sash.

His brown study lasted only a moment. With a quick movement he walked to the blackboard, caught up a section of sheepskin, and began erasing the symbols of the day's instructions.

"Well, I suppose there's reward in heaven," he said to himself, as he set the little schoolroom in order. "There isn't much here. The farmers will pay a man more to doctor their sick sheep than to teach their children. If others can take the chance I can take it too. If it were not for her I would go tomorrow."

The last remark seemed to unlink a new chain of thought. The gray eyes lit up again. He wielded the broom briskly for a minute, then tossed it in a corner, fastened the windows, slipped a little folder into his pocket, locked the door behind him and swung in a rapid stride down a by-path leading from the little schoolhouse into the forest.

Ten minutes' quick walking in the woods, now glorious in all their autumn splendor, brought him to a point where the sky stood up, pale blue, evasive, through the trees. The next moment he was at the water's edge, and a limpid lake stretched away to where the forests of the farther shore mingled hazily with sky and water. He glanced about, as though expecting someone; he whistled a line of a popular song, but the only reply was from a saucy eavesdropper which, perched on a near-by limb, trilled back its own liquid notes in answer.

"I may as well improve the moments consulting my chart," he remarked to his undulating image in the water. "This thing of embarking on two new seas at once calls for skillful piloting." He seated himself on a stone, drew from his pocket the folder, and spread a map before him.

In a few moments he was so engrossed that he did not hear the almost noiseless motion of a canoe as it thrust its brown nose into the blue wedge before him. Kneeling near its stern, her paddle held aloft and dripping, her brown arms and browner hair glistening in the mellow sun, her face bright with the light of its own expectancy, was a lithe and beautiful

girl. In an instant her eye located the young man on the bank, and her lips molded as though to speak; but when she saw how unobserved she was she remained silent and upright as an Indian while the canoe slipped gently toward the shore. Presently it cushioned its nose in the velvety sand. She rose silently from her seat, and stole on moccasined tip-toes along the stones until she could have touched his hair with her fingers. But her eyes fell over his shoulder on the papers before him.

"Always at your studies," she cried, as he sprang eagerly to his feet. "You must be seeking a professorship." She stole the map from his fingers.

"I declare, if it isn't Manitoba!" Seizing his cheeks between her hands she turned his face to her. "Answer me, John Harris. You are not thinking of going to Manitoba?"

"Suppose I say I am?"

"Then I am going, too!"

"Mary!"

"John! Nothing unusual about a wife going with her husband, is there?"

"No, of course, but you know—"

"Yes, I know"—glancing at the ring on her finger. "This still stands at par, doesn't it?"

"Yes, dear," he answered, raising the ring to his lips. "You know it does. But to venture into that wilderness means—you see, it means so much more to a woman than to a man."

"Not so much as staying at home—alone. You didn't really think I would do that?"

"No, not exactly that. Let us sit down and I will tell you what I



"You Are Not Thinking of Going to Manitoba?"

thought. Here, let me get the cushion. . . . There, that is better."

They sat for some minutes, gazing dreamily across the broad sheet of silver.

"And so you are going to Manitoba?" she said at length.

"Yes. There are possibilities there. It's a gamble, and that is why I didn't want to share it with you—at first. I thought I would spend a year; locate a homestead; get some kind of a house built; perhaps break some land. Then I would come back."

"And you weren't going to give me a word in all those preparations for our future? You have a lot to learn yet, John. You won't find it in that folder, either."

She had snatched his confession at an unguarded moment. He had not meant to tell her so much—so soon. As he thought over the wheels he had set in motion their possible course staggered him, and he found himself arguing against the step he contemplated.

"It's a gamble," he repeated. "The agricultural possibilities of the country have not been established. It may be adapted only to buffalo and Indians. We may be far back from civilization, far from neighbors, or doctors, or churches, or any of those things which we take as a matter of course."

"Then you will need me with you, John, and I am going."

In a crimson glory the sun had sunk behind the black forest across the lake. The silver waters had draped in mist their fringe of inverted trees

along the shore and lay, passive and breathing, and very still, beneath the smooth-cutting canoe.

"And we shall build our own home, and live our own lives, and love each other—always—only, for ever and ever?" she breathed.

"For ever and ever," he answered.

The last white shimmer of daylight faded from the surface of the lake. The lovers floated on, gently, joyously, into their ocean of hope and happiness.

CHAPTER I.

The Beck of Fortune.

The last congratulations had been offered; the last good wishes, somewhat mixed with tears, had been expressed. The bride, glowing in the happy consciousness of her own beauty, and defied by the great tenderness that enveloped her new estate like a golden mist, said her farewells with steady voice and undrooping eyes.

It had been a busy winter for John Harris, and this, although the consummation of his great desire, was but the threshold to new activities and new outlets for his intense energies. Since the face and form of Mary Allan had first enraptured him in his little backwoods school district, a vast ambition had possessed his soul, and today, which had seemed to be its end, he now knew to be but its beginning. The ready consent of his betrothed to share his life in the unknown wilderness between the Red river and the Rocky mountains had been a tide which, taken at its flood, might well lead him on to fortune. At the conclusion of his fall term he had resigned his position as teacher, and with his small savings had set about accumulating equipment essential to the homesteader. Because his effects were not enough to fill a car he had "doubled up" with Tom Morrison, a fine farmer whose worldly success had been somewhat less than his deserts, and who bravely hoped to mend his broken fortunes where land might be had for the taking.

So John Harris and his bride took the passenger train from her city home, while their goods and chattels, save for their personal baggage, rumbled on in a box-car or crowded stolidly into congested side-tracks as the exigencies of traffic required.

At a junction point they were transferred from the regular passenger service to an immigrant train.

One or two of the passengers had already made the trip to Manitoba, and were now on the journey a second time, accompanied by their wives and families. These men were soon noted as individuals of some moment; they became the center of little knots of conversation, and their fellow-immigrants hung in reverent attention upon every word from their lips.

"Tell us about the crops," said one of the men passengers. "What like wheat can ye grow?"

"Like corn," said the narrator, with great deliberation. "Heads like ears o' corn. Wheat that grows so fast ye can hear it. Nothin' uncommon to walk into wheat fields when they's knee-high, an' have to fight yer way out like a jungle."

"Is the Injuns werry big?" piped a little voice. "My pa's go'n to make me a bone-arrow so I can kill 'em all up."

"That's a brave soldier," said the man, drawing the child to his knee. "But Ah know a better way to fight Indians than with bows an' arrows. Ah fights 'em with flour an' blankets

an' badger-meat, an' it's a long way better."

The child climbed up on the friendly knee and interested himself in the great silver watch-chain that looped conveniently to his fingers. "Go on wif your story, man," he said. "P's listen-in."

And big Aleck McCrae forgot the immigrants crowded around, forgot the lurch of the train and the window-glimpse of forests heavy-blanketed with snow, as he plowed his fertile imagination and spread a sudden harvest of wonderment before the little soul that clung to his great watch-chain.

And so the journey wore on. As day succeeded day to the monotonous rumble of the car wheels the immigrants became better acquainted and friendships took root that in after years were to brave every storm of adversity and bloom forth in the splendid community of spirit and sacrifice which particularly distinguished the pioneers.

In the cold gray of a March morn-ing, when the sun had not yet dispelled the mists of night, and the fringing woods back from the Red river loomed white and spectral through the frost, they re-entered the empire, and in a few minutes were detouring at Emerson, the boundary town and gateway to the prairies which for 1,000 miles stretched into the mysteries of the unknown.

Emerson was the gateway of the great invasion. The "farthest west" of rail communication, on the threshold of the prairie country, it seemed the strategical point for the great city which must arise with the settlement and development of the fertile kingdom of territory lying between the Lake of the Woods and the Rocky mountains, and between the forty-ninth parallel and the unknown northern limit of agriculture.

"A party for the front."

"A party for the front."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MAN'S FIRST DWELLING PLACE

Scientists Claim that the Desert of Gobi Must for Natural Reasons Be the Spot.

The desert of Gobi, which is the summit of the central steppe in Asia, is the most elevated region on the globe, and it is here, scientists claim, man first lived, arguing that this point of earth must have been the first to emerge from the universal sea, and that as the subsiding waters gradually gave up lower regions of earth to man he was able to descend and spread himself progressively over new acquisitions.

It is from this region that the great rivers of Asia also take their rise and flow toward the four cardinal points. On the declivities of these highlands are the plains of Tibet, lower than the frozen regions of Gobi. Here are found not only the vine, the olive, rice, the legumina, and other plants on which man has depended for sustenance, but also those animals which he has tamed and led with him over the earth, as the ox, the horse, the ass, the sheep, the goat, the camel, the hog, the dog, and even the reindeer, run wild upon these mountains. On the mountains of Cashmere, in Tibet, and in the north of China, grain has been found to be growing wild for years without ever being sown or filled, and here also wild animals that have lived there while man has tamed others of the same species, are numerous.—Exchange.

No Statue of Georgian.

The secretary of the statutory hall in the capitol says that there is no representative of Georgia in the Hall of Fame. Each state may contribute two statues of deceased citizens of the state, who "for historical renown or for civil or military services" are considered by the state as worthy of such commemoration.

ACCORDING TO FIXED DESIGN

Variety of Reasons Advanced for the Arrangement of Paint on the Cheeks of Clown.

All pantomime, clowns paint their cheeks and mostly they do so according to certain designs handed down from generation to generation. But as to the why and the wherefore opinions differ.

According to one authority the scarlet triangles, red fishtail and half moon, originated from dabs of vermilion placed here and there on the cheeks at haphazard to represent a naughty boy who had been at the jam pot.

Another says that the pantomime clown's reddened face is intended as a burlesque of the rouge-tinted cheeks of the pantomime Columbine; while yet a third has it that the crimson patches are a survival from the early mystery plays, when the clown was a demon, and red all over.

The theory has also been held that

THE REFLECTIONS OF A MARRIED WOMAN

—are not pleasant if she is delicate, run-down, or overworked. She feels "played out." Her smile and good spirits have been taken flight. It worries her husband.

This is the time to build up her strength and remedy those weaknesses or ailments which are the seat of her trouble. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription regulates and promotes the proper functions, enriches the blood, dispels aches and pains, melancholia, nervousness and brings refreshing sleep.

"Molesophy."

"Molesophy" is the delineation of character and reading of the past and future by means of moles on the human face and body. It is an even more ancient occult science than that of palmistry.

For constipation use a natural remedy. Garfield Tea is composed of carefully selected herbs only. At all drug stores.—Adv.

What, indeed!

Bobby's mother asked him why he had not done what she had told him to do. He replied with a serious air: "Well, mother, what are you going to do when your forgetter is bigger than your thinker?"

Significance of Diamonds.

The diamond is generally chosen for engagement rings because the legend is that it strengthens the love of a man for a woman.

Inspiration to Home Affection.

"When a man bet on a lame horse," said Charcoal Eph, ruminatively, "hit sure do git inspirin' how he yell fo' laigs t' git on dat old crowbat fo' de sake o' his wife an' chillun."—Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Good health cannot be maintained where there is a constipated habit. Garfield Tea overcomes constipation.—Adv.

Woman's Rights.

An Indiana court compelled a man to give back the false teeth he had taken away from his wife. Women's rights still include the privilege of biting, it seems.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Among the First Editions!

No man really knows a woman like a book until he has tried to put her on the "shelf!"—Cartoons Magazine.

Cuticura for Sore Hands.

Soak hands on retiring in the hot suds of Cuticura Soap, dry and rub in Cuticura Ointment. Remove surplus Ointment with tissue paper. This is only one of the things Cuticura will do if Soap, Ointment and Talcum are used for all toilet purposes.—Adv.

That's the Way It Is.

Uncle Bill Bottletop says that too few people lay by anything for a rainy day and too many lay by something for a dry spell.—Washington Star.

Why?

"How to Live More Than One Hundred Years" is the title of a recent book. But what, we desire to ask, would be the object?—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Since it is worth while to be well, take Garfield Tea, nature's medicine.—Adv.

Boon to Forgetfulness.

To make people laugh is to make them forget. What a benefactor to humanity is he who can bestow forgetfulness.—Victor Hugo.

One Penalty of Wealth.

"After a man accumulates a big fortune," said Jud Tunkins, "he has to hire a lot of people to show him what to do with it."

Skin Troubles
—Soothed—
With Cuticura
Soap 25c, Ointment 25 and 50c, Talcum 25c.

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