

Mrs. M. M. M. M.

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LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

OR

**PIONEER DAYS IN THE
SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES**

By **PEGGY MARTIN**



THE FIRST CHURCH

CHAPTER I.

Faith

*When something different you would do
To make your favorite dream come true
If just one soul believes in you —
Begin: That faith will see you through.*

*But almost hopeless is the man
Whose dear ones scoff at every plan
At every aspiration high —
He never has the heart to try.*

—Via Vae.

It was in the year of 1879 that a family in a town of Southern Ontario was caught with the excitement that filled the hearts of so many in the seventies and eighties.

After coming home from work one evening, Mr. Noble said to his dear wife, "Well, Mother, shall we go to this new place and try our luck? I had a letter from Hopewell this morning and he gives a wonderful account of this new land where the Government is giving free grant land. All we have to do is go and locate for the hundred acres."

This looked good to the mother of nine children. She had lived on a farm until she married and always had a longing for the country. Up there they could grow the most of their food and her husband might have better health, so they talked it over and finally decided they would go.

Mr. Noble went north to what is now Parry Sound District, but was known in those days as "Muskoka, to locate a farm and clear a place for the little home. Mr. Hopewell being an old friend, offered to help, so the house was partly built. Then Mr. Noble had to return home to finish a contract for painting and decorating

which the winter weather had hindered. This must be finished before he could leave the town for good.

Mrs. Noble thought she had better go on with the family so they could get the crop in early. It was decided to get a cousin Duncan Kaye, to go with her as he was some years older than any of her own family.

They sold most of their household effects, taking only what they had to have and what they thought they could get into a place where there were no roads, but among the few things reserved from a home of refinement and comfort was a small organ and, much as they loved music they little knew what great comfort and help this little organ would be to them.

One thing they afterwards regretted, was selling the pictures which Mr. Noble had painted. It was so difficult to get anything in to the new home and they thought that sometime he would be able to paint more. He had the soul of a poet and an artist and loved to put his appreciation of the beautiful world around him into colors.

As the father sat with little five year old Margaret on his knee he told the children about the new home to which they were going, of the beautiful woods and the hills, and of the gurgling stream that slipped past the new home, sparkling among mossy stones and overhanging ferns that lined its banks. It was called Spring Creek and from it they got their drinking water. Not very far back from the house and a few yards through the pine forest, ran a much larger stream called Whirl Creek, where later the children learned to swim in the deep holes, laughing at the little fish disappearing as they dashed into the water.

The children accepted this decision to move, in different ways. Jean, who was sixteen, her mother's right hand and her father's darling, thought of the many friends she would leave behind as well as her beloved music lessons, but was quite willing to give them up if

it were best for all. Katie, although only fourteen and already in High School, thought of her books and lessons and her ambition to be a teacher, which she would have to renounce.

George's favourite pastime outside of school hours was driving horses. He loved them and could manage them better than most boys of eleven years of age. He often drove a team out into the country for the local livery man and when he thought of the new home, it was of the nice team of horses he would have someday.

Nellie, May and Willie, who were also of school age, thought a home in the country would be great fun, while little Margaret, Fanny and Minnie were too young to know what it was all about.

Mrs. Noble's people lived about two and a half miles from town. She was the eldest of the family and two of her brothers were also married and had little families, while her two youngest brothers and little sister lived at home with their parents. Mrs. Noble and her children had a farewell visit with Grandma and Grandpa and the night before they left for the North, her family, along with many of the neighbours gathered at their home to wish them happiness and prosperity in their new venture.

Mr. Noble went to the train to see them off, on a beautiful May morning, giving a last command to the family, "Remember, children, take good care of your mother. Make her always your first care and consideration." The children blithely answered "We will, father," and so they started on their way to Muskoka, the land of Hope and Promise.

CHAPTER II.

The Journey to the New Home

The end of the railway was at Gravenhurst, seventy miles from their destination. From there they went by stage. This stage was an open wagon, drawn by a strong team of horses. When the children got tired of bumping over the rough roads they got out and walked or ran, which the little ones did, behind the wagon. They would have liked to stop and pick the wild flowers that grew in profusion along the roadside, but if they stopped the driver would think they were tired and call, "Come on, you'd better get in and ride now." In this way they got to Emsdale, Where they stayed over night with a brother of Mr. Hopewell's, and the next morning started on again in the stage and landed at Kearney on May 29th, 1879.

This little village consisted of Weir's Hotel, now known as the McConkey homestead and A. J. O'Neill's store, a little log building with a scooped roof, one end of which was dwelling house and the other, the store and post office. There were also a few farm houses, among which were the homes of Ivor and Sinclair McIvor.

From there, there was no road and they had to walk or go by boat and there were two portages to cross before they came to Sand Lake, that beautiful lake, the sight of which was a rest for tired pilgrims and around which now cluster so many tourist cottages.

When they beached their big flat-bottomed boat at Mr. Hopewell's home on the far side of the lake they found he had not finished their home as he had promised to do, so the newcomers had to stay at his place, which made a big crowd in a small house. Their bedding was opened and beds made on the floor in any corner they could find large enough for a bed. Then in the morning they folded up their bedding and laid it outside on the packing boxes, which had been brought over in another boat.

CHAPTER III.

The New Home

With real pioneer spirit they went to work, Mr. Hopewell, Duncan and George going every day to get the roof on, the windows in and the door on, and Mrs. Noble going too, to supervise, to help all she could and to encourage them with her bright hopeful spirit.

While still at Hopewell's Jean and Katie thought they would go and see how the house was progressing and left the younger children in Nellie's care. A short distance from Hopewell's they took the wrong trail and presently came to a cabin in a little clearing. Imagine the surprise of the woman in the cabin when she saw two girls coming out of the bush. She had been there several years and had never seen a woman. How delighted she was to know that there were neighbours only two miles away, and what good friends they became, and what a comfort Mrs. Noble was to her in after years. Gifted as Mrs. Noble was with a sunny disposition and a courage far beyond most women, she gave help wherever it was needed and brought courage and cheer everywhere she went for she carried the love of God in her heart and a faith that trusted in His wisdom and goodness.

Even before the floor was laid down, the Nobles moved into their new home. They cut balsam boughs to keep the beds off the ground. These were placed upside down and made very good springs and, in spite of the black flies and mosquitoes, they slept well. In the morning these beds had to be taken up and the boughs carried out. This was the children's task and they thought it great fun.

On wet days these boughs were piled up in a corner of the room and the bedding piled on top of them and the children forbidden to get on them. This command was not always obeyed if their mother was out of sight. It was great fun for the little ones to jump into a feather tick on top of these springing boughs and then slide down to the floor. Sometimes the tick came with the children,

and then there was trouble. They were made to sit on a bench in the corner and that was not always enjoyable.

And so the spring passed and the summer came. The crop had been put in on the new land, which had been cleaned up by burning the logs from the trees that had been chopped down the winter before. All the roots and stumps that could be taken out with a grub hoe and an axe were piled in heaps on the logs and burned. Oh! the delight of those big bon fires. How the children worked to carry more roots to keep them going! Sometimes they were left until evening, and then how they enjoyed sitting at a safe distance watching the flames leap into the air and the sparks fly up so high that they wondered where they went. The grain was then sown on the cleared land and hoed in, and the potatoes were planted, and what potatoes they did grow! There was never anything so delicious as those big potatoes, so white and floury and dry.

One day a young man and his girl friend called to see the Nobles and of course, were asked to stay for supper, as they had a long walk back through the bush. For supper they had, among other things, some potatoes fried in an iron frying pan until they were nice and brown all round, then turned out on a big plate. They looked very appetising. When Miss Newman saw it, she thought, "What a lovely looking pie." She got a surprise when she went to the table and was asked if she would have some potatoes.

After the seeding, there were so many things still to do for winter would come and the house must be made warm. This was done by gathering moss from the woods and stuffing it into the cracks around the chinks. The chinks were made from bits of pine left from the shingles. While Duncan and George whittled these down with the axe and made them fit in the cracks, Nellie, May and Wiklie gathered the moss, picking it from the trees or in the swamps where the soft silky moss grows. They carried it in baskets, or bags and put it in the sunshine

to dry. Then their Mother, Jean and Katie poked it in around the chinks with a dull knife or sharp stick until not a breath of wind could blow through. The children were always told they must not go out of hearing or out of sight of the house when gathering the moss for fear they might get lost.

In September their father came and Mrs. Noble's youngest brother also came for a visit and, as many hands make light work, the building progressed more rapidly.

To make the flooring they felled a straight pine tree and sawed it into four foot lengths. These were stood on end and split into boards about one and a half inches thick, with a frow. These were placed across the sleepers and nailed down. Then when the floor was all laid it was smoothed with an adze. This was a real art and not every man could make a good job of it, but when it was well done the floor was almost as smooth as if it had been planed, and how beautiful and white it was when scrubbed.

They thought the little cabin was rather small for so large family and so decided to build an addition and, although their father had to go away to work again, the others undertook to finish it. Soon Mrs. Noble's brother and Duncan also had to return home so George and Jean undertook to make the shingles. These were made of pine of which there was plenty. Choosing a straight log they cut it into sixteen inch blocks called bolts. These were split in four with an axe, then with the frow they split them into shingles, one half of an inch thick. The butt of the shingle was then held tight in the shaving horse while they shaved the other end to a smooth thin edge with a draw-knife. The shaving horse was made of a balsam log, split in half and smoothed off, and the edges rounded so it would not be so hard to sit on. A table board was put on this horse, the end next to the workman being raised six or eight inches while the other end of this table was nailed to the horse. Through this table and also through the log a hole was cut. Through this

hole was passed the shaft which with the head was cut out of solid hardwood. On the lower end of this was fastened a small board on which they placed their feet and pressed it back to keep the head down, thus holding the shingle in place while they shaved it. These shingles were from twelve to sixteen inches wide, of the best pine and when a roof was made of these it was good for a lifetime.

It was hard work for young folks just from town but their courage and their fun never failed them. Many laughs they had over who was the best man, but finally the roof was finished and all were delighted because this new part was to be divided into bedrooms, which would mean more comfort for the family.

Life in the country was not all hard work, though, and there was lots of fun too. The little organ was a great pleasure to the whole country for miles around, for Jean could play and sing as well as make shingles, and the young folks for miles around came through the woods to spend the evening, bringing their lanterns with them for there were no street lights to show them their way home. They gathered around the organ and sang the popular songs and the good old Psalms and hymns. Even when the family were alone they sang, special favourites being "Old Black Joe" and "Nancy Lee." On Sunday, only sacred music was sung, for they did not forget their God even if they were a long way from church and on Sunday the children would sit on a big pine log at the edge of the woods while those who could read the Bible and the others listened attentively, or the mother would gather them around her, and read Bible stories or the Sunday School papers that were sent from the old home town.

CHAPTER IV.

"The Home of Happy People"

*"Here's the very thing we dreamed of
In the springtime of our wooing
Here's the castle which we builded
In the distant long ago.*

*All our children gathered round us,
Doing just as they are doing—
Could a greater earthly triumph
Any living mortal know?*

*Here's the joy which we have worked for
Here's the scene we've longed to see;
Ours a home all mirth and gladness,
Where our children like to be."*

—Edgar A. Guest

So the first summer passed. When the days grew short and the long dark evenings came and there had to be a light they began to gather birch bark for light. Not only was money scarce but nine miles is a long way to carry a gallon of coal oil through the bush, so the birch bark was used. Opening the front door of the stove the bark was thrown in and it flamed up brightly making a light by which the older ones could knit and do plain sewing, while the younger ones sat in a corner, and talked and dreamed of the years to come. Some were to be nurses and soothe and comfort the ill of life, and there was also to be an artist and some teachers. Some of these dreams were realized in after years, and some not.

Some times the weather was wet and the birch bark too, then a light had to be made with a candle if they were fortunate enough to have candle moulds and tallow to make them, but when they hadn't a light was made by putting some grease in a small dish and placing in this a piece of candle wick to which they touched a match and behold! a glim! Did I say "touched a match", more often

it was lit with a small sliver whittled from a bit of pine for the matches must be taken care of and always a lamp full of oil on hand for fear some one might be taken ill in the night. Matches and oil, therefore were guarded carefully through the wet dark days of the Fall and early Winter.

When not busy with little tasks on these wet days, the younger children would amuse themselves watching the slashing of the evergreen trees in the woods near the house. They would kneel on the home-made couch by the window and watch the big green tops slash and bend in the wind and rain and wonder if they would break off and wonder why God sent storms and why it could not always be bright and dry so they could play outside. The "whys" of childhood years! No wonder mother's hair gets grey and her face wrinkled even if her life is a happy one.

Early in the winter Mr. Noble came home and what a pleasure it was to his wife and family to think he would be with them for sometime. And now Christmas was coming and what was to be done about a few little presents for everyone just to remind them that it was a festive season even in a little log cabin in a wilderness of snow and forest. All the same, never did mansion hold happier hearts or brighter spirits.

Mr. Noble, being good with his knife, made some "Jumping Jacks". The little figure was made of pine fastened at the joints with a bit of snare wire and hung on a wire between two sticks. When the handles were pressed together it would spring over the wire at the top. He made one of these for Willie and each of the three little girls and he also made wooden dolls for the girls and their mother dressed them with pieces of bright print. These little dolls lasted for years and the little girls loved them, just as much as if they had been expensive ones. Then the older girls made some candy, not very much, for sugar was hard to get, and they had hazel nuts which they had gathered in the Fall and put away to dry for Christmas time. When these nuts

were hulled they were put in a small grip and hung out of reach of the wee folk. The grip was locked and Jean carried the key in her pocket, but one day the key got lost and the children had the laugh on her when she wanted to get a few for a friend who called and had to make a slit in the corner of the grip. However they were very good and saved the nuts for Christmas.

The house was trimmed with evergreen boughs and wreaths made of trailing moss with a few red leaves, which had been pressed in the Fall, put here and there to give them a bit of color. There was no Christmas tree for there was so little room. The stockings were hung and the little gifts put in and although there were no expensive presents, and no grand dinner it was a happy time for all.

All winter they cut wood to keep the fires going and when George came home from the store one day and said there were no brooms to be had, his father spent the stormy days making birch brooms, such as he had seen in some of the other homes. This was done by cutting a small yellow birch to the length of a broom. One and a half feet from the bottom end a saw cut was put in, sawing all the way round and cutting within two inches of the centre of the stick, then it was whittled off with an axe until nearly the right size for a handle. This was smoothed with a spoke shave and scraped with a bit of broken glass until it was smooth. The bark was peeled off the thick piece at the bottom and then a nick was cut half way with a sharp knife so that the shavings that were whittled from both ends of this would bend in the way they were wanted. When this had been cut into fine shaving it was soaked in water until it was soft, then the upper part was bent down, and tied with a strong cord of wire. You have heard of things looking "like a brush broom in a fit", but those who have never seen one can hardly imagine how fierce they look before they are soaked and tied down. When they were finished they made a very good broom for a rough floor and the making occupied their time on wet and stormy days, for

there was no daily paper and very little else to read, except a few of their best books that had been brought from their old home. It was a happy Winter they all spent there together in spite of the fact that many things, which were considered necessities in the old home, were luxuries in the new one.

CHAPTER V.

Springtime Activities

It seemed only a short time until spring came and that year they were there for sugar-making. The trees were tapped by boring a small auger hole in one side, not deep enough to hurt the tree. Into this was put a spile scooped from soft wood which would run the sap into a trough, also made of wood. No tin pails and metal spiles in those good old days and no evaporator where you put the sap in at one end and it comes out syrup at the other. They carried the sap to the house where it was boiled down and made into syrup and sugar. This sugar was moulded in milk pans and when it was cold the large cakes were piled one on top of the other with a layer of wrapping paper between them. These were put away in a dry place to supply sugar for the rest of the year. When wanted for baking is scraped off with a knife until it was fine like brown sugar. And oh, the taffy they had! This was made by pouring some of the hot syrup on a piece of crusty snow and as soon as it was cooled it was pulled to and fro in buttered hands until it was ready to eat. Sometimes they made candy of it by twisting a light colored piece and a dark brown piece together. The more it is pulled the lighter coloured it becomes.

Some of the neighbours boiled their sugar in big iron kettles in the bush and it was great fun to sit on logs around the fire and tell stories and if they heard the wolves howling in the distance, it was all the more thrilling.

Then the seed time came again and the crops were put in, a little more this year and all the family were out helping to pick up roots and throw them into heaps to be burned, and hoeing and raking the seed into the ground.

The next task was soap-making. They had saved the hardwood ashes all through the winter and now a leach was made of a piece of hollow log that had been all cleaned out until only a shell of two or three inches thickness was left. This they set on a piece of board which was raised a foot or two from the ground and set with a little slant so that the lye would run down into a trough. On this board was placed the hollow log, on end, some straw was put in the bottom and then it was filled with ashes. Some water was poured in from time to time so the lye would drain out slowly through the straw and they would get all the strength of the ashes. When they had enough lye they put it in a big kettle over a fire. This kettle was hung on a small log which rested on two posts with forked ends. Into this lye was put all the scraps of fat that had been saved, pork rinds, fat from the deer meat which they used, or anything that would make grease. This was boiled for a long time until all the fat had disappeared. When it was done it was taken from the fire, put into a wooden keg and set away to cool. This was the summer's supply. If it was good it was a light brown and thick like jelly. Sometimes it was not so good but it was soap anyway and had to do until the next house cleaning time came round, for the soap-making was done in the spring and fall and there was always a feeling of thankfulness when the dirty task was done without anyone being burned, for a drop of the lye on hands or feet made a bad burn.

There was always plenty of meat to be had (for the bush was full of moose, red deer and partridge, and the streams were full of fish). How thrilling it was to run down to Whirl Creek or any of the larger streams and pull out a dozen or two of those speckled beauties, in an hour or less, and what a delicious meal they made.

CHAPTER VI.

Shadows

So the time slipped around and in the winter of 1880 trouble came to the Noble family in the death of the almost idolized husband and father.

Winter came very early that year. The snow fell in October and stayed until April. Typhoid fever had broken out and little Margaret became ill. Away back in the bush so far from a doctor, this was serious but the mother had brought a medical book, Dr. Gunn, with her when coming to the farm and with this to help her she went to work in her soft, gentle way, for she was naturally good at nursing. But when the fever raged on she wrote to her doctor in the old home town which now seemed so far away. He answered at once, sending medicine and advice, but everything seemed to fail and one night in late November, the mother and Jean knelt beside the bed, thinking every minute would be her last on earth. The little fair head had been shaved and the little body gone to a skeleton, but in their distress a loved one whispered, "Be not afraid. It is I", and courage came back to their aching hearts and tired bodies and before morning the little girl had dropped into a quiet sleep, the first she had had for weeks.

In the meantime three of the other children had taken the fever but were not very ill. Their father, who was working in Gravenhurst came home to see the little ones, thinking to return with the next stage, but when he found his little girl so ill, decided to wait for another day, but he must let the stage driver know, so he asked George if he thought he could go and tell the driver not to wait for him. The little lad, not wanting to add to the troubles of the sad household, bravely said he would try. Then the father filled and lighted the lantern for him and he started on his long tramp through the snow and darkness. Seven miles was through dense forest with no break in it except the trail. When about half way through the forest a screech owl right above his head gave such a screech that he

almost dropped in his tracks, but in a minute he knew what it was and went on. A few miles farther on where he had to pass Beaver Lake, he saw a light in a home across the lake so he did not feel so lonely then, knowing that some one else was about. He kept bravely on and got to the stopping place before the stage driver had even had his breakfast so after he had a rest and his breakfast, he started home again, walking the nine miles back.

Then early in December Jean became ill. She had been her mother's right hand through all this troubled time and one day she went to the store with George to get some things that were needed and the mail, for they were anxious to hear from their father. When they came home in the evening she was so tired her mother had to help her out of her wet snowy clothes into some dry ones. They got her some hot supper but she could not eat. She drank her tea, and told them all the news she had heard of the neighbours around, who had been sick and how they were getting along. Then she went to her bed and did not rise from it again until early spring. To say that the mother was anxious was putting it mildly. Little Margaret was not able to be around yet, and had to be carried from her bed to her chair, but remembering Christ who said "My strength is sufficient for thee" she bravely took up this added burden and carried on without a murmur. Shortly after this her husband took the fever and word was sent to the poor wife that he was very ill. She sent for her mother and brothers, but it was several days before the word could get to them and they could get to her. Mrs. Noble was ready and accompanied by her youngest brother, she started, walking the nine miles to the post office where she could get the stage. There she got word that her husband was not likely to live and to come at once. She was doing her best to get to him but there was still sixty miles to go with a team of horses. She hoped and prayed that he might be spared to her, but when she got to his boarding house and told them she was Mrs. Noble, the man asked her to sit down and said he would call his wife. When the woman came into the room, she rose, and said she wished to go to her husband

at once. The woman tried to break it to her gently that her husband had died the day before. Mrs. Noble caught the back of the chair and the room went black, and for a moment she thought "God has surely forgotten me," but, she was soon herself again, saying within her heart, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

She had been caring for sick children for months with little rest, and a trip of seventy miles through cold and snow to find this sad news awaiting her! No wonder her heart failed her and for a moment her faith seemed to desert her, but she said "I will go to him", and was taken into the room where lay the remains of her husband, the one love of her life. They had been brought up on adjoining farms and loved each other since their school days, when he used to carry her school bag and go ahead and break the road after the storms, and now she must go on without him. She was left a young widow of thirty-six, with the care of nine children on her hands, but she took up her cross and tried to follow as Christ led the way. As soon as the funeral was over she returned home to her sick children. When she arrived at the cabin she removed all sign of mourning before entering, for fear of shock to any of the children who were well enough to notice her, but Jean was still too ill to notice. The grandmother stayed on to help the stricken daughter, who seemed to have so much to bear. There were no spells of weeping, no slacking in the care of the children.

After some weeks her mother had to go back to her long neglected home and it was a wrench for Mrs. Noble to part with her and for the first time the family saw her cry, as she stood at the window and watched her mother go away. Jean, by this time was able to be lifted from the bed to a chair for a while each day. She was sitting up when her grandmother went away. Seeing her mother crying frightened her. She had often wondered why her father had not come home to see her in all this time, so when she saw her mother crying, she said, "I believe Daddy is dead and that is why you are crying". The mother turned quickly to tell her it was because Grandma

had gone away, but she was too late. Jean had fainted. They put her back to bed from which she did not rise again until April. The poor mother blamed herself for her momentary weakness. How hard it was to hide from Jean that no letters came from the father she so dearly loved, but at last the long hard winter was over and Jean was told the truth. It was a sad blow, but she rallied and tried to get strong to help her mother, but when every one was again on their feet the worn out mother took ill herself and had to go to bed. She did not have the fever, but was just worn out. She had kept up with almost superhuman strength, from October until April. She had never been undressed, except to change her clothes, and for all those months their light and fire had never been out. The neighbours had been so kind, but she had never left the sick ones for more than a few minutes.

Now the children waited on her with such love and care that life began to look a little brighter for her, and she realized that she had much to live for after all. So, summer came, the flowers bloomed and the sun shone just as brightly although her heart seemed dead within her. But the summer would soon pass and there must be food and clothing for the children, so the wise Father filled her days with many tasks and gradually health and strength came back to her as well as courage and brightness and the friends and neighbours marvelled at her hopefulness.

CHAPTER VII.

Changes Taking Place

George went to work for a farmer, thus at the age of fourteen becoming a wage earner and the support of the family. Jean and the others were growing stronger again. Katie decided to try for a teacher's certificate. If she could teach she could help in the support of the

home, so with the help of a neighbour, Mr. John McConkey, she started to review the school work she had taken in the old home town. She had spent all the spare time she had since they came to the new home in teaching her young brother and sisters and now she hoped to make some further use of her education.

There were no scribblers to be had and no money to buy them if they had been handy, so every bit of wrapping paper was saved both at their home and the other homes around. This was pressed and made into a book and many a hard evening's work she spent over them. Teaching had always been her ambition. She was clever and the neighbour was very proud of his pupil. Late in the year after walking eighteen miles to where the school Inspector, Mr. Reason lived, she wrote her examinations, passed for her certificate, and in the New Year started to teach in the village of Burks Falls, not far away.

Thus began the life work of one who taught for thirty-two years, and many a man and woman look back from the higher walks of life to the little log school houses where they first started on their road to education for she always impressed on them that the first thing in life was to live cleanly and honourably. She taught Sunday School and helped with everything she could that was for the betterment of the community in which she worked.

One day in the summer, Jean went out calling with Mrs. Robert McConkey. She was a young bride, lately come to the neighbourhood and she had never lived in the bush before. She and Jean went to call on Mrs. Hunter, another young married woman who lived a mile or so away. Mr. Hunter insisted that they stay for supper. It was such a treat to have a visit from them, as there was not much young company around for her. It was rather late when they started for home, and was growing dusk when they got through the bush to the place where the road turned to McConkey's. Jean left her to go on alone as she was only a few yards from their fence, while Jean had nearly a mile to go in the other direction. She said goodbye and started for home in the darkening woods.

She had not gone far when she heard something racing after her. Gathering up the long skirts they wore in those days so her feet could go a little faster, she began the run for life through the dark woods. Jean was fleet as a deer and when she reached home, she dashed in and shut the door behind her. Leaning upon it, she gasped to her mother. "Something has chased me all the way through the bush from McConkey's corner." Her mother only laughed and said. "Nonsense, child, there is nothing in that bush to hurt anyone. Get off your wet things, dear, your feet are soaked." She had run through wet places without looking for stepping stones. Before she could get her wet shoes off, the door opened and Mrs. McConkey came tumbling in all out of breath. After Jean had left her, she had heard something in the bush, she said, so in fear, she had turned and tried to catch up to Jean. But she could not. What a laugh they had over that wild chase. Mrs. Noble wanted her to sit down and rest but she said she must not, as Rob would be so worried about her. Jean then got the lantern and took her home. To her indignation and surprise, she found Rob was not in the least worried about her. He was sitting with his chair tipped back and his feet on the damper of the stove, having a nice quiet smoke. How he did laugh when he heard her story. For years after, Mrs. McConkey used to like to tell about that bad scare she got.

As soon as Jean was strong enough, she went back to the old home town where she got work with a friend of her mother's. She worked at dressmaking for some time and later went to Detroit where she learned the tailoring. There she met the young man who later became her husband.

In the meantime Mrs. Noble's parents and brothers and her sister had moved into a township about thirty miles from her home. She seemed so lonely and discouraged that in the fall of 1881 they persuaded her to move nearer to them. This was not a good move for her heart-ache went with her and the land was rough and much harder to work, so she stayed only a year and a half and then returned to her own farm again.

While there the little children missed the big pine trees where they used to play. There was only one pine tree near their new home and how they liked to play under it. They built ships and towns out of the cones and dreamed of the years to come and in the dreams there was always mother and how they would get her nice dresses and bonnets and a nice house to live in.

They were twelve miles from town with a very hilly road over which to travel to carry home the food for the children. One trip was well remembered by the children. Their mother had gone to town and not getting a letter from George with some money in it as she had expected she decided to walk to where he was working for the same farmer he had started with after his father died. This was four miles farther for her to walk. She found George well and hard at work but he had not had a chance to send the money out to the Post Office in the town. So she started home after she had received the money and had been given a nice warm dinner, which was much better than the lunch she carried in her pocket, and usually sat by a spring somewhere on the roadside to eat, where she could get a drink of the sparkling water. She still had the sixteen miles to walk back and carry a pack of twenty-five pounds of flour and some other groceries. The last few miles seemed very long and the hills hard to climb. It was dark some time before she reached home and the older children were watching anxiously for her, while the little ones wished that Barney, the faithful collie, would bark so mother would come home. She came at last, tired and footsore. Supper was long over but Nellie and May got her a cup of tea and as nice a supper as they could, while the little girls bathed her tired feet and found her some old worn slippers to put on to rest them.

Another time that was always remembered by the children was the day their mother sent Margaret and Willie to drive the cows out of their Uncle's crops. This field belonged to an uncle who was unmarried and there was no one living on the place. The children drove the cattle out and away some distance from the field thinking

they would come out on a path that led to their home but they failed to find the path. Soon they began to realize they were lost. Here they were, two children of eight and ten, lost in a bush of unlimited miles with only a few settlers living miles apart.

Margaret wanted to tell Barney to go home and follow him, but Willie was afraid to trust him and thought they had better stay with the cows. They could still hear their bells so they made their way back to them. They knew some one would find them before night, but it was early afternoon when they left home and they had no lunch. They stayed close to the cows and Barney stayed too, and when the cows stopped to eat or lay down for a rest the children sat down and rested and when the cows moved on they went with them. This they did till four o'clock in the afternoon.

Their mother wondered when they did not come back but did not feel alarmed, thinking they must have gone back to their Grandmother's. They were not in the habit of doing things like that without leave, but when dinner time came and they still were not home, she took the younger children and went to see. To say that she was alarmed, when her mother told her they had not been there, was hardly expressing her feeling. So they started to look for the cows hoping the children had stayed with them. They wandered for miles before they found them, two very hungry, but, oh, such happy children, when they saw their mother and grandmother. In all the hours they had wandered in that wild and rocky country they had never seen a wild animal of any kind, but had seen and heard some very beautiful birds. It being green forest where there had never been a fire there were no berries for them to eat and the simple supper they had when they arrived home tasted like a banquet to them.

*"Oh, for festive dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread."*

CHAPTER VIII.

Back to "Pinelands"

After a year and a half they moved back to their old home. While they had been away the Flatt Lumber Company of Hamilton had come in and taken out a cut of square timber. Some of this was quite close to their house. Their little cabin had been used as a camp for the lumbermen, so they came back to find their dooryard littered with chips, and all the refuse pertaining to the breaking up of a lumber camp. This did not bother them much. George was home for a few days helping them to get moved, so every one went to work with a right good will and while the younger ones piled wood and raked and cleaned the yard, the mother and the older girls, with the help of George cleaned up the house and put things in their places.

So the summer of '83 began, but now there were some roads, for the lumbermen had to build log bridges so they could get their timber out. This timber was only the best of the pine, which was cut and hewed into clean square timber, some of it two or three feet through. Later the rest of the pine was cut down and made into sawlogs. George worked in the camp and helped to take these out. How the children loved to sit out at the back of the cabin and watch this big handsome brother, who was now sixteen. All through the warm fall weather he worked with his brown curly head bare and his fair face flushed and warm, while he swung his axe with swift sure strokes, which sank deep into the side of the great trees, and soon brought them crashing to the ground. This made the children laugh and add one more to the trees George had cut that day. They were so very proud of this dear brother who could cut down enough of these trees in a day to make one hundred logs. (This was the amount required daily from each gang.)

These logs were put on skidways piled up as high as they could, to be drawn when the snow came. The skidways were built along the draw-roads with the front to

the road so that the logs could be easily rolled onto the sleighs and piled high.

The roads were built up well in the fall before the snow came and when it came they broke their roads, filled up all the holes with snow, then put a watering tank on them. This tank was a large strong box with holes in the bottom, which was built on a sleigh so they could turn the water on or off as they wished. They had great holes cut in the ice on the lakes where they filled this tank. The water was drawn up in a barrel with horses. When it was dumped into the tank the horses backed up, letting the barrel down into the water and then drew it up again.

Two men went with the tank and they usually worked at night when the other teams were off the roads, and what roads they made. They were as level as a floor, and they needed them level for the loads they carried, piled six or eight tier deep on a ten foot bunk and the men sitting or standing on top of these. It was a cold job when the mercury dropped to forty or fifty below zero, but they did not seem to mind. They loved the horses, and what noble creatures they were, the best the Company could find and the pride of the teamster's heart.

The men were dressed in the warmest of clothing with only their faces exposed to the weather and they whistled and sang as if they did not have a care in the world.

The logs were dumped on the side of a lake or river and driven for miles and miles through the lakes and rivers to the Georgian Bay, where they were shipped to their destination, or sawn into lumber. But after sixty odd years I can shut my eyes and see in my dreams that beautiful pine forest with its green branches waving in the gentle wind and the sunshine, and making a checkered pattern of light and shadows on the soft carpet of golden brown needles where the children played or stopped to rest, leaning against the rough bark and inhaling the health-giving fragrance of those great pine trees before the lumbermen had laid them low.

In 1883 the first minister came to the settlement, in the person of John Garrioch, a dear old Christian man who was a friend to all. He walked miles every week holding meetings in the homes. He would walk fourteen miles and preach three times on Sunday, and how the people drank in the Gospel message. It was like a refreshing shower to the thirsty land.

Then the problem was to get the children dressed fit to go to church. Their print dresses had to be washed and starched and neatly ironed. Starch was not to be had in packages, so a potato was grated in water so it would not get discoloured. After the starch had settled to the bottom of the dish the water and grounds were poured off and the white starch left in the bottom. This was dried and put away for future use if it was not all required at the time. So the little dresses were got ready, but there were also the hats and shoes.

Hats were made of fine rye straw that had been picked from the last harvest. These were bleached with sulphur smoke until they were a very light cream color, and then trimmed with a bit of ribbon or some trimming from an old hat or dress which had been washed and pressed. They looked very nice, but this meant a lot of work for the family and the little ones very often went with a little sunbonnet made of white or light coloured goods. These were made with a little frill around the face which made the little girls look very sweet and pretty as they smiled so shyly up at the minister when he shook hands with them.

The adults and some of the children had shoes but they were very shabby and there was not shoe polish at hand, so a damp dauber was rubbed into the soot on the under side of the back lid of the stove. This, when well polished, gave a good shine to the shoes. Some of the mothers made shoes for their children out of the long legs of the daddy's worn out boots. However, with shoes or without them, they went to church. There was no organ and choir but the angels' song at Bethlehem could

not have sounded sweeter to those hard-working pioneers, for many of them were good singers and they sang with all their hearts. They had little money to give but what they had, they gave gladly.

The minister visited at all the homes. Once when he called on the Noble's, Katie, the young school teacher, who was home for the holidays, made a pie of wild gooseberries. They were very good when cooked with plenty of sugar, but in her hurry she forgot to put the sugar in. The minister was the first to be served with pie. He ate it manfully, taking it, I suppose as part of his pioneering experience, but when Willie got his pie he soon shouted; "Whoever made this pie never put any sugar in it." Imagine the embarrassment of the young cook, but the minister smiled at her and said it was not so bad, while the little girls wondered if ministers always told the truth, for they had been taught that children should never tell untruths.

CHAPTER IX.

"Go To A Tree"

*"When you grow weary of the boasts of men
Go to a tree, my friend, one that has stood
Long patient years within the silent wood
Beneath its branches you will find again
A thing long lost. Trees are content to be
As God created them. No bough that turns
Its golden thoughts to Autumn ever yearns
Beyond a hillside's immortality.
Go to a tree in silence. You will find
In the soft eloquence of bud and leaf
Serenity beyond the voice of grief,
And faith above the reach of human kind.
Man spends his noisy days in search of gain
While trees find God in sunlight, soil and rain.*

—Dr. Anderson M. Scruggs.

The years rolled on and the children were growing up, every one trying to help all they could in making a living and always the brave mother was bright and cheerful and the little home a happy one in spite of the lights and shadows of pioneer life.

Sunday was always such a welcome rest after a long busy week. To hunt the wild flowers or sit on a mossy bank amongst the ferns and Indian pipes and Jack-in-the-Pulpits, and listen to the wild birds with their sweet songs seemed to bring one nearer to God and give fresh courage; "God's in His Heaven. All's well with the world," these little birds seemed to say.

Willie was growing to be quite a big boy, and would soon be able to go to work. He was not a big strapping fellow like George but was fairly tall, very slim and fine looking with big blue eyes and brown curls and was the darling of his mother's heart because he was more like his father than any of the others. He was very clever as an artist, and could play almost any instrument he got hold of. Both boys were good singers and helped with the singing in the little church gatherings.

In 1884 the railroad was built from Gravenhurst to North Bay. This made work for many men and teams so there was more money in the country and the thought of the railroad so near brought fresh hope. There would then be a way of getting out to the older parts of the country and a way to get flour and such things in without having to draw them in sixty miles with horses. When the first train went over the line shrieking its way through valley and over uplands towards the north, leaving clouds of smoke and dust behind it, what joy it brought to the lonely hearted women who had not heard a train for years.

Some grist mills had been built by this time, one at Beggsborough and another at Stirling Falls. When the farmers had a good crop of wheat they drove for miles to take it to the mills and get their flour. This flour was dark, and it made dark bread, but it was sweet and lovely. When the farmers had wheat enough to make their own

flour it was a big help, for they had the bran and shorts for feed, as well as the flour, but sometimes the wheat was frozen and was only good for feed. When butter was only ten cents a pound and eggs nine cents a dozen, it was hard to have to buy the flour as well as the other things, for wages were low. One year, George Noble, even though he was exceptionally good with a cradle, worked ten hours a day in the harvest field for fifty cents a day.

CHAPTER X.

The New Minister

Mr. Garrioch, the minister, had been moved to another field, and they now had a student from Knox College in Toronto. These young men came in April and stayed until September, and what fine fellows they were, trying to do the work that God would have them do, without a thought of self, walking for miles through the bush trails, going from house to house bringing brightness and cheer with them and helping in every way they could.

One of the first of these students was Mr. William Gauld, afterwards the much loved and noted Dr. Gauld of Formosa. Mr. Gauld came as a guiding star to these backwoods settlers, a noble Christian, full of faith and hope that never doubted the wisdom of God. He was gladly welcomed everywhere he went. Mr. Gauld was two summers on the field. The first summer the flies were so bad that he thought of a way to save himself trouble and misery. He got some mosquito netting and made bags large enough to hang loosely over his hands. In the top of these he put a draw string that could be tied around the cuff of his coat. About half way down he fastened a hoop made of a willow twig. This hoop kept the net away from his hands so the flies could not bite through. To protect his face he made the same, only larger, and with both ends open with a draw string in each end. He tied one around the crown of his hat and when he put his hat

on, he tied the other around his coat collar. It amused the children very much to see him with this pink mosquito-netting over his hands and face.

Soon after coming to the field he began petitioning for a church building. A meeting was called and every one was willing. Mr. Hunter gave an acre of ground for the building and the cemetery and everyone promised to do what they could to help. The logs were pine, hewed flat and squared off on the edges. Someone with oxen drew them to the building site. A day was set for the raising, and what excitement there was. George Noble being always good with his axe, was chosen for a corner man at any raising, so he was one of the corner men on this. He stood there so bright and happy looking, his curls tossed with the wind and his happy laugh or whistle mingling with the chatter of the men and the tap, tap of the axes as they shaped the ends of the logs and made them fit into a perfect dovetail at each corner. Two other corner men on this building were Bob and George Mason. Soon the walls were up and the rafters on, and Mr. Gauld, being very handy with carpenter's tools, did most of the other work. He put in the platform, made the pulpit and the pulpit chair, and put in the seats. The front ones had backs on but the others were just benches as the lumber ran out and it was hard to get more. He always saw that the older folks sat in these seats with backs and the young people, who came to Sunday School would move back to make room for them.

The Superintendent of Missions came that fall and held the opening service, and behold the little Presbyterian Church, the only church for miles around. How happy and thankful these pioneers were to see this little church the fruit of their hard work and sacrifice.

Mr. Gauld has passed away and most of the others who helped with the building of the church, but the little church still stands on a sunny little flat, over-shadowed by the hills, where many summer tourists come to worship, and glancing from the windows must recall the words, "I to the hills will lift mine eyes," for they are

very beautiful, with a little farm house nestled on the hillside against a background of evergreens.

Year after year young students have come to this field, and have preached from the pulpit that Dr. Gauld had made, and sat in the same chair that he made and used, and one could ask no greater blessing for them than those that attended Dr. Gauld. Much of the seed sown in those children's hearts were precious memories all their lives and brought forth a harvest of useful Christian lives.

To these young students Mrs. Noble was always a good kind friend, and they came to her with all their cares and troubles, sometimes discouraged, thinking they had failed in their work. Some one told them they had failed in their last sermon. They had not reached someone they had hoped to influence for good, but Mrs. Noble always sent them away cheered. Her right, cheery disposition, her faith and courage, the kind word she had for every one, and the good she could see in all human nature, gave them hope and they began to think that perhaps they had not failed so badly and determined to go on doing their best and leave the results in higher hands. So these young men carried on this work year after year, walking fourteen miles on a Sunday, preaching three times and teaching Sunday School twice, but they never complained. They were glad to suffer hardships for the good they could do and the cheer and comfort they could bring to many lonely hearts. Some of the settlers walked four or five miles to attend church, others who had children, drove, riding in a wagon over the rough roads with never a thought about their old clothes that they had worn for years.

One woman told the Noble girls that she had worn her bonnet for fifteen years, but no one thought of her bonnet as she sat in church with her slim little hands clasped in her lap, and her fair sweet face raised to the minister as she drank in the Gospel message. Years of hard work had not spoiled her pretty hands, nor had the years of poverty and hardship dimmed her spirit.

CHAPTER XI.

Taking Out the Drive

As the years rolled on the road improved and summer visitors began to come to this quiet country place to spend their holidays. The sweet fresh air and the calm still nights brought rest and strength to the tired brain and nerve. To lie in the sunshine beside the sweet smelling evergreens gave to the tired city dwellers renewed strength and made them return to the city feeling that they had taken a fresh lease on life. In the early part of the summer it was not so good for the flies were bad, but later when they were gone, it was wonderful, for the fishing was good and the partridge were plentiful. One man caught a nineteen pound trout in one of the lakes. What wonderful fish yarns were told after that. One of the visitors was out in the woods one day with one of the settlers for a hike when they came across two bear cubs. They were so cute the visitors wanted to catch one but the old timer said, "If you are going to catch one, I'm going on," for he knew that the mother would not be far away. With the first cry from the baby bear she would be there ready to fight for them, so they both went on and left the little things to their play. It was wonderful to see the mother partridge with her brood. At the first sound of warning from the mother how quickly they all disappeared under roots or bunches of leaves or anything that would hide them. While these things were very common to the Oltons and other country folks, they were wonderful to the city dwellers.

By this time Willie Noble was grown up. He had gone to the camps as he was big enough to be a chore boy. Always quick in his movements and very clean and tidy he soon became a great cook but always in the spring he left his work in the cookery to go on the drive. This was dangerous work but seemed to have a great fascination for some of the men. Dams were built at the mouth of the river or creek that were large enough to drive. It was usually built four or five feet high across the mouth of the stream just where it left the

lake. As most of the lakes have quite a high bank this would mean four or five feet of water over the whole surface of the lake or perhaps a chain of two or three lakes. When this dam was opened the rush and roar of the water down the stream was terrifying. When this rush of water reached the logs the drive began. Sometimes the men worked from daylight until dark, which meant a long day at that time of year, but they had to work long and fast while the water was high with the spring floods. These logs were pushed into the middle of the stream with a long pike pole to keep them from catching on trees and brush at the sides.

When the last log had been pushed into the water, the driver jumped on one and went floating down the stream, balancing himself with his pike pole, whistling or singing a gay tune. If the logs rolled in the water as they often did, the boys with their sharp caulked boots seemed to have no trouble in keeping on top of them. When they came to the first lake they put a boom around the logs, so many at a time, and drew it across the lake by means of a strong raft. On this raft they placed a strong steady horse which went around and around thus winding up the cable that had been fastened to the boom while the other end was snubbed to a tree on an island or some point ahead of them and in this way winding their way across the miles of water. This work was often done at night while the lake was calm. One or two of the men always went on the logs to see that everything went right. They would go springing across these logs from one point to another of the boom and always with a cheery whistle in spite of the wet and long cold days.

There were many rapids and falls on the rivers. Over these they built a slide or chute. This was built of long logs laid over the rocky places and fastened down solid the whole width of the stream. There were sides to put on, also of logs and those in the bottom were hewed flat and smooth so there was nothing for the logs to catch on as they went through. When the dam was opened at the mouth of the stream to start the logs

going there was a man or two placed at the head of this slide to keep the logs going, for if they caught on anything and caused a jam it made a lot of trouble and was very likely to take out the whole slide, for when hundreds of logs got pushing and jamming with all that force of water behind them, it took something very strong to hold them back so these men who were usually experienced drivers kept them going so they rushed through amid this rushing, foaming water, Sometimes they would strike a rock or something at the foot and turn over endways.

By this time there was a sawmill built at Katrine and the logs were taken there and sawed into lumber. This mill was beside the new railroad and the lumber was shipped from there and did not have to be driven so far as the square timber was in the first days of the lumbering in this district.

Soon there were more mills built, one of which was at Kearney. Although they were small they gave work to some of the men who were not farming. The smell of the fresh pine lumber was so nice that it was no wonder the men liked to work amongst it.

CHAPTER XII.

Changing Times

By this time the Nobles had moved into a new house, a small log house, but larger than the old one had been. While the young folks were glad of the change the mother looked at the dismantled shanty with a sad heart. It was the home her husband had built for her and where she had last seen him alive. It was here he had bidden her a fond good-bye hoping to be home again before long. Now she was leaving it, but for the sake of the children she knew she must make the move.

The Noble family had been a very happy one in spite of hard work and few pleasures but their home was always pleasant for they made their own good times.

The younger girls now presided at the organ for the older ones were away working, but after their work was done, they would walk miles to spend a week end at home. How early on Sunday morning they would slip out to see the garden and all the nice flowers that mother had, for she was a wonderful hand at growing flowers and strangers passing would stop to admire the beauty of her garden or beg a few flowers. The garden seen early in the morning with the sun peeping over the hilltop, the dew sparkling like diamonds on everything, the spider webs among the bushes gleaming like jewelled lace all seemed to the girls a wonderful picture and they realized that God is the greatest artist of all.

Many of the trees that still adorn the old garden were planted by those happy girls in the bright May days of long ago.

Mrs. Noble always had her windows full of flowers, and it was a habit of hers to turn the flowers around for Sunday after growing towards the wind and the sunshine all week. They were turned with the bright flowers and pretty green leaves towards the room. The girls laughed at her and said she was turning their Sunday faces toward the family, but it always brightened the room, and the daughters, who are trying to remember the mother's teachings also turn their flowers around for Sunday, and try as she did to keep the inside of the home bright even if it is dark and stormy outside.

But soon the family was scattered, the older ones married none of them settled near home, and one of them was in the far West. This was shortly after the rebellion and Mrs. Noble's heart ached with longing and anxiety for this bright sunny spirit that had left the little home and gone far away to face the hardship of pioneer life on the prairie, but she had tried to instil in her family both by teaching and example a steadfast courage and a faith that trusts at all times and looks for the silver lining in every cloud. However far away they went they could never get beyond their mother's love or their Heavenly Father's care. The letter that came to the little home was always cheerful telling of all the good or

funny things that happened, but never of the hard times or the longing for a glimpse of the home faces.

And now there was another wedding in the family, the first of the Noble girls to be married at home. The living room was very pretty, decorated with her mother's flowers and the young bride looked sweet in her simple white dress. Mr. Garrioch, the dear friend of the bride's childhood had come to marry them. The guests were her own loved ones and a few family friends. The supper was simple but in good taste and every one was merry as they partook of it, and later wished the young couple much happiness as they drove away, with a spirited team of horses, to the station at Burks Falls and thence to their new home in the north.

In 1896 the railroad was laid from Parry Sound, passing through Kearney on its way to Ottawa. This was a wonderful help to the country. It made work for the men and teams and there were better markets for farm produce.

Kearney began to build up until it was a nice little village. The little log store and post office gave place to frame buildings, and later to a brick post office. It was a lovely site for a town, nestled around the shore of a beautiful lake with the hills surrounding it.

Among the improvements in the country were schools which gave the younger children in the community a chance of an education, although too late for the older ones to derive much benefit, but they held their heads erect and met the world with a smile. No one ever saw them discouraged or knew how they longed for the education or professions that were out of their reach.

Doctors were still very scarce and travelling had to be done on foot, or with a horse, but all the time Mrs. Noble lived on her farm she cared for her sick neighbours, helping in every way she could. Where there was sickness or trouble of any kind she was there and did not mind going for miles to help anyone. One dear old lady, said, "The minute Mrs. Noble comes in, your burden seems lighter."

CHAPTER XIII.

The Reunion

At last the family were all away from home so Mrs. Noble decided to sell her farm and go and live among her children for she could not live on the farm alone. She went to live with her daughter in the west for a few years and then came back home for a while. Later she went to live with her daughter in the United States for a year or two. Every one said. "What a good time Mrs. Noble has." She was always bright, but she never got over her longing for the old home. One of the happiest times of her life was a picnic that was held on the shores of Sand Lake near the old home. At this picnic were her nine children, all grown up and most of them married. Some came from the West, one from the United States, some from Toronto, and Northern Ontario, and others still were living in Kearney. Mrs. Olton felt like the poet who wrote;

*"They grew in beauty side by side
They filled one home with glee
Their homes are scattered far and wide
By mountains, stream and sea.*

*The same fond Mother bent at night
O'er each fair sleeping brow
She had each folded flower in sight
Where are those dreamers now."*

But she was happy to see the children she had tried so hard to bring up well, now all grown, most of them with families of their own and how these grandchildren loved to have Grandma visit them. All the young folks around called her Grandma and loved her for her bright happy manner and her soft little laugh. She never lost her sense of humor and used to love to tell the young folks little things that happened that were funny. As she grew older she was quite a stout woman and one of her stories was of the time she fell on the trainman as he helped her down the steps. It was told

in a way that made everyone laugh and they always admired her and liked to be with her. They liked her happy little chuckle and were always delighted when she came to stay with them. One young grandson asked his mother, "When is Grandma coming back? I haven't had my mitts and socks well darned since she was here the last time."

The roads were improving each year and it was a wonderful thing when the first automobile went up to Sand Lake. Every one wondered at the speed they went. Soon the cars were more common and it was nothing unusual to see them flying past in a cloud of dust.

Mrs. Noble had lived to see many changes in this new country, but there was no greater change than to see the cars speeding along the roads where she had once walked on a blazed trail. And she loved to go out in a car. When asked by one of her daughters if she was nervous she said, "No, I always sit in the back seat and don't worry about the driving. If the driver doesn't know his business he should, and I am not trying to tell him."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Close of a Useful Life

When the world war came and took so many of our young men, the pick of the country, some of Mrs. Noble's grandsons went, one from the University in Toronto, others from different parts of the country. This was another trial for the dear old lady but she bore it as she did her other trials, calmly and patiently, and tried to cheer the mothers whose sons had gone, always trying to look on the bright side. Some of the poor fellows did not come back, and this was a great grief. It took all her Christian faith to keep her bright and cheerful for the sake of the sorrowing ones. She wrote bright letters to the boys overseas and did what she could to help in every way. She read the papers and all the good magazines and books and could talk well on any subject. If the young folks got discouraged she laughed at them and told them how they did things in her young days and the fun they used to have until the clouds were chased away and every one was bright and happy again. They loved to hear her stories of the pioneer days.

She was always strong and well and until the last few years of her life was a great walker. She went from place to place among her family. She enjoyed everything, and had such interesting things to tell when she returned. But the years rolled on and the last came in April 1923. She took suddenly ill at the home of her daughter in Kearney and before the nearest of her daughters could get to her she had passed on. She had been poorly at night but did not think it necessary to send for the doctor. When she did give in to send for him, it was too late. With only a little sigh she had passed away in the arms of her granddaughter.

So the bright, cheerful life was over. This woman who had lived a life of hardship and hard work in the early days, who had come through years of sorrow, was a mother, grandmother and great grandmother, who

had lived for seventy-eight years and had never complained of anything or anyone, had passed on, leaving not only her own family to mourn for her but the friends and neighbours for miles around. When the word quickly spread that Grandma Noble had died, oh, the grief it brought to the hearts of so many to whom she had been a friend in need. She had thought no trouble too great if she could help or comfort anyone. How often she had helped the baby's first breath or closed the eyes that were stilled in death and always in that quiet gentle way that gave her patients such confidence in her. Her love and sympathy were very great and her faith and courage unailing, and now she was gone. Would the world go on just the same without her? Ah, just the same, though many hearts were sore with grief. Messages flashed over country calling her nine children from the North, South and West. It was forty-two years since the dearly loved husband and father had passed on leaving her with such a care. In all that time there had been no deaths in the family and now she had gone on to join him in that better home. Her busy hands that had helped so many, were now folded in peace.

Now she was gone the trains brought her children and grandchildren from far distant points to look upon that dear still face with its gentle smile.

The crowds that came to the funeral and the flowers that were sent showed the love and respect of all.

Six grandsons carried her to her last resting place in Prospect Cemetery in Toronto. Left a widow at an early age, with a large family on her hands, no doubt she had made many mistakes, but she had tried to do her best and those who mourned for her felt sure the Master's voice would say, "She hath done what she could."