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HJALMAR

OR

THE IMMIGRANT'S SON

BY

JAMES A. PETERSON



K. C. Holter Publishing Company,
Minneapolis, Minnesota
1922

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By James A. Peterson

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Chapter I.

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE WOODS.

It was in the forties of the last century. The city of Milwaukee, now one of the great lake ports of the Middle West, was a straggling village. Down by the lake stood a large, barn-like structure. At first one would take it for a lumber shed; but on closer inspection it appeared to be a passenger terminal of a line of steamboats that were plying between Buffalo, New York, and the ports on Lake Michigan.

Inside of this building was a huge pile of trunks, chests, traveling bags and other bags, boxes, barrels and kegs of almost every description and color that could be imagined. This baggage was piled in the shape of a pyramid or a small mountain, that reached to the rafters under the peak of the roof, for there was no ceiling. The building was about one hundred feet long and nearly as wide. There was no furniture or fixtures of any kind.

It was in the afternoon of a hot, sultry day in the middle of August. The floor was covered with groups of immigrants that had just arrived in one of the boats. There were German groups, Irish groups and Scandinavian groups; old men and old women, babies, children of all ages, young girls and strong young men. They were the beginning of that great Empire

of the West which was to stretch from the western shores of the Great Lakes to the Pacific coast.

Some were lying down; some were sitting on the floor; some were standing up, and others were walking about. They had left their homes; they were on the road. Some knew where they were going, others did not. They were out to get land and to build themselves homes where they and their children might live in peace and comfort. They realized, however, that a hard struggle was before them.

We pass over the groups of Germans, Irish and Scotch and fasten our attention on a small group who, in dress and appearance, presented a marked difference from the others. A young woman, strongly built, rather tall and muscular, with flaxen hair braided and fastened in a knot on the back of her head, was nursing a baby girl with dark blue eyes and light hair. The little girl looked pale and thin, the effect of a long sea voyage and the long overland journey. The mother's face was strong and regular, with well rounded cheeks, that glowed with a clear red and white complexion. A wholesome good nature beamed from her face as she bent over her puny child. She looked as though she were desirous of imparting to her young offspring some of her own health and vigor.

Sitting beside her on a small box was a tall, straight young man with a large, well-shaped head, covered with long, bushy, black hair. He had heavy overhanging eyebrows under which sparkled a pair of light blue eyes. His mouth was firm, set above a full dark beard. His shoulders were broad and

heavy; his limbs, well shaped; his body gave appearance of great strength, with grace in shape and movement. His face and general bearing gave one the impression that he had a well balanced mind and a kindly disposition. This couple were husband and wife,—Atle Sunmere and Thora, his wife. The baby girl, Freda, was their first born.

They were from one of the valleys in far-away Norway. They had come across the ocean in a Norwegian sailing vessel to live and die in the New Republic of the West. They had spent eleven weeks on the Atlantic; four more weeks on the canal boat from New York. They had lived on food carried with them in a chest from their dear old motherland. They were now nearing their journey's end, their destination being forty miles farther toward the west in the wilderness. They were eagerly looking forward to the time when they could lie down and rest in a little home all their own on their own land, however wild and weird their surroundings might be.

In this same group was Thora's father, a man in the sixties, well over six feet tall, with a gleam in his eye which told plainly that the fire of life and health was still burning brightly. Thora's mother was lying down, Atle having made a pillow for her out of part of the baggage. She had a thin, beautiful face, straight black hair and dark eyes. She was delicate and feeble; she lacked the robust appearance that was so apparent in the rest of the group. These two elderly people were Tosten Aspelund and Aaste, his wife.

Two of the others in the group were their sons.

Ingebret, the older, was a large, heavily built man, rather clumsy and ponderous, as compared with Atle. Then there was his wife, Kari, with their first born, Ole. Freda and Ole were of an age. Peter, the younger son, was a lad not yet fourteen, bright, full of life, with a jovial disposition.

All the men wore jackets and trousers made from heavy woolen homespun cloth of a dark gray color, and small black caps. The women wore homespun woolen plaid dresses, fitted tightly to their forms. On their heads they wore large colored kerchiefs with one corner folded back, tied in a knot under the chin.

Thora had opened a small chest from which she took some food and passed it around to the company. There was flat bread, unleavened, very thin and crisp, baked on top of the oven in their homeland. Then there were primost, pultost and dried mutton.

Freda and Ole clamored for milk. Ingebret took a large bottle and went out to see if he could get some. He soon returned and it was not long before Freda and Ole were drinking milk to their hearts' content.

The day was drawing to a close. They concluded they would have to stay where they were until morning, when they would start on their journey through the woods to find the home of Helge Nelson. Helge Nelson was a son of Tosten Aspelund's sister. He had emigrated to America five years before and was living somewhere in the woods about forty miles due west from Milwaukee. He had married just before leaving for America.

There was great excitement and discussion in the

little group as to how they might locate Helge Nelson. In his last letter, received by Atle before he left Norway, Helge had given directions as to how they could find his home, when they reached Milwaukee. Atle had carefully preserved these written directions and now took the letter from his pocket. The directions were written in English.

After telling the company he was going out to find somebody to take them to Helge Nelson's the next morning, he went out into the street. He soon returned with a man, tall and slim, with a dark beard, and pointed to the little group of immigrants and their baggage. Atle then handed him the written directions. The man read them out loud.

"Take the government trail that runs west to the ford across Rock River at the rapids about forty-five miles from Milwaukee. Helge Nelson lives six miles on the government trail east of the ford."

The man then told Atle he would charge him five dollars. Atle looked at him with a puzzled air. The man then held up one hand with his fingers wide apart, at which Atle said, "Fem daler".

The man said, "Four o'clock in the morning."

This they all seemed to understand, for they all nodded their heads, and the man went away.

Kari and Thora took some heavy feather quilts from one of the large chests and made the best bed they could for Tosten and Aaste. They also made a bed for themselves and Ole and Freda. All slept with their clothes on. The men slept on the floor with traveling bags for pillows.

Atle's watch having stopped, he cautioned Peter

to be sure to wind his, so they would know the time in the morning. It was soon dark and everything became quiet. Atle arose early the next morning. Before four o'clock he was out in the street to look for the man with the wagon who was to take them up into the country. The sky was clear and the prospects for fine weather were good. Soon the whole company were up and, after a hurried breakfast, were waiting before the passenger terminal for their conveyance. In a little while the man drove up in a large lumber wagon, with a spring seat in front. Before the men loaded the baggage into the wagon the driver demanded his five dollars. This amount was quickly produced and turned over by Tosten, who seemed to be the treasurer of the expedition. Aaste, with Freda, sat on the spring seat with the driver. A fairly comfortable seat was made with the feather quilt on one of the chests for Tosten and the two women. Some of the men walked while the others rode in the wagon.

Before starting, Atle had taken from one of the chests an old English fowling piece. He first tried the lock carefully, then loaded it with powder and shot, but did not put on any percussion cap. A small box of these, however, he carried in his pocket. His powder he carried in a flattened cowhorn, which had been beautifully carved with his initials and the date of his departure from Norway for America. His shot bag was made from tanned bearskin, with the neck turned out of bear's bone, and the cork made from the same material.

The party now turned their faces to the west

and drove straight along the government trail, which ran from Milwaukee to Portage. After a half mile's travel they were in the woods,—such woods as are seldom seen on the North American continent. There were oaks from three to six feet in diameter, several hundred years old, that towered high above the other trees; large maples, basswood, elm trees, ironwood, beech and butternut trees. Such a hardwood forest the immigrants had never seen before. At times they were unable to see the sky or the sun. The foliage had such a beautiful green color. When the lumber wagon rolled down into the valleys everything seemed so peaceful, so quiet and so beautiful. They saw robins, thrushes and other birds that reminded them of their homeland. Never before had they thought so much of a robin or a thrush. But now that they met them in far away America, they seemed to be old friends and acquaintances. There were gray squirrels and fox squirrels and red squirrels and rabbits, running across the road in front of the horses. And they saw some very pretty birds, which, Atle told them, were game birds. They had little plumes on their heads. They were about the size of the ptarmigan, but they were not that, said Atle. Soon they saw a coon. Peter insisted it was a young bear, but Tosten shook his head and laughed and said:

“Then bears must be very small in America.”

When the sun had reached the meridian the immigrants came to a small stream. Here the driver stopped to feed and water his horses. The women soon got out their provisions, which they ate on the grass under the trees.

"How do you like the looks of the country?" said Ingebret to Tosten, as he stretched himself out on the grass, looking straight up into the sky.

"I never saw so much fine hardwood timber in my life," said Tosten. "This, in my opinion, shows that the soil is very rich and productive. I am sure it will produce the finest kind of wheat, rye and barley."

"But think of the game!" interjected Atle. "I am sure we will not have to raise any meat for years to come."

Atle had scarcely finished speaking before Peter shouted, as he pointed his finger down stream, "Look at that, what is that, father!"

Everybody looked in the direction Peter pointed and saw a beautiful gray doe, with two fawns, drinking in the stream less than a hundred yards from where they were sitting. Atle started for the wagon and reached for his gun, but Thora stopped him.

"No, no, Atle," she cried, "God forbid that you should make motherless those two dear little fawns! This is our first sight of our new homeland, and such an occasion should not be marred by an act of cruelty on our part."

The shouting of Peter had warned the deer, which instantly disappeared in the underbrush.

"What a beautiful day!" said Ingebret, "I wonder how long the summer lasts in America."

Nobody could answer that question, but Tosten remarked that it would last long enough to enable them to build huts to live in before the winter came.

The driver now got into his seat and shouted to the party to get in. After gathering up what re-

mained of their lunch, they forded the stream, for there were no bridges at that time. When they had reached the other bank, the road wound up a steep incline, which lasted for nearly a mile. When they had reached the summit of the hill, the driver stopped and looked around. Everybody got out of the wagon to take in the beautiful panorama that lay stretched out to the west of them. Far away on the western horizon they saw the glittering water of a small lake.

"This seems like being up on the mountains in Norway," said Aaste, as she shaded her eyes with her hand and looked steadily toward the west.

"But there were not so many green trees upon the mountains of Norway," said Kari. "I think this is one of the prettiest sights I have ever seen."

"I wish my father could have seen this," said Atle. "I have never seen any country so beautiful as this in Norway."

The driver again mounted his seat, and the wagon moved on.

Down in a little valley they saw smoke coming up through the trees.

"Indians!" shouted Thora with fear and trembling. At this the driver turned around and looked at Thora, shook his head and smiled.

"There are no bad Indians here," said Atle, "you know Helge told us that often in the letters he has written home."

They soon found that the smoke they had seen came from the cabin of a white settler. He had a small clearing around the house and was splitting

rails. His wife was raking brush together in small piles, to be burned.

Cowbells were tinkling down in the woods back of the hut. Aaste reached for the milk bottle and asked Ingebret to try to get some milk from the settler.

The driver halted the wagon. Ingebret walked up to the man in the clearing, saluted him and held up his bottle.

"They want milk," said the woman who was raking the brush. She took the bottle from Ingebret, went into the house and returned with it filled with sweet milk. Ingebret offered her money, but she laughingly shook her head, and waved him back with her hand.

In a short time the wagon was again following the trail. They drove by beautiful lakes and forded small streams. The sun was nearing the western horizon. Presently they came to the shore of a large lake. By the side of the road a little spring bubbled out of the ground and poured its surplus waters into a large slough or marsh that stretched out from a little bay on the lake shore. Here the driver stopped. He had to turn out of the road for a man on horseback that came from the opposite direction.

"How far are we from the Rapids?" shouted the driver.

"Six miles," answered the horseman.

"Straight ahead?" asked the driver.

"Straight ahead," replied the horseman.

"Do you know a man living there by the name of Helge Nelson?" asked the driver.

The horseman shook his head: "I am just riding through from Portage, I am a stranger here." He had a gun strapped over his back, a tin cup was hanging from his saddle bags. He looked ragged and dirty.

"Oh, what a dirty looking fellow he is!" cried Kari.

"But he looks like a pleasant fellow," said Atle.

Peter looked at his watch and said it was six o'clock. The driver turned around to Atle and said he would have to go back to Milwaukee and leave them there for the night. Nobody seemed to understand what the driver was saying, so he turned the wagon around and made motions to the men to unload their belongings. After a few minutes' consultation the men took the big chests and put them on the ground. The women seated themselves on a large oak log and looked gloomily into the woods. Here the driver left them, waving a good-bye as he disappeared among the giant trees.

Chapter II.

A NIGHT IN THE WOODS.

Ingebret, Peter and Tosten began to prepare for spending the night in the woods. While they were doing this Atle swung his gun over his shoulder and walked down the trail. He had been gone but a short time when the report of his gun rang through the immense solitude. Everybody turned to look down the trail and with almost breathless anxiety awaited Atle's return. His face beaming with a broad smile, he soon appeared through the underbrush. As he stepped out into the open, he was seen to carry in his hand a large black game bird, with a long red neck, decorated with bright red folds and a red fleshy top-knot.

"A tiur!" shouted Tosten, as they all ran to meet Atle, who held the game up for inspection.

"That is a beauty," said Ingebret, "and will furnish our first American meat meal."

Atle had shot a turkey gobbler, which resembles very much a tiur, one of the famous game birds of Norway. Atle threw the bird on the ground. Kari and Peter prepared it for supper. Thora got water at the spring and carried it up to the camp.

Atle took two of the large chests and placed them endwise against the large oak log, leaving a space

between them large enough for a bed. Around and over them he built a frame work, which he covered with green boughs. The women made a large bed of the feather quilts between the chests, where Tosten and Aaste, Thora and Kari, Ole and Freda could sleep.

Thora cut up the turkey into small pieces and fried it over the fire. She also got out the pewter plates, which had not been used since they left the ship. She made coffee, poured it into a wooden pail or firkin, from which each of them dipped a cupful. They still had some hard tack and flat bread left in their provision chest. Soon they were all sitting around the fire enjoying a bountiful supper.

"This is the finest meal I ever ate," said Aaste.

"I agree," said Kari.

"It's better than any game bird I ever ate in Norway," asserted Tosten.

"It is so juicy and tender," interjected Peter.

"And the flavor," said Ingebret, "is finer than the ptarmigan at home."

And so they kept on, eating, talking and laughing until the big turkey gobbler had entirely disappeared. At this time Aaste brought out her house-postil and said it was appropriate before they retired on the first night in their new homeland to give thanks to God and a prayer that they might all come safely to Helge Nelson's place on the following day. Peter put fresh wood on the fire, by the light of which Thora read several passages from the book. They then stood up and said aloud the Lord's prayer, after which Aaste

and Tosten, Kari and Thora, with the two children, retired to the bed between the chests.

Peter was selected as the one to stay awake and keep the fire burning. Atle and Ingebret lay on the ground and soon the whole company excepting Peter were fast asleep. Atle had loaded his gun with buck-shot and had given it to Peter before he lay down, warning him to keep the gun in his hand ready to fire in case any wild animal should appear.

For some time Peter listened for noises in the bushes, but everything around him was as still as the grave. Even the water in the lake was quiet and peaceful. The woods around him looked black as ink. Only the stars blinking over his head seemed natural.

As he was looking into the fire his thoughts flew back to his own homeland. He thought of the young friends he had left behind. He saw among the rocks and boulders the little cottage where he had played. He saw again the old familiar light in the window and the little gate at the foot of the hill. He would never see it again. He wondered if he would ever get a house and farm of his own in this wonderful new country. He wondered where they would sleep the following night and if they would find new friends and new neighbors that he would like and enjoy as those he had left behind in Norway.

In his reverie he nearly fell asleep. All at once the clear notes of a bird singing in a tree nearby startled him. He had never heard such a song bird before. It seemed to call out to him. It fairly shouted, "Whippoorwill, Whippoorwill!" As he looked

out toward the tree where the bird was singing he become frightened, his limbs shaking with fear, for he saw over the grass in the slough what seemed to be sparks of fire flying hither and thither. Had they encamped in an enchanted spot? Were the sparks sent out by demons or trolls? He sat for a while almost motionless. He recalled the stories his father Tosten had told him of trolls that lived in the hills and valleys of uninhabited lands. He rose up, his knees trembled, he could hardly walk.

At last he shouted: "Ingebret and Atle, wake up, we have encamped in an enchanted spot inhabited by trolls and devils!"

He cried so loud that the whole company woke up. They all came out and saw the slough throwing up bright sparks of fire.

"What is it?" asked Thora.

"This might be near the infernal regions," said Ingebret.

Aaste crossed herself and muttered, "God save us!"

The sparks of fire seemed to multiply. Thora began to sing the well known hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God." All joined in until the words of Martin Luther's great hymn sounded long and loud through the primitive forest. After singing the hymn, the women refused to go back to bed, but insisted on sitting by the fire. Atle and Ingebret said they would go down the hill to the slough and see what the sparks were. Atle took his gun, examined the priming, and walked down the hill with Ingebret. The women implored them not to go, but they were

determined. They soon came back, each holding a firefly in his hand.

"It is a fly," said Ingebret, "it is not a fire at all."

They all had a good laugh over the matter. It was now after midnight and Ingebret took the gun, while Atle and Peter went to sleep again on the ground. Ingebret sat until he saw the light of the new day in the east, when he woke up Atle and asked him to watch the remainder of the night, so he could get some sleep.

When they woke up the sun was pouring its light upon the little lake and the tops of the trees. And such bird singing as they heard! Every living thing seemed to rejoice that the night had passed and they were again in the sunlight. The women at once set about preparing the breakfast. Atle and Ingebret discussed their trip into the woods in search of the home of Helge Nelson.

As they scanned such portions of the horizon as they could see among the treetops, Atle said, "There is a storm coming."

A heavy dark cloud was, indeed, rising from the Northwest, with occasional flashes of lightning. They began hurriedly to cut more boughs from the trees and piled them on top of their temporary hut to protect themselves and their stuff from the storm. After breakfast Aaste repeated the religious readings of the preceding day.

The lightning became more frequent and the thunder louder, so they gathered their dishes and food and placed them under cover, after which they all crawled under the bower of green branches. There

was a great calm in the forest, not a leaf stirred, the lake was as smooth and placid as a mirror. Then they heard a rumbling noise in the distance.

"The storm is soon here," said Atle. He had scarcely uttered these words when a bolt of lightning struck a large elm that stood only a few yards from where they were sitting. This was followed by crash upon crash of thunder. It seemed to them as though the ground rocked with the force of the storm. Then came the wind, now roaring, now whistling, sweeping along the hillside, cracking and twisting the trees and bushes. Sometimes it seemed as though the trees were bent almost flat to the ground. Then came a clatter of hailstones as large as plums. They danced and rolled down the hillside like small pebbles. No one said a word. Finally Aaste began to repeat aloud the Lord's prayer.

Ingebret said he had never before seen such a terrific storm. They all assented to that. Peter said they had bigger storms in America because America was a bigger country.

"Everything looks larger here to me," said he. "The trees are larger, distances are greater, buildings are taller."

At this remark Atle became angry and told Peter to keep still at least until the storm was over.

"But," insisted Peter, "we are now in a new country, and we must get used to new things. Everything here is on a larger scale than in little Norway."

The storm soon passed over. Atle and Ingebret went out and reported that the sky would soon be

clear, and it was not long before the sun was again shining and the birds singing.

"I will go and see if I can find Helge Nelson," said Atle to Ingebret. "You and Peter stay with the women and watch our stuff and I will take the gun and go."

Thora protested against Atle's going alone. She was afraid he would get lost, and it was decided that Peter should accompany him. Atle assured Thora that they would follow the trail and would not lose sight of it, so they could return to the camp.

After they had walked along the trail for a mile, they came to a little log house in a clearing. Atle rapped on the door. A tall, blonde woman opened it and asked him to come in. He handed her the directions that Helge Nelson had written in English in his letter. The woman looked at it and shook her head.

"Are you Norwegian?" she asked in Atle's native tongue.

"Yes," answered Atle, "and who are you?"

"I am the wife of Nels Holtan."

"Nels Holtan," replied Atle, "is from my parish in Norway. I am well acquainted with him."

The woman went to the back door and shouted, "Nels, come up to the house."

When Nels came in, he greeted Atle and Peter and said, "So you, too, have come to America."

"Yes," replied Atle, "we have our women and children and baggage down by the lake."

After inquiries on both sides as to what kind of voyage they had had and about the folks at home, Atle asked Nels if he could tell where Helge Nelson

lived. Nels stepped out in front of the house and pointed down the trail.

"Helge Nelson," he said, "lives two miles from here. You follow the trail and the first house you come to is John Tufte's place. The next is Helge Nelson's."

Atle and Peter said good-bye to the Holtans and hurried through the woods. They became enthusiastic over the nearness of the end of their long journey. Sometimes they would walk and sometimes they would run. They passed John Tufte's place and soon stood in front of Helge's house. Atle rushed in without rapping. Sarah, Helge's wife, shouted:

"Oh, Atle, have you come! Where are Aaste and Thora and Kari and the children? Are they well?"

"We are all well," said Atle. "We left them down by the lake. Where is Helge?"

"Helge is down in the clearing digging potatoes for dinner," said Sarah. Atle and Peter went down to where Helge was, after Sarah had pointed the direction.

"Hello, Helge," said Atle, "now you will get company." Helge turned around, threw down his hoe and said, "Yes, and from such a distance."

Atle told him how they had traveled from Milwaukee and where they had left the rest of the company. Helge yoked up his oxen, hitched them to the wagon and with Peter and Atle drove down the trail.

"Where did you get this wagon?" asked Atle.

"Oh, I made it myself," said Helge. The wheels were solid without any spokes. They were the sawed

off ends of a large oak log. The axles were of wood with pins on the outside to keep the wheels from coming off.

"Where did you get the boards for the box?" inquired Peter.

"Oh, we have a sawmill here," said Helge. "It is on that little stream you crossed before you came to the lake. We have plenty of logs, so we can get all the sawed lumber we want. I gave the sawyer five bushels of potatoes for a whole load of lumber."

Soon they came to the camp. Aaste and Kari were so glad when they saw Helge that they cried for joy. The men piled the chests and baggage in the wagon and made seats for the women. Soon Helge was on the road. The men all walked.

What talking there was! The women had to tell Helge about his father and mother, his cousins, aunts and uncles, who were left behind in the homeland. Sarah had prepared dinner when they arrived. The table was steaming with large potatoes, onions and cabbage and fried venison.

"What a feast!" said Tosten. And there was wheat bread on the table.

"Do you eat wheat bread every day?" asked Ingebret.

"Yes, we raise all the wheat we want," said Sarah, "and about four miles down the stream is a mill that grinds the flour for us."

"You must remember," said Helge, "that you are in America now and you will never want for wheat bread."

"God be praised, for His mercy endureth forever," said Aaste.

The talking around the table was loud and incessant. Never were there so many things to inquire about from both sides. Soon they all found themselves talking at the same time. Thora opened one of the chests and took out primost, pultost, dried nut-ton and hard tack.

"Here, Sarah," she said, "see what we have left! These came from our old home. I am sure you want to taste them."

Sarah and Helge were delighted to taste food that had come across the sea from their childhood home. Ingebret produced a sheath-knife with a beautifully carved handle.

"This," he said to Helge, "is from your father. He made it himself and told me to be sure to give it to you."

"And here," he said to Sarah, "is a silk kerchief from your mother."

After the meal was over, Sarah took the women into the back yard and showed them her sleek fat pigs and her chickens, while the men followed Helge down into the clearing to look at his land.

Chapter III.

LOOKING FOR LAND.

The first few days after their arrival were spent by the immigrants in visiting two or three families that had come over with Helge Nelson a few years before. They found that Helge had learned to speak English very rapidly and was now quite a fluent talker in that language. He had had some education in the old country, which, together with his native shrewdness and natural gifts, had made him a leader, not only among the people of his own race, but also among those of other nationalities that had located in the settlement. He was a subscriber to a small English paper, published in Milwaukee, and was therefore the dispenser of the news of the country to his neighbors. Helge had espoused the cause of the Democratic party and was looked upon as one of the local Democratic leaders in the territory.

After some traveling about, Ingebret and Peter decided to buy eighty acres from a settler who wanted to go farther west into the woods. The class of settlers to which this man belonged was quite numerous in frontier life. Ingebret and Peter gave forty dollars for the house and eighty. This money was furnished by Tosten, their father. The whole group soon took up their abode in this newly acquired home.

Atle, however, had very little money, so he bought forty acres from the government a few miles farther to the west. Thora accompanied him when he selected the spot for their home.

The government trail ran along one side of his forty. He and Thora walked up the trail until they reached what was to be the future home of the Sunmere family. Atle took Thora to a little elevation near the trail where they sat down and rested under a giant oak tree. A spring of the purest water trickled out of the hillside and flowed into the creek down in the meadow.

"Here we will build our home," said Atle as he stood erect on the little knoll looking toward the meadow. "And what fine water we will have!" he said. Thora stooped down and drank from the spring.

"This is the best water I have ever drank," said she, "and think how near it will be to our house!"

They spent the day looking over their new possessions. Atle told his wife that in a few days Helge Nelson would go to the land office and get a deed from the government.

"And that deed," he said, "will be signed by Zachary Taylor, the president of the United States. After that this land will be all our own and we can stay here as long as we live and our children after us."

"Will we have nobody over us then?" asked Thora.

"No," said Atle, "this great country God Almighty has given to the poor people. We'll have no kings, barons, dukes or landlords here. What we raise and get will come from God Himself and not from the hand of a master."

"Oh! how beautiful!" said Thora, "I hope it will always be that way in this country."

"It will," said Atle, "if the people who come here and make their homes are good and just to one another."

After they had determined where the house and barn should stand they walked back to the place where their relatives were living.

The next morning Helge Nelson brought over to their home a Yankee whom he called Colonel Stevens. His name was Abner Stevens. He had lately come from the state of New York and had located on a piece of land not far from where Helge lived. Colonel Stevens, as he was called, was a tall, slender man, with full, dark whiskers. He was dignified in his manners, and had some education and refinement. He had been an officer in a militia company in his native state, which gave him the title of colonel. This title, however, had no reference to the rank he had held in the militia company. It was sufficient for the settlers to know that he had had military training, so they dubbed him "Colonel." He wore a black suit which gave him a certain rank and standing among the other backwoods men.

Helge told Atle that the Colonel wanted him to do some carpenter work upstairs in his house and that he would pay him in wheat flour. Atle consented to go. After gathering together what he thought would be necessary tools, he went with the Colonel to his house, which was only a short distance from where Tosten was living. Here he worked for several days.

One morning Atle had a scare. As he was working upstairs, the Colonel shouted to him from below, "Atle, come down!"

Now in Atle's native dialect "down" means "death". He thought he saw death coming. He did not move. Again the Colonel shouted, "Come down!", and motioned to him from the stairway.

Before going down Atle looked out of the window and saw a man standing in the yard with a gun in his hand. Again the Colonel shouted and motioned. Atle put his hand on his sheath knife and walked down stairs. His anxiety was soon relieved, for he understood that the man with the gun was a neighbor, who had come to help the Colonel butcher a steer, and the Colonel wanted Atle to join them.

At the end of a week Atle had finished the carpenter work, and received his pay in wheat flour at the rate of twenty-five cents per day. This was small wages, but it went far towards the support of the Sunmere family. Meat was plentiful in the woods and with flour on hand Atle saw his way clear to begin building his house.

In his wanderings through the woods, Atle always carried his gun. He would bring home partridges and ducks, and one evening he carried home a deer on his back. The family did not have many delicacies, but they had the good, substantial food that the land gave forth in great abundance,—game and bread.

One evening, when Tosten, Atle and Thora were at Helge Nelson's house, Thora complained to Helge that they could not understand English. She said she

wished so much that they might talk with the Yankees.

"Oh, that is easy," said Helge, "you will soon learn to talk English. *En, to, tre* is one, two, three. *Kaffe* is coffee, *sukker* is sugar, *ko* is cow, *hest* is horse, and *hus* is house. The Yankees are for the most part nice people, although some of them are very shiftless. But the Yankee women," he continued, as he pounded the table for emphasis, "are as nice and fine women as there are anywhere in the world."

"But," remarked Atle, "there are shiftless fellows among the Norwegians, as well."

"That is true," answered Helge, "but those fellows have not the energy and the courage to come to America."

"When it comes to telling stories, the Yankees beat us fellows out of sight."

"That may be so," said Thora, "but some of our people are not very slow at that."

At this Helge straightened up with a serious expression on his face and remarked: "I guess, after all, when everything is said, there is not much difference between the Yankees and the Norwegians."

And so the discussion ended.

Chapter IV.

BUILDING OF THE NEW HOME.

One morning, late in August, Atle gathered together his tools and started for his land to begin building the new home. His tools consisted of a Norwegian broad ax, with which he intended to square the timbers, a common woodman's ax, a plumb line, augurs and bits, saws, chisels, planes, etc. All of these he had brought with him from the old country. He also carried his gun and ammunition.

The morning was bright, the sun was shining through the trees, the forest seemed to be full of life, as he walked along. The woodpeckers were hammering, the frogs were croaking in the ponds, and in the distance he could hear the drumming of the partridges.

"If I could get my house ready for Christmas," he said, as he hurried along. He was young and powerful and never before had felt such a desire to work. What fun it would be for Thora, himself and little Freda to celebrate Christmas Eve in their very own home, on their own land! Many a time in Norway he had yearned for a piece of land and his own home on it. However, it always seemed to him that his yearnings would lead to disappointment. Now, it appeared as if he had it almost within his grasp.

Helge Nelson would go to Milwaukee in a few days and get the deed from the government.

He began his work by clearing off the little knoll where the house was to stand. It should face the government trail, which, he imagined, some day would be a splendid highway. It was located one hundred paces from the trail. Between the trail and the house he would make a little path, and on each side of it he would plant apple trees, plum trees and berry bushes. He would also have a little garden and a potato patch.

Atle's spirits were high as he pictured in his mind how pretty his log house would look under the tall trees. When it was noon he ate his lunch, which was enriched by a copious supply of blackberries that grew on his land, for he already called it **his** land and **his** home. For weeks Atle worked; he cleared, he hewed the logs into square timber, he made oak shingles and soon he had everything ready for the raising. One morning Tosten, Ingebret, Peter, Helge and a few other settlers, with whom he had become acquainted, accompanied him, for on that day he was to have a "raising" on his place. All day the men worked and by three o'clock the rafters were all set. The logs in the corners were neatly dovetailed as was the fashion in Norway. After cutting a hole in the side of the house for a door facing the trail, and cutting out the logs for three windows, the day's work was done.

Atle's new home in the new world had risen.

On his trip to Milwaukee to get the title deed on Atle's land, Helge brought back with him brick for

the chimney and glass for the windows. He also gave him lumber and such other materials as he could spare. Tosten, who had been a stone mason and birck layer in Norway, built the chimney. Atle needed a stove badly, but his money was all gone. What should he do?

Settlers were coming in very rapidly. There were Irishmen, Germans, Englishmen, Manxmen, Scotts and Yankees from the East. Atle had a watch and one day he was lucky enough to find a Yankee settler who was willing to trade him a stove for his watch.

Everything would be ready in a few days. It would soon be December, but Atle never faltered in his desire to have Thora and Freda spend Christmas with him in the new house. Atle also made the furniture. He made beds, he made a table and he made benches to sit on.

Thus far he had not been conscious of any neighbors. He was at least three miles, so far as he knew, from any human being. One night he determined to stay alle alone in his house. It was beginning to get cold. He built a fire and lit a lamp. He worked inside all evening. Before retiring he went out to get the time. And how do you suppose he got the time? Atle had been a woodsman in the old country. He had spent most of his life in the forests on the mountains. These woodsmen understood the movement of the stars and could tell the time as accurately at night as we can tell the time of day by the sun.

"It is ten o'clock," concluded Atle, and he went back into his cottage, closed the door and prepared to retire.

Just then he heard something. He listened. There was a rap at the door. Was it Indians? No, an Indian would not rap on the door. He concluded that it was a white man. Atle knew no fear. He had nothing that was worth stealing. He knew it was a friend, although it might be a stranger.

He opened the door and saw before him a man of striking appearance, tall and muscular—so tall that he could not pass through the door without bending—with a stern but kindly face and a long beard that reached to his chest. His eyebrows were bushy and long. Under them peered a pair of rather small, bright eyes. The man had a high forehead and long black hair. On the whole, he had a fine appearance and would have attracted attention in any gathering or community.

The stranger was Donald McGregor from the Highlands of Scotland. In his younger days he had seen service under the British flag in India and was a man of some means. He had converted all of his property into cash, and with his wife, Margaret, and an only child, a daughter two years old, had set sail for the New World the preceding spring. He had acquired eighty acres of land on the banks of a little stream a mile from Atle's home, where he was building a house, now nearing completion. His wife and little daughter had been left in Milwaukee, where he expected soon to go to bring them home.

Donald McGregor had been watching every night for a light in the woods to show that some new settler had arrived, and when he saw the light from

Atle's cabin was determined to pay a visit to his new neighbor.

"Come in," said Atle, and stretched out his hand in greeting to the stranger. Donald grasped his hand as though they had been friends for years. After Atle had provided his visitor with a seat, he found out that the newcomer could not talk his native tongue. Atle also told him that he could not speak English, at which Donald laughed and said he was Scotch.

"We will talk Highland Scotch," he said, and so they began conversing with each other. Atle mixed Norwegian words with the little English he had learned. Donald talked the Highland dialect of the Scotch. All in all they got along well. There was something in Atle's light blue eyes that interested Donald. He could not but admire Atle's powerful physique and intelligent, interesting face.

All alone in the dark woods of Wisconsin the two strangers had a jolly time. Atle showed Donald his gun, his powderhorn and his shot bag. All these Donald admired. Donald told Atle of his wife and daughter. In turn Atle told of his wife and daughter and that he intended to have them with him for Christmas. At this Donald laughed and informed Atle that he also expected his wife and daughter for Christmas. And so the two sat. Donald lingered until after midnight. When he arose to go, Atle took his gun and ammunition and told Donald that he would accompany him home. They walked through the woods together. Donald invited Atle into his

new house and showed it to him. Then Atle said goodnight and returned to his own house.

The sun was high above the horizon when Atle awoke the next morning. He thought back with pleasure of the visit paid him by his Scotch neighbor. He liked Donald McGregor from the first moment he saw him. Little did he realize, however, that it was the beginning of a great friendship between the McGregors and the Sunmeres.

Time had flown into December. The woods in southeastern Wisconsin presented perhaps the finest hardwood trees on the American continent. The trees were large and the foliage most luxuriant. Here a rising elevation, there a beautiful slope and down below a hollow, where the giant trees grew so close to each other as to intermingle their branches. The spaces between the trees looked like Gothic arches in an immense Gothic building. Sometimes they took on the appearance of a great nave in a cathedral, with innumerable archways, pointed windows and doorways. It seemed as though Nature herself had constructed these temples, reared these great arches and covered them with the most beautiful decorations to the glory of God, the Creator and Designer of the world.

That fall, after the frost came, the coloring of the leaves in these primeval forests was the most magnificent Atle had ever seen. He scarcely had time to think about the mountains, the evergreen trees and the waterfalls of that country where he had spent his childhood. The new world was so full of beautiful things that it had completely taken possession of

him. He had fallen desperately in love with his new surroundings. The weather had been mild and beautiful. The leaves had fallen; the giants of the forest stood stripped and defiant, awaiting the cold blasts of the winter storms. There was still no snow, although it was within two weeks of Christmas. The sun was shining and the newcomers were enjoying what Helge Nelson told them was the "Indian Summer."

Atle had provided the house with furniture. It only remained now to move in with Thora and Freda. By this time Ingebret Aspelund had bought a team of oxen and, with the assistance of Tosten, he had made a wagon similar to the one Helge Nelson had. The moving took place on Saturday morning two weeks before Christmas. Tosten and Aaste went along. Aaste was delighted with the beautiful scenery on the road and admonished them all to thank God for the manifold blessings that He had bestowed upon them since their arrival in the new country. They soon came to Atle's place. Atle, Thora and Freda went in first. Thora threw up her hands and exclaimed:

"What a beautiful home you have made for us, Atle! I only hope that we will be well and have plenty to eat in it."

"Don't worry about that," said Atle, as he walked up the little stairway and brought down three partridges, "these are for dinner."

Aaste and Tosten were also delighted with the new house. Wood was brought in and soon dinner was cooking on the stove. Freda ran up the little

stairway and inspected the upstairs, which had not yet been completed. Only one room was finished. That was downstairs and was to be their kitchen, dining room, living room and sleeping room.

When dinner was over Ingebret, Aaste and Tosten went back home. Thora and Atle talked and planned for the future. He showed her where the barn and the stable for the oxen were to stand. He showed her where he was going to clear off a portion of the ground that winter for wheat, potatoes, a patch of corn, and a little garden. In the evening before they retired, Thora read aloud from the house-postil. Then she made up the bed with the bedding brought from the old country. Atle had filled the bedtick with dry leaves. As Thora looked out into the darkness she said:

“Atle, are you not afraid to stay here, so far from neighbors?”

Atle shook his head and answered: “Wild animals I am not afraid of so long as I have my gun and plenty of ammunition. I am not afraid of people, for there are none here except those who want a home to live in just as we do. Our poverty will protect us from robbers.”

The time to Christmas flew rapidly. Helge Nelson and the Holtans had been to see them. Atle had already begun to fell the trees in the new clearing. Christmas Eve was beautiful and balmy. In Norway Christmas is the highest festival in the whole year. There is a certain amount of solemn festivity connected with Christmas Eve that the settlers could not divest themselves of even in their little cabin in the

depths of the forest of the great West. In Norway, on that day, it is not only customary to show good will to one's fellowmen, but also to all of God's creatures. A sheaf of ripe grain is usually elevated in the barn yard, so that the birds may be well fed on that blessed day.

"We have no sheaf of grain for the birds tonight," said Atle.

"Oh, well," said Thora, "we will share what we have with them." So she brought out the crumbs and leavings from their table and strewed them on the ground in front of the house.

"If we remember the birds," she said, "we will have plenty next Christmas."

After supper, Thora read from the old psalmbook and they sang the Christmas hymns just as they had done in the old home across the sea.

Chapter V.

PETER HIRES OUT TO A YANKEE.

The Aspelunds had become fairly well settled in the home they had acquired. Ingebret had worked as a carpenter for Colonel Stevens, who was building a little barn. Peter hired out by the month to the Colonel and had agreed to work for him for a whole year. His wages were to be six dollars a month, which were to be paid partly in flour and partly in pork; the balance in cash, if the Colonel should succeed in selling some of his produce in Milwaukee, for this was the nearest market place. Peter was young; he had just passed his fourteenth birthday and was strong and vigorous. A part of his work, to begin with, was to help the Colonel in clearing a five acre field, which he intended to put into crop the following spring.

Mr. Stevens and his wife had only one child, a girl about eight years old. Mrs. Stevens often deplored the fact that Mabel, for this was the daughter's name, could not attend school, for as yet there was no school in the settlement. Every evening, after supper, Mrs. Stevens would get out a primer, which she had brought all the way from New York, and with this she taught Mabel her first lessons in reading and spelling.

One evening, when this little school was in session, the desire to learn how to read English seized Peter. He asked Mrs. Stevens if he might be allowed to join her class. The request was readily granted, and in this way the first educational institution in the new settlement was gotten under way. Peter's efforts to pronounce English words amused Mabel very much. He could not place his tongue in the proper position to get the "th" sound. When Mrs. Stevens told him to say "the," he always said "de," and when he was to pronounce "John," he always got it "Yon."

But Peter did not give up. He kept practicing and in time, in trying to say "John," he could say "Djon." Notwithstanding the fun that Peter's awkward attempts gave Mabel, Mrs. Stevens encouraged him and often said he would soon be able to read better than Mabel. By spring he had mastered the pronunciation of the difficult words fairly well. The only difference now between Mabel's and Peter's reading was that Peter read a little slower.

One day, that first fall, after the Colonel and Peter had burned the logs and brushpiles in the clearing, the Colonel thought they would try to plow, so the ground would be ready for the crop in the spring. There was on the place only a pair of young steers that had never been yoked or broken in to work. An effort was made one morning to plow with the young steers. After yoking them up and tying a rope around the horns of one of them, Peter led them out of the stable and started to break them. Mr. Stevens gave Peter a whip and told him to walk beside the

steer on the left. When he wanted the team to come towards him, he should say "haw" and when he wanted them to turn the other way, he should say "gee", and when he wanted them to stop, he should shout "whoa," and when he wanted them to go forward, he should tap them gently with the whip and say, "Get up." At first the steers walked leisurely enough, but when Peter tapped them with the whip and said, "Get up," they started to run. Peter held on to the rope, kicked up the dirt and shouted, "Whoa!", but the louder he shouted, the faster went the steers, until they ran away with Peter down into the woods. They kept on running until they struck with their yoke a small ironwood tree. Here they stopped.

Peter saw there was no use in shouting "Whoa" any longer, so he began to pet them and talked soothingly to them. The steers seemed to be as glad as Peter that the ironwood had stopped them in their wild flight. Peter coaxed them to go back to the clearing. They followed him quietly.

When they came back to the place they had left, the Colonel said, "We'll hitch them to the plow. Do you know how to hold the plow?"

"I can try," said Peter. They got out the plow and hitched it to the ring in the yoke by means of a long logging chain.

"I think we had better coax them," said the Colonel; "that seems to go better." So he got a few ears of corn and walked ahead of them, giving them a nubbin once in awhile. Peter held the plow and they got on very well all forenoon.

After dinner they had to start a new dead furrow, which the Colonel insisted must be straight. Instead of going ahead of the steers with the corn, he went to the other end of the field and hung the corn ears on a pole at the point to which the furrow should come. Peter stuck the plow in the ground and shouted, "Get up!", but the steers hesitated. The Colonel then shook the ears of corn at the end of the pole on the other side of the clearing. All at once the steers perceived the corn dangling on the end of the pole. They went at a double quick gait and the nearer they got to the pole the faster they ran. This would have been all right, had it not been for a maple stump that caught the plow and threw Peter sprawling on the ground. The steers reached the pole, but to their great disappointment the Colonel removed the pole and they got no corn.

Thus it went. Sometimes the Colonel and Peter coaxed the steers and sometimes used the whip, with the result that they finally succeeded in plowing the whole clearing. The stumps were numerous and in some places the plow had scarcely scratched the surface. The Colonel said it made little difference, for the ground was rich and new, and he was sure they would get a crop anyhow.

By spring Peter could talk English fairly well. The Colonel and Mrs. Stevens grew very fond of him. He had in a short time become almost one of the family. In the evening, after Peter and Mabel had recited their lessons, the Colonel would tell how they did things when they lived down East in York State; how they had cleared the timber off the land and

burned the stumps, so that now the fields there were smooth and clear. Peter was very handy with carpenter tools, and during the winter had made a cupboard and a kitchen table for Mrs. Stevens. With a sheath-knife he had also made wooden spoons and playthings for Mabel. He had made a wooden doll, and Mabel was now busy sewing clothes for her.

One day, the following summer, Peter was mowing grass down by the little creek. Mabel, with her little feet bare, was picking flowers.

"Oh, Peter," said Mabel, "look at those beautiful yellow flowers. Did you have flowers like these in Norway?"

"Yes," said Peter, "we had some just like these."

"What did you call them?" asked Mabel.

"We called them the 'Virgin Mary's Golden Slipper'."

"Oh, what a beautiful name!" said Mabel. Out in the creek grew the yellow cowslips. "And what did you call these?" asked Mabel, as she picked one of them.

"We call them the 'Virgin Mary's key ribbons'."

Just then Mabel became frightened and shouted: "Oh, Peter, see that big snake!"

Peter looked around quickly and saw coiled up a few feet from her a large rattlesnake, preparing to strike at her bare feet.

"Stand still!" shouted Peter, at the same moment hitting the snake with a club. He killed the snake and carried Mabel up to the house. He had learned how dangerous the rattlesnake is. When Mrs. Stevens learned of the danger to her daughter, she took

Mabel in her arms and carried her into the house. She was very grateful to Peter because, as she said, he had saved the little girl's life.

One day, as Peter was milking the cows, Mabel asked if they had cows in Norway. Peter told her how, in the summer time in Norway, the girls drove the cows upon the mountains, where the grass was abundant, and how they milked them and made butter and cheese, which they brought home with them in the fall, when they took the cows back.

"We also have goats and sheep," said Peter, "and the girls milk them also."

"Milk sheep?" said Mabel, and then she clapped her little hands and laughed. Mabel had never seen a goat, so Peter told her about the goats; how large they were; that they had horns and whiskers, and how they could climb up the steep sides of mountains, where the cows could not go. Then Peter sang to her about the girl that tended a pretty little lamb that had curly wool. It ran something like this: "Eg gjætte Tulla." He explained to her that "Tulla" was the name of the little lamb which the girl loved dearly, but before fall the wolf took her. Mabel asked Peter if there were goats in this country. Peter said he did not know, but if she asked her papa he could probably tell her.

And so the summer months passed. One evening, Mrs. Stevens asked Peter to tell them something about his homeland, for that was what Peter always called his native country. Peter told them what fun they had at Christmas time. Christmas, he said, lasted twenty-two days. First they had Little Christ-

mas Eve, and then they had Big Christmas Eve; next came Big Christmas, which was the 25th day of December. They played and feasted and ate and drank for twenty days. On Christmas Eve they fed all the birds and gave especially large portions to all the domestic animals. They went around and said to the cows, horses and every living thing on the farm:

“Eat well, and thrive well, for tonight is Christmas Eve.”

“We had so much fun on Christmas Eve,” said Peter. “We had cream pudding and roast spare ribs. We slid down hill on our sleighs, we skated on the ice and we went skiing.”

Then Peter had to explain to them what skiis were and how fast they could go down hill on them.

The Colonel had a fine crop of wheat, corn and potatoes. The clearing, which they had prepared the winter before, produced abundantly. The steers were now so well broken that Peter could drive them to the flour mill with wheat to be ground. Peter was fast becoming accustomed to his new country and his new surroundings. At the same time he fondly remembered Norway, and Mabel would sit and listen to his stories about his homeland whenever he was not busy. She had no playmates and began to look upon Peter as a big brother.

Chapter VI.

NEW NEIGHBORS.

Early the following spring rumors were rife among the settlers that a large number of immigrants were coming to take up land in the settlement, some from the eastern states, some from Ireland, England, Scotland, Germany and Norway. Atle had cleared up several acres of his land and was now busy burning the logs and the brush piles. He expected Ingebret and Tosten to plow the clearing for him in the spring, Tosten having bought a yoke of oxen for Ingebret during the winter.

In the meantime a more intimate relationship had been established between the Sunmeres and the McGregors. Donald McGregor's wife, Margaret, with their little daughter Katherine, had joined her husband in his loghouse. Mrs. McGregor had called at the Sunmere house several times and had become well acquainted with Thora and Atle. Atle and Donald were together a great deal. Atle and Thora were beginning to talk English fairly well. The two mountaineers had made several hunting trips together during the winter. Each of them had killed two deer, so both families were well provided with food. During the winter a daughter was born to Atle and Thora.

In the spring the new settlers began to arrive. The ax of the woodsman was heard on all sides. Houses were being built, roads were laid out and, before the end of the year, the settlement began to assume the appearance of a thriving community. The following year a meeting was called at Helge Nelson's house to lay plans for the building of a school house. It was agreed by the neighbors that a bee should be held and that every settler should bring his ox team, so that the logs could be hauled and the building erected in a single day. Late in the second fall after Atle's arrival, the school house was ready. It was found that there was among them a young lady from New England, who was a school teacher. She was employed to teach, and by the middle of November the school was opened.

During the third spring after their arrival a son was born to Atle and Thora. They called him Gunnar. Ole and Freda were now old enough to begin going to school. They had been taught at home by their parents to read from a Norwegian primer, but it was thought best that they should also learn to read the language of the country where they were to grow up and live.

The teacher asked Ole what his name was. He answered "Ole!!" The teacher could not quite get the pronunciation, so she wrote his name, "William," and told Ole that he must answer to that name hereafter. The little fellow did not like this, but he had to obey. The boys and girls at school called him "Willie," so we shall have to obey the teacher, too, and hereafter call him "Willie." That evening when

"Willie" got home, he told his parents that he had a new name; that the teacher had told him that his name was "William" or "Willie." When Aaste heard that she was very much put out, for Ole had been named after one of her brothers, who was a very good man, and she could not be reconciled to the fact that her little grandson should have a Yankee name. The following Sunday Willie and his parents and grandparents went to see Helge Nelson. They complained to him about the change made in Ole's name. Aaste said she did not like to have her boy trade off the good old Norwegian name, "Ole," for the Yankee name, "Willie." At this Helge laughed heartily. He said the Yankees had never heard the name "Ole" before and thought that "Willie" was easier for the Americans to pronounce.

"But," said Helge, "why don't you let the Yankees have their way? You can call him 'William Ole,' and when he is grown he can write his name 'William O. Aspelund.' 'Ole' will remind him of his old homeland and 'Willie' will be his new name in the new country."

This seemed to satisfy the parents as well as the grandparents, and from that time on the boy wrote his name "William O. Aspelund."

As time went on our little Norwegian group prospered and increased in numbers. Atle and Thora had altogether six children: Freda, who was born in Norway, Dagne, Gunnar, Josephine, Hilda, and the youngest a boy, Hjalmar.

Donald McGregor also had a large family. Every time a child was born to Atle and Thora, the Mc-

Gregors also had a child born. Margaret McGregor would visit Thora quite often and every time a child was born to the Sunmeres, Margaret would say: "We have a playmate for him (or her, as the case might be) over at our house."

Katherine McGregor was Freda's playmate; Isabel McGregor was Dagne's; Jim McGregor was Gunnar's; Louise McGregor was Josephine's; and Elizabeth McGregor was Hilda's. The two youngest children were a boy and a girl; Helen McGregor was Hjalmar's playmate.

The two families visited together a great deal, and whenever they did the children played as they were mated, always together. The McGregor cottage stood on the bank of a little stream. It was not so large but that the children could, without danger, wade all over it. The water came rippling and gurgling, now over yellow pebbles and now under a large log that had fallen across the stream. It flowed by the house, then through the meadow and lost itself in the thick woods farther down. Hjalmar and Helen would sit on a log down in the meadow and catch minnows with hook and line. What fun they had picking the cowslips, the bluebells and the violets that grew on the banks! When the Sunmeres visited the McGregors, Hjalmar and Helen played in the water in the summer time and slid on the ice in winter.

In the course of time, a little farther down on this same stream, a small church was built. The great pioneer bishop of the West, Bishop Kemper, dedicated it. The Norwegian settlers were all Lutherans.

But there was no Lutheran Church in the settlement, so they joined the Episcopalian church. A Norwegian Episcopalian minister preached in the Norwegian language to the older people on one Sunday; on the next Sunday a Yankee preacher would preach in English.

What a mixture of nationalities was gathered in that little church every Sunday morning! There were the English, the Norwegians, the Yankees, the Scotch, the Irish, and the Germans. The children all went to Sunday School, which was conducted in the English language. In this little church these different nationalities baptized their children, solemnized their marriages, confirmed their young people, and conducted services for their dead. This church became not only a place of worship, but also a social center. The people had singing schools, Christmas trees and festivals, and thus in the woods of the great Middle West was begun the mingling of the races that was to form a new people. There grew up new institutions that were to have a powerful influence, not only in the Northwest, but also over the whole nation.

Chapter VII.

ATLE'S HOME IN NORWAY.

Norway lies farther to the North than any other country in Europe. If you travel to its northernmost extremity, you will find that in the middle of the summer the sun does not set. There is one day whose length is measured, not by hours, but by weeks and months. Even in the southern portions of the country, upon the mountains, you can read all night by the light of the sun.

The climate is tempered during the winter months by the great Gulf Stream that sweeps along the western coast. Every river forms a valley that is quite narrow at the source, but which grows gradually wider as it approaches the sea. The inhabited portions of the country are in these valleys. Between the valleys there is usually a range of high mountains, some of which are continually covered with snow, and in the clefts of the rocks may still be found large glaciers. The ice and snow on the mountain tops melt and form little rivulets that run down the mountain sides, producing innumerable waterfalls, and sometimes small lakes.

The forests of the country are mostly evergreen, consisting of fir, pine, hemlock and spruce. Here and

there are to be found a few hardwood trees, such as maple, elm, basswood and oak. Only small portions of the country are level. Not enough food is produced to feed the population, and large portions of the bread products must be imported each year from foreign countries. Many of the young men of the land are employed as sailors on Norwegian ships. The population, for the most part, consists of mountaineers. The history of Norway for the last five or six hundred years has attracted but little attention from the world at large. The main reason for this may be laid to the fact that during this period the nation has had no wars. The Norwegian peasant has lived his life free from molestation by the foreign invader. This may be due to two reasons: first, because Norway has no wealth to tempt the conqueror; second, because of the difficulty an invading army would have in overrunning the country. In the early part of the nineteenth century the Norwegian sailors that had visited America brought home fascinating stories of the great republic in America. These stories dealt with the liberty, freedom and independence of the American people; also with the opportunity of the poor and oppressed to acquire land and homes of their own. These stories rapidly passed from valley to valley until they were a topic of conversation in the homes of the poor from the North Cape to Lindsness in the south.

In the twenties of the nineteenth century, young men began to move across the ocean to America. This was before the day of the steamboat. They had to

go in sailing vessels and furnish their own food for the voyage. There was not even a sailing vessel cruising the Atlantic that was fitted up for passenger traffic. Hundreds of thousands of emigrants were carried across the ocean in freighters. The sailing vessels were generally owned by the skipper or captain that sailed them. In Norway they would be fitted out with temporary sleeping bunks, roughly made for the emigrant service. When they reached the American port and the passengers were landed, the temporary bunks were torn out and the vessels returned with cargoes of freight, generally for Liverpool or Hamburg. Here we must say, to the credit of Norwegian sailors, that, so far as is known, no fatal disaster ever happened to these emigrant ships or to the emigrants they carried. Thousands of emigrants came from Norway to America in this way.

The people that leave their native surroundings and travel long distances to build homes in a new and comparatively wild country generally come from the poor class. Mankind generally prefers to live and die in the country where their ancestors have lived and died before them. For this reason the well-to-do rarely emigrate. In the days of the people written about in this book, when a young man said good-bye and left for America, his parents and friends knew he would never come back and in all probability they would never see him again. In most cases it was a melancholy event, for those who stayed at home as well as for those who left.

* * *

Far up from the sea in one of the valleys here described, where it was narrow and rocky, was the former home of Atle Sunmere. Here he had played as a child, here, in his youth, he had traversed the mountains; here he had hunted bears, and other game; here he had worked as a woodsman and had helped to till the soil on the barren slopes of the mountains. His father's house was a little cottage, stuck under an overhanging cliff near the river. On the opposite side of the river the strip of land was wider and more fertile. Atle's father lived on a small farm. He had ten cows that in the summertime found their pasture up in the mountains. In the winter time they were fed on hay that was cut and cured among the cliffs and stones of the valley.

It was in the evening just before supper. Halvor Sunmere was sitting in a log rocking chair before the fire. The evening meal was being prepared by Sigrid, his wife, and his two daughters, Maren and Inger. Halvor was smoking a long pipe and reading from a little pamphlet that was written by Kleng Peerson about that wonderful country—America.

"I see by this book," said Halvor to Sigrid, "that in America they get sugar from the trees in the woods."

"What kind of trees can that be?" questioned Sigrid.

"Why, the maple tree," answered Halvor. "Kleng Peerson says that these trees are just the same as the maples here in Norway."

"That is certainly strange," said Sigrid, "I never thought we could get sugar from a maple tree."

"Oh, that must be a great country," said Halvor, as he knocked the ashes from his pipe into the fire. "If I were a young man, I would go there myself. I am tired of trying to raise crops among the stones and cliffs in this country."

"I am sure Atle has landed in America by this time," mused Sigrid.

"Just then a noise was heard in the vestibule of the cottage. This was followed by a sharp rap at the door. Inger went to the door and Nels Kleven, a neighbor boy, walked into the room.

"Good-evening, everybody," said Nels, "I can bring you good news. I have come from town today and can tell you that the good ship "Dea" sailed into the harbor from America this morning."

"Did you see Captain Solberg?" asked Halvor.

"No, I did not," said Nels, "I had to leave town before the Captain landed."

"Is the ship back?" asked Sigrid, leaning forward to catch every word that Nels spoke, "if so, that is good news." "Dea" was the ship upon which Atle and Thora had taken passage for America the previous spring.

"I had a talk with Consul Heltberg," said Nels. "He told me that you would probably get a letter from Atle by Christmas."

"Then you must go to town on Christmas Eve," said Sigrid. "Will it not be a nice thing to hear from Atle and Thora by Christmas?"

"If Atle likes America, I think I shall follow him next spring," said Nels.

"What will become of your father and mother then?" asked Sigrid.

"I'll take them along", responded Nels, whereupon Nels bade them good evening and left for his home, a little farther up the valley.

Halvor and Sigrid often talked about Atle. They were certain now that he had landed safely in America. They did not expect, however, that he would write them until he should reach Helge Nelson's place. When Christmas Eve arrived, Halvor drove down the valley to inquire at the postoffice for a letter from Atle. Even in Norway, in those days, mail was delivered only to the cities and villages. As yet there were no postoffices, or at least very few, in the interior of the country. The sleighing was good and most of the way Halvor drove on the frozen river. On his arrival at the postoffice he called for his mail, and, sure enough, there was a letter from America. He put the letter, without opening it, into his pocket, and went to the office of Consul Heltberg, the owner of the "Dea." Here he was agreeably surprised to find Captain Solberg, who told Halvor that they had had a very stormy passage to New York; so bad, in fact, that it had taken them eleven weeks to go across; but, he said, with no accidents, no sickness and no deaths on board. All the passengers had landed safely in New York. Halvor asked him how Freda had stood the voyage.

"Quite well," said the captain, "I think the sea

voyage was good for her. I am getting up another boat load of passengers for next spring," continued the Captain.

"I wish you good luck for your enterprise," said Halvor, as he left the Captain to go home where he and Sigrid could read Atle's letter together.

There was great rejoicing at Sunmere when Halvor showed them the letter received from America. Maren read the letter aloud:

"Dear Father and Mother:

"We are glad to inform you that we landed safely in New York on the tenth day of July. There was no sickness or death on board our ship. From New York we went by boat to Albany, where we boarded a canal boat, which took us on the Erie Canal to Buffalo, New York. From there we took passage on a steam boat and landed in Milwaukee on the 17th day of August. In Milwaukee we hired a man with a team of horses to take us to Helge Nelson's place. Our food lasted until we got there, with some left over.

"This is a beautiful country, covered with very fine hardwood timber — maple, oak, elm, basswood and a tree called 'butternut,' which I have never seen in Norway. There is no pine or cedar here. The land is very rich and fertile. They raise wheat, potatoes and maize. In a few days I expect to go out and look for land. Helge Nelson and Sarah were very kind to us. We stayed there nearly a week.

"Tosten and Ingebret have already bought eighty acres of land with a log house on it. We are living

with them now. Freda looks much better than she did when we left. The ocean voyage was very rough, but I think it did us all very much good. We were on the sea eleven weeks.

"I think by the time you get this letter, I will have bought my land. Helge Nelson knows of forty acres that I can buy from the government for a small sum. I expect to build a log house and have it ready by Christmas. In the meantime Thora and Freda will remain with Tosten and Aaste.

"We like the country very much and will write you more about it in our next letter. Game is very plentiful here and we will not want for meat for some time. If Nels Kleven comes to America next spring, send with him the broad ax that I have at home hanging in the blacksmith shop. Also send my scythe and snath. I want it for Tosten because he cannot use an American snath and scythe. Freda and Thora both send their love to you all. Also remember us to Helge's father and mother. Write us a letter soon. Our postoffice is C-Wis., U. S. A.

With kindest regards, I am,

Your affectionate son

Atle Summere."

"This has been a very happy Christmas Eve," said Halvor; "We must all thank God that Atle and his family have reached Helge Nelson safely. I have no doubt they will get along very well. America has a good free government and there is no reason why

the poor people that come from here should not prosper."

During the reading of the letter, Sigrid had sat looking into the fire before her. She made no remarks on the letter. Notwithstanding the good news, there was a sad expression on her face.

"Why do you look so sad, after hearing the good news from America?" asked Halvor.

Sigrid looked up at Halvor, heaved a sigh and said, "Yes, Halvor, it is good news, but Atle's letter makes me think of the great distance between him and us. It is for that reason I am sad. You know Atle was always so good to his mother, and I know it is impossible for me ever to see him again. The girls are young; they may go to the country where Atle now is, but you and I, Halvor, will never go to America. We must stay and die, here in Norway."

Chapter VIII.

A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

The Norwegian immigrants, who are the subjects of this story, by 1852 had made some progress toward citizenship in their new country. They all spoke English fairly well; they had become well acquainted with their neighbors, a large number of whom were of other nationalities; some of the younger ones had learned to read the English language and from the American newspapers, published in English, read the news to the older ones. They had mingled to such an extent with the Yankee element, that they had caught the idea that the great American commonwealth must be governed by the people, who on election day, through the ballot, express themselves. Helge Nelson had taken them to the county seat where they had publicly declared their intention to become citizens of the United States. This gave them the right to vote at the following presidential election.

Helge Nelson had developed into the political leader of the township. He was a good speaker, as speakers went in those days, out on the western frontier. He was a shrewd politician and was easily the most influential man in the whole settlement. He had allied himself with the Democratic party and under-

took in that early day to throw the Norwegian immigrant vote into that organization. In this he was not successful. The Norwegians were a northern race and had, what has always characterized these nations, the ability and desire to think for themselves on governmental questions.

The question of human slavery was forging to the front even in this little settlement in the wilds of Wisconsin. The Norwegian settlers had listened to speakers who advocated the liberating of the black race. The lesson of liberty and independence had been taught them in the history of their native land. They were descended from ancestors who had never bowed the knee to a tyrant. No foreign foe had ever set foot on Norwegian soil. The story of the great King Sverre, the defender of popular liberty in Norway and one of the great heroes of their country, they could never forget. The free mountain air of the homeland had, as it were, made them enemies of slavery and oppression. The glorious struggle that their fathers had won for liberty and independence in the early part of the nineteenth century, was fresh in their minds. In memory of that event they had celebrated the 17th of May, which now by their immigration, had been changed to the 4th of July. While they were only of the common people, they had read and were familiar with the struggle of the thirteen colonies against the British Empire. They loved Washington and Jefferson, as they loved the popular heroes of the homeland. Their bold and liberty-loving mountain hearts abhorred slavery with all its injustice and inhumanity.

The Democratic party had nominated Franklin Pierce for president. The Whig party had nominated General Winfield Scott. The Norwegian settlers had already learned that the slave holding element of the South controlled the great Democratic party.

The election was held in a log house, the home of one of the early settlers. Tosten, Atle and Ingebret went to vote for the first time. At the door of the voting place stood a barrel of whiskey with a tin cup floating on top of the liquor. It was free to all the voters. Each voter, as he went in, helped himself to a drink from the barrel. Helge Nelson was there. He mounted the stump of a large oak that stood in the clearing outside the voting place; he harangued the voters, addressing his remarks principally to the Norwegians in the group. With stolid faces they listened attentively. Helge started out with a description of the great Thomas Jefferson, who, as he said, had laid the foundation of the Democratic party in a struggle for civil rights and freedom of speech. He reminded them how Jefferson had stricken from the statutes of this country the abominable alien and sedition laws. Then he lauded the achievements of Andrew Jackson and all the other great statesmen of the Democratic party.

The crowd was mostly Demorcatc, but the Yankees and Norwegians stood pat. They were for General Winfield Scott and the Whig party. After Helge was through he received a great ovation, with hand clapping and hurrahs. However, standing in the crowd was a little Norwegian sea captain and, as Helge stepped down from the stump, some one in the

audience shouted for the captain. He was a short, rather stocky old man. He had sailed the ship that brought Helge to America. When he had ascended the stump, he stood as straight as an arrow. He lacked the smooth pose of Helge. His words were few, but to the point. He told the voters that the glory of the Democratic party had vanished; he did not blame Helge Nelson for going back and talking about Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. He reminded them that there were no Jeffersons or Jacksons in the Democratic party of that day. He called their attention to James K. Polk in his war of conquest waged against Mexico entirely at the dictation of the slavery interests of the South. He showed how Polk had floundered around, trying to invent a creditable reason for this spurious war. He showed that this war, which he laid to the Democratic party, was so obnoxious that even John C. Calhoun, the great statesman of the South, could not stand for it.

The old sea captain was vigorously applauded by the Norwegian element and some of the Yankee settlers. A large number of immigrants from Norway had arrived since the coming of Tosten, Atle and Ingebret. All of these voted for Scott. Little did that small group of settlers realize that they were soon to enter upon, and take part in, the greatest of all wars for human liberty.

Helge Nelson was much disappointed in not being able to control the votes of the people of his own blood, but he took it philosophically, and friendly relationship was continued between Helge and his relatives.

Chapter IX.

LOVE FINDS A WAY.

Every spring, after the arrival of the Sunmeres and the Aspelunds, a group of immigrants had arrived from Norway, so that a large portion of the new settlement spoke Norwegian. The heavy woollen plaid dresses of the women were gradually changed to American calico dresses. Instead of a colored kerchief tied over their heads, they wore sunbonnets on week days and shakers on Sunday. The English language was readily acquired by the newcomers. The younger generation spoke it as well as the New England Yankee. The older people spoke it with a slight accent. Both English and Norwegian were spoken fluently by the children.

Elling Hegstad, lately arrived from Norway with his family, had acquired eighty acres a half mile north of Atle's place. He had built a log house and was clearing off the timber from his land. He had two daughters, Agnes and Selma, both tall and slender, with dark blue eyes. Agnes had long, dark, wavy hair, while Selma's hung in brown curls over her shoulders. Both girls were pretty. Neither could talk the English language. Their mother had died shortly after their arrival in the settlement and the

two daughters kept the house and helped their father in raking the brush together in the clearing.

Agnes had standing on a small bench on the little front porch several flowering plants, of which she was very fond. Some grew in wooden pails, some in tin pails and some in boxes. The plants and flowers were so well kept and so pretty that the containers were seldom noticed. The little home was kept scrupulously neat and clean and had a thrifty and cozy appearance as it stood among the tall basswood and maple trees. In those early days, when any one in the settlement went to the little country store, he generally brought back the mail for the neighbors. The mail came once a week. Newspapers were rather scarce in the settlement, because only a few could read English and a newspaper in the Norwegian language had not yet appeared in the settlement.

About a mile south of the Hegstad farm a Yankee boy from Connecticut had acquired a quarter section of land. Instead of building a house from logs, he had hauled his logs to the little mill some miles away and had built on his place the first frame house in the settlement. There was a main part which contained a parlor and two bedrooms. On the side he had built a wing for a kitchen. In front was a roomy porch. The house had been painted white, which gave it a rather picturesque appearance among the dark green hickory and maple leaves.

Tom Swinton was as proud of his new home as any young man could be. He had put in narrow ash boards for floors, and had brought from Milwaukee

some furniture. But there was one thing he lacked—a wife.

In all new settlements there are usually plenty of men, but young girls, as a rule, are scarce. Several times Tom brought the mail to Elling Hegstad's home. He had noticed how clean and neat it looked there. He always smiled and passed the time of day with the two girls, but farther than that he could not go, for he could not talk the language they understood. Whenever he came, Agnes smiled and bowed to him as politely as if she had come from his own state of Connecticut. Once she pinned a bouquet on the lapel of his coat. Tom had a feeling that Agnes was glad to see him when he came to their house.

One day Elling Hegstad had a raising. He was building a new stable. Tom Swinton had been invited, and, of course, he was there. There were twenty at the table. This was the first meal that Tom had eaten at the Hegstad home, and such a dinner as they had prepared! There was fresh mutton, with cabbage and carrots and onions, delicious coffee and raspberry pie. Everything was as good as his mother had ever prepared for him down in old Connecticut. He thought Agnes looked more beautiful than ever.

After the meal Tom stayed in the house and helped the girls to clear the table, and oh, what a good time they had! Agnes put her hand in the flour barrel and rubbed flour in his face. Tom retaliated by pouring cold water down her neck, and so they laughed and carried on. They all seemed to have a fine time. The girls would say some words in Norwegian and Tom

would reply in English, and not a word was understood by either side. The girls could not talk English enough to ask him to come again, yet Tom decided that he would come anyway.

When the stable was raised, Tom returned to his beautiful home, for in those days it was considered a beautiful home. At night, when he went to bed all alone, he could not but think of Agnes Hegstad. His thoughts would wander over to the neat, clean home of Agnes, to the appetizing meal he had enjoyed at the raising, the mutton stew, the coffee and the delicious pie.

When Tom woke up the next morning he felt lonely and discouraged. He began to realize that he had fallen desperately in love with Agnes Hegstad, but, alas, he could not talk with her! How cruel fate had been that his loved one talked a language he could not understand! Tom had a yoke of oxen that was the largest and sleekest in the neighborhood. He drove up the road by the Hegstad home. Selma was on the porch. He waved his hat at her. Selma waved her hand and laughed. Tom thought she looked just as pretty as any Yankee girl he had ever seen. He had bought a three year old sorrel colt, which he started to break in as a riding horse. One day, as he was riding by Atle Sunmere's place, he met Hjalmar Sunmere and his sister, barefooted, playing in the road. Hjalmar could talk both English and Norwegian fluently.

"Can you talk Norwegian?" asked Tom.

"Oh, yes, as well as I can talk English," said Hjalmar.

"Then come here and I'll give you a horseback ride," said Tom. So saying, he took Hjalmar by the arm and set him behind on the horse.

"Where are you going?" asked Hjalmar.

"Oh, we'll go up to Elling Hegstad's place," said Tom. Soon they were at the Hegstad house. Tom tied his horse to a small tree, and he and Hjalmar went in. Agnes and Selma were both at home. Agnes was weaving cloth in a Norwegian loom.

Turning to Hjalmar, Tom said, "Ask Agnes what she is weaving this cloth for."

Agnes said she was weaving it for toweling and bed sheets, Hjalmar acting as interpreter.

"How do you like my new house?" asked Tom.

"Oh, your new house is the finest in the settlement," said Agnes, with a pleasant smile.

"I am getting very lonesome living there alone," said Tom.

"I should think you would," replied Agnes rather abruptly.

"How would you like to come over there and live with me?" asked Tom.

At this Agnes blushed perceptibly.

"Oh, there might be worse places than that to live in," said she.

This encouraged Tom and he realized that his opportunity had come and that he must pop the question to her then and there.

"Why can't you and I get married, Agnes?" he asked. At this Agnes looked down at the cloth in the loom. The shuttle seemed to stick in her hand. For the first time she was silent. She did not look up,

words would not come. Tom reached over and took her hand. It was warm and soft. She made no effort to remove it. She looked up full into Tom's face, their eyes met. Tom's hold on her hand became more ardent.

At last Agnes said: "I cannot answer that question now, but you and Hjalmar come back this evening and I will tell you."

Tom pressed her hand to his lips. After lingering a few moments, Tom said, "Come, Hjalmar!" and rode back home.

"I'll come and get you this evening after supper," said Tom.

"All right," replied Hjalmar.

That evening, when Elling came up to the house, Agnes and Selma told their father what had happened that afternoon. Selma giggled and laughed as Agnes told the story.

"Oh," said Elling to Selma, "this is no laughing matter. I don't like to part with you, Agnes. You have taken your mother's place and kept the house for me. You have been a good girl. I am going to leave it to you. Tom Swinton is a nice boy and a good boy. If you want to marry him, God bless you both. You have my consent."

That evening Tom and Hjalmar came back. The Hegstad family was sitting on the porch. Tom looked at Agnes. Her eyes met his. He knew then that he was accepted. For a while they talked about the beautiful evening. Tom greatly admired Agnes' flowering plants. All the while Hjalmar acted as interpreter.

Finally Tom said, "What have you to say about moving over to my place, Agnes?"

She nodded her head and said she would. Tom took her by the hand and they strolled down the lane in the twilight. They both seemed so happy when they returned, and Tom said, "When can we get married?"

"Not until fall," was the answer, "for I must help Selma and father finish up the work for winter. I must weave all the cloth that I had planned and some of it shall go to our home," she added, as she looked at Tom.

"Can we get married about the first of November?" asked Tom.

"Not until the middle of November; we will get married in the little church on Sunday."

"All right," said Tom.

He and Hjalmar said good-bye and walked down the road to their homes.

* * *

The leaves of the hard maple trees had turned yellow and scarlet. The oak trees were purple and the elms were brown; the corn had been cut and put into shocks; the pumpkin vines were wilted; the woods on the skyline were blue with smoke; the sky was clear and the sun shining; not a breath of wind moved the leaves on the trees.

It was one of those beautiful autumn days that are so common in southern Wisconsin. It was Sunday morning. It had been whispered about the settlement for a couple of weeks that there was to be a

wedding in the church this Sunday morning. Along the road leading to the little church people were walking, dressed in their Sunday clothes, to be present at the wedding. As one man said, it was an important wedding, for it was to join together a Yankee and a Norwegian. Some of the old ladies shook their heads gravely and prophesied trouble for the couple because, as they said, they could not talk to each other. The young people laughed at this, and said if they loved each other they would soon learn to talk some kind of language.

Soon Tom and Agnes drove up to the church door. Under a dark straw shaker, her beautiful face looked very happy as Tom helped her out of the buggy. She wore a light calico dress with a Garibaldi waist. Tom wore a suit of Kentucky jean. After the ceremony they drove to Tom's home and their married life began. Tom taught Agnes to read from a school primer, and it was not many months before she could talk understandable English, although with a Scandinavian accent.

Chapter X.

THE RISE OF A GREAT ISSUE.

A few years after the beginning of the settlement described in this story, large fields of waving grain began to dot the great hardwood forest of eastern Wisconsin. At first all the farm buildings were constructed from logs. Here and there in the settlement one would see a frame house. These frame houses were painted white by the New England immigrants. They looked beautiful, for they were generally surrounded by a clump of vigorous hardwood trees. The Norwegian settlers at first painted their houses red, with white trimmings, these being the colors generally used for the country houses in the homeland. The outhouses were still generally constructed from hardwood and tamarack logs.

The Norwegians were experts in building log houses. The logs were dovetailed at the corners and then cut flush with the side of the building. The logs were usually hewn square. Wherever in the Northwest one chances to see a log building dovetailed at the corners, it is safe to conclude that one is in or near a Scandinavian settlement.

One fall invitations were sent out for a log barn raising on the Ingebret Aspelund farm. On such occasions it was customary for some of the women of

the neighborhood to come in to help prepare refreshments. It was one of the few occasions when the neighborhood got together, not only to work, but also to discuss political questions and the social problems of the community. Thora and Atle both went to the raising. The logs for the structure were lying on the ground, carefully cut to the proper length, trimmed and prepared. On such occasions, men who are expert with the ax, sit on the corners of the building, to properly shape and dovetail each log, while those on the ground carefully select the logs and hoist them up to the top of the wall. With the material ready on the ground, it was customary to erect a good sized building in a single day, with the exception of the rafters and the roof.

Ingebret Aspelund, Helge Nelson, Peter Aspelund and Atle Sunmere each occupied a corner of the building. Old Tosten acted as general manager of the whole crew, for they all looked up to Tosten as an experienced builder from the old country.

"Have you seen that new book?" asked Helge Nelson, "that is being circulated by the Milwaukee Sentinel?"

"What book do you mean?" inquired Atle.

"The name of the book is 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'," said Helge.

"Yes, I have read it," said Ingebret; "we have one at our house."

"How do you like it?" asked Helge.

"It's a fine book," said Ingebret. "I never knew before that human beings could get such bad treat-

ment as the negroes of the South are getting from their masters."

"Oh, those Southern slaveholders are all Democrats," said Atle, "and you cannot expect anything better from the Democrats."

At this Helge Nelson looked sharply at Atle and said: "What party do you belong to then, Atle?"

"Oh, I am going to join that new party that is going to meet next summer and nominate a man for president. I will not stand for human slavery. This country is the land of the free and the home of the brave, and it shall continue to be so if we have to fight for it."

At this Helge Nelson laughed heartily, "You will have to fight for it, Atle," he said, "but I am afraid it will not be much of a fight. That new party you talk about is nothing but a joke, anyhow, and there are so few of them that I don't believe they will be able to put up much of a fight."

"You wait," replied Atle, "and you shall see how the new party will grow. They may not elect their president next year, but in four years more they will, and drive slavery out of this nation."

"Are you ready to shoulder a gun and fight?" asked Helge.

"Yes, I am," said Atle, "the cause is just and righteous and will soon attract to its standard a majority of the people in the United States."

"Hurry up!" shouted Peter from his corner, "you fellows had better quit talking politics and keep up with your corners. When we get the building up, you can talk politics as long as you want to."

Colonel Stevens was one of the men on the ground who were hoisting up the logs.

"I agree with Atle," said he; "the day is fast approaching when we shall have to teach these Southern Democrats a lesson."

"But the Southern Democrats are rich," retorted Helge; "they have the money and they also have the newspapers. I think it will be a cold day, Colonel, when this conglomeration of Northern backwoodsmen can teach those Southern gentlemen a lesson."

"If we Northern backwoodsmen do not happen to wear as good clothes as those Southern gentlemen," put in Peter, "I think we can show them how to fight."

"Brave words, my boy!" shouted Colonel Stevens. "I see you have the right stuff in you even though you were born in Norway. I hope you are not in favor of slavery," said Colonel Stevens, addressing his remarks to Helge Nelson.

"Oh, I don't think we have anything to do with that question," answered Helge; "that is a local question and each state will have to settle that for itself."

"That may be so," said Ingebret, "but if it is a local question they must not expect us in the North to help them catch their runaway slaves and send them back to their owners."

"But," protested Helge, "we are all members and citizens of the United States and one state must respect the laws of its sister states. If one state has a law protecting slavery, we are all in duty bound as citizens of a common country to respect the laws of such sister state."

"You believe in squatter sovereignty," said Colonel

Stevens. "I think Stephen A. Douglas is a political weathercock, who wants to be president of the United States and who does not want to hurt the feelings of either side. This squatter sovereignty doctrine is a sort of middle of the road policy. Let them try it in Kansas and Nebraska. You will find it won't work. The people of the North will never stand for it."

Just then Kari called the men to dinner. They all dropped their axes and tools and went into the house. After dinner the raising of the log barn was resumed with vigor. The argument on the slavery question continued more or less all afternoon. At times some of the participants showed considerable feeling. Helge Nelson was looked upon as the leader of the Democrats, while Colonel Stevens and Atle were his strongest opponents. Colonel Stevens related some of the horrors of slavery that were depicted in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Helge Nelson shouted that he did not believe a word that was in that book. He said that the institutions of the country would not last long if men should be pulled around by their noses by short haired women and long haired men.

At six o'clock in the evening the walls of the barn had been raised. Ingebret and Tosten thanked the men for their assistance and promised to return a similar service when requested.

Chapter XI.

THE SPELLING SCHOOL.

In the frontier settlements of our country there were but few social functions that brought the settlers together. There were certain ideals that had led these immigrants into the Western wilderness. Whether they had come from the old states on the Atlantic seaboard or from Northern Europe, they were led by the same thoughts and had the same aspirations. While their main purpose was to acquire land and homes of their own, there were other things that they were determined to get. For the most part, they were working people. Whatever savings they had, had been earned by hard labor in working for others. With the ownership of land came independence to do what they desired. They had dreamed in their old homes of educating their children. Education of the young meant to them more liberty, better people and a more efficient government. Education to them meant more than wealth and affluence.

It is therefore not strange that one of the first things a settlement did was to build a school house and hire a "school ma'am." There were very few men teachers in the pioneer days. Men were needed in clearing the land and cultivating the soil. The

teacher usually boarded around. She was required to stay and board with each family in the district for about a week. This board and lodging she received as part of her compensation.

The school terms were not very long. There were usually two terms in the year; the winter term was from three to four months long and the summer term was from two to three months. The school house became not only the educational center but, in a way, also the social center. There were spelling schools, singing schools and debating clubs. Occasionally religious services were held there on Sundays.

In the settlement whose story we have been following, there was a large and commodious log school house. It stood at the cross roads. In the center was a large stove, with a drum, that heated the room. The seats were home made, each holding about five pupils. In the center was a wide aisle, leading from the door to the teacher's desk. The teacher's desk also was home made. It was box-shaped, with a strong slab for the teacher's seat.

District Number Four was to have a spelling school. The children had been practicing their pieces for two weeks; some had declamations, some dialogues and some had songs. The competitive spelling, of course, was the chief attraction. After all the regular exercises had been completed, prominent settlers were usually called upon by the teacher, sometimes to make a speech, sometimes to declaim and occasionally to sing.

The spelling school had been arranged for Satur-

day evening. A deep snow covered the ground and sleighing was good.

Visitors were also expected from the adjoining districts. The teacher was Elizabeth Young, a tall, rather good looking girl, who hailed from New York State.

A young man had lately come into the settlement from New England. He owned two eighties of land about a mile from the school house. He was making a clearing and building a house. On Sunday he wore a better suit of clothes than most of the young men and was considered a good catch. His name was John Sterling. John Sterling had a declamation that he had delivered on one occasion with great success. The title of the piece was "Dr. Puff Stuff." The teacher had invited him to declaim it at the spelling school and John had modestly accepted the honor. This was supposed to help draw a large crowd.

William Ole Aspelund was to speak "The Sword of Bunker Hill." Hjalmar Sunmere's piece was, "I Like to See a Little Dog." Helen McGregor had committed to memory, "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," and Freda and her little sister had been taught to sing, "Oh Come, Come Away, the School Bell now is Ringing." Others had dialogues.

The young people came in bob sleighs and cutters. The air rang with the laughter of the children and the grown-ups, and with the tinkling of the sleigh-bells. The school house was filled. Those who could not get seats stood in the aisle. Miss Young, with a stately air, took her position at the desk and rang the school bell for order. She announced that the

first exercise would be a song by all the children. The scholars pushed and jammed through the crowd until they all stood in the aisle in front of the teacher's desk and sang, "The Star Spangled Banner."

The teacher then announced that the spelling would begin. She selected two of the youngest pupils in the school to choose the sides for the spelling contest. They were Helen McGregor and Hjalmar Sunmere. First Helen would choose one from the assembly and then Hjalmar would choose one. This continued until all the people present stood on the floor, half on one side of the room and half on the other. The teacher then took Sander's Spelling Book, giving out words first to one side and then to the other. On the first round, a number of the older ones went down; then others, and after a while there were only a few left standing on each side. Hjalmar and Helen were still on the floor. Two more rounds, there were only two left on each side; Hjalmar and Tom Swinton on one side and Helen and John Sterling on the other. The teacher shot out the words from the spelling book like cannon balls, but without effect. Hjalmar was the first to go down. He missed on "raillery." Then Helen went down; she left out an "l" in "ill-luck."

The contest now had narrowed down to John Sterling on one side and Tom Swinton on the other. The teacher kept on giving harder and harder words, but the contestants stood the onslaught with great coolness. The crowd became nervous. Some of the audience stood on the seats in order to get a good view of the spellers.

Somebody shouted, "Lizzie, don't give the easy words to your beau!"

At this the audience broke out in loud laughter and clapping of hands. This angered the teacher so much that she refused to give out any more words and called upon Colonel Stevens to take charge of the match.

Again a shout went up from the audience, "Hurrah for Lizzie!"

Colonel Stevens sent the words loud and clear. The contestants kept the floor. The audience became quiet, it was so still you might have heard a pin drop. It was Tom Swinton's turn. "Avoirdupois," shouted the Colonel. Tom failed and John Sterling won the match. There was some giggling among the pupils when Miss Young congratulated John.

Now began the declamations and recitations. Each performer was greeted with tumultuous applause, which consisted of stamping the feet and clapping the hands. After the scholars had completed their exercises, Miss Young announced that there was a great treat in store for them; that they had with them a gentleman who had a great reputation as an entertainer, Mr. John Sterling, who would now recite "Dr. Puff Stuff." This recitation produced such an impression on the audience that John was compelled to repeat it.

It was now nearly eleven o'clock, but the audience remained in their seats calling for volunteers to speak. A small thin man with a piping voice appeared on the floor. He spoke a piece entitled, "Is He a Man or a Beast." He contended that if the negro was a man,

he should be free; if he was a beast, he should remain in slavery. He went on to say most eloquently that the only difference between a negro and a white man was in the color of his skin, and ended by arguing that the colored man had a soul and that he would eventually sit in Paradise and play the harp with the white man. The recitation was applauded most vociferously and shouts were heard, "Let us hear the other side," but nobody took the floor.

The exercises were closed with a speech by Colonel Stevens, in which he complimented the teacher and the scholars for the very creditable showing that had been made by District Number Four. The audience then stood up and sang, "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean." This closed the midwinter spelling school of the district.

Chapter XII.

GREAT CHANGES.

Peter Aspelund had worked many years for Colonel Stevens. He had grown from boyhood to manhood in his service. He had learned to speak the English language fluently. He was tall, not heavy, but muscular, and light of foot, which is so common in young men of Norwegian blood. He was full of life and energy and good company to either sex. He had acquired eighty acres of land adjoining the farm of Colonel Stevens. He had just begun to clear the underbrush on his land near the road preparatory to felling the big trees and making a field.

One day, as Peter was hard at work in his clearing raking together prickly ash and blackberry canes, Tom Swinton drove by with his team.

"What kind of crop are you going to put in?" asked Tom.

"I am trying to clear five acres for winter wheat next fall," was the answer. Saying this, Peter walked over toward Tom and leaned on the rail fence by the road.

"Are you coming down to the meeting in the school house tonight?" asked Tom.

"I haven't heard of any meeting," answered Peter; "what is it for?"

"Why, there is a gentleman coming out from Madison to speak there tonight. He is here to raise a company of men to join Lincoln's army to go South and lick the rebels."

"Are you going?" inquired Peter.

"Yes," said Tom, "I thought I would go down. I cannot very well enlist because I would have to leave my wife and baby without anybody to care for them. There ought to be enough of you single men to go and lick those rebels."

"I think I'll go down," said Peter.

At this Tom slapped the backs of the horses with the lines and drove on. As Peter was raking the brush, he was revolving in his mind whether he should enlist and go to the war. For a long time he had dreamed about the neat little cottage he would build on his farm. In his mind's eye he saw it nestling under the spreading maples. He planned a little gravel path to the road, a picket fence and a little gate. It was to be a frame house, painted white, as the Yankees did. He wanted a green lawn under the trees in front of the house, just like Colonel Stevens' lawn. On this green lawn he wanted large round flower beds, just like those his grandmother had made.

"The green lawns that the Yankees have are very pretty," thought Peter, "but they would be prettier still if they were dotted with Norwegian flowerbeds."

When he would have his little cottage, his lawn, and his flowerbeds ready, he was going to be married, for Peter was desperately in love, and his love was returned—but this was kept a secret. Was the

war going to shatter this beautiful dream? Peter was unable to decide that question.

That evening he went to the school house to hear the speech. Colonel Stevens introduced the speaker as Captain Bryant. There was a large crowd of young boys, some old men and a few women at the meeting. The speaker began by calling attention to the sacrifices that had been made by the fathers who had established a free government in America. He showed how prosperous and happy the American people had been under the constitution and laws of the United States. He then went on to say that all people from almost every country in the world were welcome to come to the United States and he hoped that they had all come here to make sacrifices whenever it might be necessary to preserve our institutions and our union. Then he launched out into an invective against slavery and all its evil consequences. After speaking for an hour, he informed the audience that he was there to enlist the young men to join the army to defend the flag and the union and to destroy the curse of human slavery. Three or four young men walked up and signed their names to the enlistment roll. Colonel Stevens and some of the older men joined Captain Bryant in urging the young men to enlist.

Peter Aspelund sat down by the door. A conflict was going on in his mind. On the one side was his dream of the little cottage and the little home and his sweetheart, on the other side was the call of his country to defend it in the hour of danger. The thought came to him that had it not been for this

country, he never would have had even the dream of the little home of his own and the farm. He thought that a country which could furnish him such a dream of future happiness was worthy of his defense. He arose and walked up the aisle. There sat Mrs. Stevens and Mabel. He signed his name quickly and was about to turn around when Colonel Stevens seized him by the arm, and exclaimed:

"You always were a great boy, Peter, but I never was as proud of you as I am tonight." Mrs. Stevens and Mabel rose up and congratulated him, although Peter thought that Mabel looked somewhat serious and sad.

Every time a recruit signed his name it was read off by Captain Bryant, and the audience applauded vociferously.

Mabel Stevens was now nearly a young lady. She was very handsome and had inherited the dignity and bearing of her father. After the meeting, Peter and Mabel walked home arm in arm, for Peter was still boarding at the Colonel's house.

"I am so glad," said Mabel, "that you enlisted. You could not have done otherwise, and I knew that you would not do otherwise, still I feel awfully sad to think that you are going away. I know it will be dreadfully lonesome when you are gone."

"I will write often," said Peter, "and I don't think the war will last very long. You know the first call by President Lincoln was only for ninety days, so you see, Mabel, I may be back again before fall."

That night Peter had difficulty in going to sleep. His mind was so active he could not close his eyes.

His short life lay spread out before him like a panorama. He remembered his little mountain home in Norway; remembered how, when he was a mere boy, he had heard tell of the great land beyond the sea, where poor people could get land, own their own homes and be happy. He remembered how he had a longing to cross the great waste of water and live in America. When a schoolboy in his homeland, he had read the stories of Washington and Franklin. He thought of the time when his father and mother packed up their belongings and went to the seaport town to sail for America; how their neighbors and friends had wished them God-speed on their long journey. He remembered their trials and hardships on the voyage across the Atlantic, and their tedious trip across the great state of New York in a canal boat; he remembered how anxious they were when they shipped at Buffalo for Milwaukee; he recalled with enthusiasm their trip through the woods on the old government trail; he could not forget how kind everybody had been to him in this new country. Those he had come in contact with were just common people; there were no rich lords living in castles, no large estates; just little farms that were called "homesteads"; one man was as good as the other.

"What a beautiful country it is!" thought Peter, and he wondered if it would always be that way. The more he thought the more he became convinced that he was right when he enlisted.

"What a magnificent country it is," said Peter. "Why should some men, because they want to own slaves, break up this great country?" Then he thought

of Uncle Tom, poor Uncle Tom, who had been abused and maltreated so by his arrogant masters in the South, for "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was fresh in his mind that night. He thought also that he might never again see his little farm and never build the little house that he had thought so much about since he had begun working for Colonel Stevens.

What would his mother say? Peter did not know. He felt almost as much at home in Colonel Stevens' house as he did with his father and mother. The Colonel and his family had been so kind to him; they had taught him to read and talk the English language. They had cared for him as though he was their own child. He knew that the Colonel, Mrs. Stevens and Mabel were proud of him because he had enlisted in the service of his country.

Next morning, when Peter awoke, the sun was already high above the horizon. He dressed hurriedly and went down stairs. The result of his thoughts of the night before was that he was clear in his own mind, and had a strong conviction, that he had done the proper thing in enlisting, so he felt happy and cheerful as he greeted the Stevens family. The Colonel, as usual after breakfast, read one of the Psalms of David. Never before had Scripture reading sunk so deep into Peter's heart.

"When do you leave for the front?" asked Colonel Stevens.

"Captain Bryant told us last night," answered Peter, "that we should report at the city of Portage in two weeks from yesterday. He thought by that

time the regiment would be filled up. We go from there to Camp Randall at Madison for training."

"Mother and I are planning," said Mabel, "to make up a box for you of good things to eat."

"That will be fine," said Peter, as he patted Mabel on the head.

The next Sunday all the boys in the town, who had enlisted, met in an open field near the school house to begin drilling. Colonel Stevens took charge of the company and gave them the rudiments of military drill. There were twenty-five boys altogether in the squad. The following Sunday Donald McGregor and Atle Summere were there with their muskets and gave the boys instructions how to handle a gun and gave them some pointers in target practice.

* * *

The time for departure had come. The boys all gathered together early in the morning. They were to march to Portage, which, they estimated, would take them two days. Old men and women, and children, young girls, and men of almost all ages had gathered on this beautiful June morning to say good-bye. Some were sweethearts, some were fathers, some mothers, some sisters and brothers. It was an impressive scene. The young men appeared gay and happy. Colonel Stevens and Helge Nelson both made speeches.

Aaste and Tosten had come to say good-bye to Peter. The tears streamed down Aaste's face as she put her arms around Peter's neck for a last embrace before he departed. Then she put into his hand a

little Norwegian house-postil and asked him to read it whenever he had time; he would find in it consolation and strength for the arduous duties of a soldier. She said she was satisfied to have him go. This country had been so good to her, that it would be wrong if her boy should fail to respond to its call in the hour of need.

Mabel and Mrs. Stevens had the box they had packed for Peter ready. There were wild raspberry preserves, blackberry jam and wild plum preserves in it. They had made cookies, sandwiches and biscuits and other delicacies that they knew Peter liked.

The young man the boys had elected as leader shouted, "Attention!" The new recruits fell into line; then came the order, "Forward, March!" and away went the little band, down the road, with the stars and stripes waving in the breeze. Some shouted, "Hurrah for Lincoln!" Others yelled, "Give the rebels 'Hail Columbia'!" The girls waved their handkerchiefs. Onward went the boys, singing "John Brown's Body Lies a Mouldering in the Grave."

The crowd by the schoolhouse divided into little knots and groups, talked awhile and then went home. Little did they realize that they had seen the beginning of the greatest war of all history. The little Wisconsin town was contributing its share in wiping off from the flag the disgraceful blot of slavery and servitude.

Chapter XIII.

TRAINING FOR WAR.

The little company of recruits were headed for Portage, where they were to meet their Colonel and entrain for Camp Randall at Madison. It would take them from two to three days to reach Portage along the old trail that the early pioneers had followed in the forties. The country, through which they marched, had taken on the aspect of a well cultivated agricultural country. There were still large stretches of forest and wild land, and, while most of the timber had been cleared off the farms, the large hardwood stumps were still in evidence. Here and there they would come upon a large, well built farm house with a beautiful garden, lawn and shade trees. The country was just emerging from pioneer conditions into beautiful rural districts that looked prosperous and progressive.

It was a beautiful June morning; the world seemed busy and happy. There was the lowing of cows in the meadows, the singing of birds in the trees, and the croaking of frogs in the lowlands. As the boys had planned on camping out doors two nights, they carried with them provisions and a little extra clothing. Some were singing and whistling; others were joking and laughing. On the whole, the little com-

pany had the appearance of being filled with mirth and good cheer. It may be that this was assumed to suppress feelings of another sort. They acted as though they were going out on a lark and had no thought of the serious business they were undertaking.

Peter had considerable of a load to carry. Mrs. Stevens and Mabel had provided him with a satchel that contained eatables, not for two or three days, but for a whole week. There were cold turkey, hard boiled eggs, bread and butter, a bottle of milk, cheese, jams and preserves. Wrapped in tissue paper and placed on top of the other provisions was a cake Mabel had baked, and which, she said, he should have for dinner the first day. She had also put into the satchel writing paper, a small ink bottle and pen, so Peter could write to them very often while he was gone. None of the boys could beat the drum, so Ingebret Aspelund, who had been a drummer boy in the Norwegian army, accompanied them to Portage and drummed for them on the way, in order that they might learn to keep step with the drum music. Atle and Donald, old soldiers as they were, said the one necessary thing for an efficient army was to learn to keep step with the music. As they marched along, their numbers were swelled by new recruits at almost every cross-road and village. By night their band had quadrupled in size.

The march along the road was exciting and interesting. After the boys had said good-bye to the people at home, they seemed to enjoy the signs of appreciation that came to them from every group

they passed on their march. On the third day of their march they entered Portage City with flags flying and drums beating. They had accumulated enough recruits on the road to make the regiment half full. The people of Portage had arranged a great reception for the new regiment. Wherever they looked they saw the stars and stripes and gaily dressed people.

The whole countryside had assembled on the occasion of sending to the front the first regiment from the city of Portage. In the park in front of the courthouse a picnic dinner was served by the women. Banners had been flung across the principal streets and the air seemed surcharged with patriotism and loyalty to Lincoln and the Union. The regiment was lined up in front of the entrance to the courthouse. Mr. John Clark, editor of one of the papers, presided, and as he introduced Colonel Bryant to the new regiment, three hearty cheers rose from the throats of the thousand young soldiers that had just entered the service. In the evening they entrained for Camp Randall midst fireworks and demonstrations.

The regiment arrived at Camp Randall late that night and slept for the first time in military tents that had been prepared for them. Little did they think that three years of marching, fighting and suffering lay before them! In talking to the people along the road, as they marched to Portage City, they had been led to believe that they would be back in less than three months. Most of the boys believed this, which accounted largely for their hilarity and good cheer. Little did they realize that the young

men who were gathering in the South were foes well worthy of their steel, and that the war they were entering would be the most destructive in the history of civilization.

The following day drilling began in earnest. The farmer boys at first were slow to learn the requirements of military life. Their free and easy life in the woods—for most of them were the sons of pioneer woodsmen,—could not be given up without hardship for the strict discipline of the soldier. Gradually, however, they were drilled into form and became accustomed to eat, live and sleep by military regulations. Peter still had some of the eatables provided for him by Mrs. Stevens and Mabel.

The boys had to do their own cooking, which reminded Peter of his voyage across the Atlantic when he emigrated to America. Their captain, Mr. Bissell, whom Peter had known for some time, was from a neighboring village, and was a kind and considerate officer. After three months' training at Camp Randall, Colonel Bryant announced to them one morning that they would entrain for St. Louis the following week, and in a short time they would stand face to face with the men of the South—men who were endeavoring to destroy their great country and to make republican institutions a mockery and a by-word to the nations of the world.

Chapter XIV.

ON THE FIRING LINE.

The people of the United States, after two years of war, were beginning to settle down to the firm conviction that it would be a long and desperate struggle. One call for troops followed another until it seemed as though all able-bodied men would have to join the army. Some were discouraged, others were quickened to a livelier interest in the struggle. In the little settlement in Wisconsin that we have been watching, newspapers were not very plentiful, nor were there many who could understandingly read the press accounts of the great battles that were being fought. For this reason the people used to gather in small groups at some house where an English paper was received. Such gatherings were usually held at Colonel Stevens' house or at the home of Atle Sunmere or Donald McGregor.

Colonel Stevens had received several letters from Peter Aspelund since he had left home, but Peter had not yet been in battle. After spending the summer at Camp Randall, he had left there in the fall, only to go into camp at St. Louis, Missouri. No letter had been received from him for several weeks. The newspapers had contained accounts of the great battle of Murfreesborough. Early in January, how-

ever, Colonel Stevens received a long letter from Peter, in which he gave an account of this battle. This news soon spread to the neighbors and in the evening they gathered at the Colonel's house to hear Peter's letter read—Atle Sunmere and his wife, Thora, Donald McGregor and his wife, Tom Swinton and Ingebret Aspelund. Colonel Stevens read the letter aloud. It would be folly to attempt to give a summary of what Peter wrote, so here is the letter in full:

“Army of the Cumberland,
Near Murfreesborough, Tenn.
January 3, 1863.

“Dear Colonel Stevens:

I have not been able to write to you lately because we have been traveling all the time. We broke camp at St. Louis about the first of December and took a train for Nashville, Tennessee. There we joined the army of the Cumberland, commanded by General Rosecranz. After joining the army there, we kept on marching through the country until we got near the rebel army, commanded by General Bragg. For several days we kept moving around to get in position for a great battle. We all knew that a battle would soon be fought, but we did not know when it would come on. The thirtieth day of December, however, we became certain that there would be a battle the following day. I tell you I was very nervous that night. I did not know how I would act under fire. I talked with several of the boys, who visited our regiment, and who had been in several battles, and asked them how they felt. They told

me that the noise and tumult of the battle did not always produce the same effect on all the men. Some men would get frightened and want to run away. Others would become so desperate and so furious that the officers had great difficulty in holding them back. They all told me, however, that the best thing to do was to keep cool and not get excited. I was so afraid that I would be a coward, disgrace myself, my family and my nationality, that I took out the old house-poster that mother gave me when I left home and read a few pages in that. I then felt very much better and went to sleep, determined to be a man on the following day and hold my ground.

"As is usual, the first thing we did in the morning after eating breakfast, was to attend religious services, which were held in all the regiments by our chaplains. We boys all understood that we were going into battle that day. Before the chaplain had finished his prayers, the minie balls began to whistle through the trees about us. The officers all jumped up and ordered us to fall in line. We all thought when the chaplain came to the end of his prayer, that he said, "Aim Low," instead of "Amen." Whether he did or not I do not know, but we all lay down in line, with our guns ready to shoot.

"Soon we saw coming down the hill a line of gray men shouting, with waving of caps and swords. The officers came on first and some on horseback were urging their men forward. We all lay quietly waiting for them. When they got within shooting distance the order came clear and distinct:

"Fire!" We all fired. Then the smoke got so

thick around us we could not see a thing. We could hear only the rebel yell. We loaded our guns and fired again in the direction of the yell. Soon the shooting became general and the noise was so great that we could hardly hear the orders of the officers. Soon we saw the men in gray only a few rods in front of us. We kept on loading and firing as fast as we could. Every time we fired a volley we could see the rebel lines waver and fall back. Soon they came back, but we kept them away from us until three o'clock in the afternoon. Then there was a heavy cannon fire kept up for about an hour. The shells were bursting all around us.

"I never shall forget the hissing noise that those shells made as they struck the trees and the ground about us. Then everything became quiet. The officers, however, knew what was coming next, for the order came along the line to fix bayonets. The shout went up along the line: "The rebs are going to charge us with fixed bayonets!"

"On they came. We reserved our fire until they came close. Oh, what a desperate charge they made! Again we fired. The rebel line seemed to crumple up. Some of them, however, kept on. We gave them another volley and they wavered and soon fell back.

"Some of our boys got up on their feet, waved their hats and shouted. Then came the order to charge. We all got up with fixed bayonets, and ran forward. We had not gone very far, probably ten rods, when we were ordered again to lie down. The rebels had reformed and had been reinforced by the

reserves. Again we were ordered to fire. This time the rebel line came within a few rods of us. Some of the rebels were right in amongst us. A hand to hand fight then began. Two regiments to the right of us were driven back. We held our ground, but in a short time we were ordered to fall back to keep in line with the other regiments.

"We went back to the first place we had held. We finally succeeded in driving them back again. By this time it was beginning to get dark and the rebels did not come back that evening. As the rebels retreated, I was ordered forward on the picket line, where I stayed till midnight before I was relieved. I could see the rebel campfires in the hills in front of us. We were so near the rebel picket line that we could hear them talk.

"The second day we did not see much of the enemy. There was a lull in the fighting, neither side making any charges.

"Early the third morning, however, we heard that we were to make a charge. We filled our canteens with water and put rations in our knapsacks for twenty-four hours. We started for the enemy at seven o'clock. Our batteries had begun at six o'clock to throw shells into the rebel camp. We could hear them hiss as they flew over our heads.

"The first sight we had of the rebels was their scrimmage line, but they did not stop very long. They shot off their guns and ran when we came up. On we went over fences and rocks and hills, and through the woods. This time the battle did not last quite so

long. After two hours fighting, the rebel line began to give way and you may believe we were not slow in following them. Our regiment took three hundred prisoners. We followed them up all afternoon. We were then about five miles from our camp, so we camped outdoors that night.

"It was a great victory. Some of the officers told us that it was the greatest victory the Union army had gained since the beginning of the war.

"The following morning we were all ordered up early to bury the dead and I want to say it was a gruesome job. Twenty were killed in our regiment, but not one of the killed was from our town, so you would not know them. Tom Fullerton was shot in the shoulder, but the bone was not injured, so he will recover soon.

"We got up early in the morning, and, as we got on the battlefield, we saw two men who were stealing valuables from the corpses. Another fellow and I gave chase to them. When they saw us, they started to run, and one of them dropped something. I picked it up and found that in the package was a gold locket and a gold watch. I mail today those two articles to you. The gold locket is for Hjalmar, and the gold watch for Mabel. I am sending them home because it is impossible to find out where the men had gotten them.

"The 15th Wisconsin regiment, composed entirely of Norwegians, as you know, was also in the battle. I went to their camp a few days ago and had a nice visit with some of them. I found that Iver Ericson

from Rio was in the regiment. You will remember that he is the same fellow that worked one year for Donald McGregor. We have been told that from here we are going to march North through the state of Tennessee. Please let brother Ingebret get this letter, so he can read it to mother and father. I am well and feeling fine. Your good friend,

Peter Aspelund."

Chapter XV.

GREAT SUSPENSE.

The old government trail, that we have described as running from Milwaukee to Portage, would hardly be recognized now by one who had seen it in the late forties. It had been preserved as a public highway, but had been straightened out here and there, so as to conform as nearly as practicable to the section lines. Green fields of waving grain and pasture lands, well stocked with cattle and horses, could be seen on either side. The road-bed itself had been turnpiked and covered with gravel. Here and there large farm houses had been built, surrounded by beautiful lawns, shaded with maple and elm trees.

Colonel Stevens had built a beautiful home and torn down the old log house that had served him in the pioneer days. Mabel had grown from a mere slip of a girl into a tall and graceful young woman. She was a brunette with dark blue eyes and a clear complexion, her cheeks glowing with health and beauty.

One day Mabel was seated at the table in the living room writing. As Mrs. Stevens came into the room, Mabel threw her pen angrily on the table and stretched herself back in the chair, with her hands clasped around the back of her head.

"I am so tired," said Mabel, "of this nasty war. I

wish the rebels would all go home and let their niggers go. It seems to me they ought to know enough to do that without being forced by our Northern boys."

"What is the matter now, Mabel?" remarked Mrs. Stevens. "Why this outburst of passion? You know that nobody can help it and it won't do any good to get angry about it. I'd like to know what's the occasion for such talk."

"Why, mother, I have just been writing a letter to Peter Aspelund—I should have said Lieutenant Aspelund—and I don't know where to address it, for who knows where General Rosecrans' army will be when this letter reaches Tennessee?"

"Why, my dear girl," said Mrs. Stevens, "just address it to Chattanooga or Nashville and put the company and regiment on, and you know he will be sure to get it. But, my dear girl, what did you write to Peter?"

"I told him all about our new house, mother; about our beautiful parlor and sitting room, and that father has been to Milwaukee and bought some very nice furniture. I told him about the new dressers in our bedrooms, our sofas and our upholstered chairs in the sitting room and parlor. I also told him that father has bought me a new organ and that Mrs. Segelbaum gives me music lessons twice a week. I told him that I could already play 'Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching' and 'Old Black Joe' just as well as his regiment band; then I told him I had walked all over his farm one day and found nothing but thistles and burdocks growing on it. I am going to

send him one of the last photographs that I had taken. I know he won't recognize me and I wager he will ask in his next letter whose picture it is. Won't that be funny? You know, mother, when Peter left I was just a little girl. I was only fourteen years old and now I am nearly seventeen."

As she was talking, somebody rapped. Mrs. Stevens opened the door, and there stood Atle Summere. Atle looked grave as he spoke.

"I am afraid, Mrs. Stevens," said he, "that I bring you bad news."

Mabel, hearing what he said, jumped up nervously and put her handkerchief to her face. "Has Peter been killed?" she asked.

"I don't know whether he has been killed or not," said Atle, "but I am afraid it might be either killed or wounded."

"What do you know?" asked Mrs. Stevens; "tell us all."

"Donald McGregor and I each took a load of wheat to town today and while we were there, we heard that a great battle had been fought at Chickamauga; that Peter's regiment was in the fiercest fighting. There were a hundred killed and two hundred wounded. It seems that his regiment was in General Thomas' division on Snodgrass Hill; that it withstood the charges of the rebel army all afternoon. But they saved the Union army," said Atle, with a flash in his eye and a shake of his head. "Peter was a good boy and if he died, I know he covered himself with glory. That boy had good stuff in him."

Mabel had fallen back in her chair. She laid her head on the table and sobbed.

"What, what!" exclaimed Atle, "You must have thought a good deal of Peter."

Mrs. Stevens was trembling, but she steadied herself against the corner of the table, "Oh, yes," said she, "Mabel always considered Peter as an older brother."

"Oh," said Atle, "Peter may be all right for all we know. There have been no casualty lists as yet. Never borrow trouble. I was going by and wanted to tell you the news."

Next day Tom Swinton went to the postoffice for the mail, and in the evening the neighbors gathered at the Colonel's house to hear the news. As he came through the little gate with the newspaper in his hand, Tom said that there was a casualty list, but that Peter's name was neither among the dead nor the wounded. This made the little group more cheerful.

The Colonel read aloud the account of the battle. When he read about the great charge that the Fifteenth Wisconsin had made along the Chattanooga road on the first day of the battle, Atle could restrain himself no longer, and shouted to Donald McGregor:

"That's the kind of fighters, Donald, the Norwegians are!"

Donald smiled and said, "I guess they are just as good as the Scotch Highlanders."

They found, however, that Terence McNamara, a neighbor boy in Peter's regiment, had been wound-

ed. After giving the casualty list, the paper stated that all the casualties had not yet been definitely ascertained. Again there was gloom in the little gathering.

"Wait a minute," said Donald McGregor, "you must all remember that Peter is a lieutenant, and I am sure if anything had happened to him they would have found it out immediately. My opinion is that Peter is safe."

To this Atle Sunmere assented. Their words carried with the little crowd, for they all knew that Donald had seen service in the British Army in India and that Atle had served in the Norwegian army in 1848 in the Danish-Prussian War. How badly Terence McNamara was wounded they did not know. The only thing to do was to wait for further particulars.

That night Donald and Atle went to the home of Terence McNamara, told the family the news and comforted them the best they could. No further news was received for several days. In the course of a week, the McNamara family received a letter from the headquarters of the regiment, stating that Terence McNamara had received a shell wound between the hip and the knee on his left side; that he was doing well, and the doctors expected to save his leg. But no news came from Peter.

On the following Sunday, Tosten and Ingebret Aspelund, who lived near the postoffice, drove into Atle's yard. Atle knew it meant that they had heard from Peter, and as he walked down the little hill to

where they were sitting in the buggy, he shouted, "Have you heard from Peter?"

Both Tosten and Ingebret answered at the same time, "Yes, we have a long letter from Peter. He is all right."

Old Tosten shook his head and said, "Oh, Atle, that was a great battle. Think of all the men that were killed and wounded!"

"We must take this letter right over to Colonel Stevens' house," said Atle; "I am afraid there is someone over there that is worrying more than we are."

"Who is that?" asked Ingebret.

Atle laughed, "Why, don't you know, there's a young girl over there who has been crying all the time since she heard of the battle?"

"You mean Mabel," said Tosten. "Yes, she seems to think a great deal of Peter."

"And a prettier girl I never saw," said Ingebret.

Chapter XVI.

CHICKAMAUGA.

There was great rejoicing at the home of Colonel Stevens when they heard that Peter was safe. That evening a group of the neighbors again gathered at the Colonel's house to listen to the news from the front. Colonel Stevens took Peter's letter and looked it over. "This is a very long account of the battle," said he. "It is remarkable that Peter could find the time so soon after the great battle to write such a long letter."

Everybody became quiet and the Colonel read:

"Army of the Cumberland,
Chattanooga, Tenn., Sept. 24, 1863.

"My dear father:

By the time you get this letter you will undoubtedly have read in the newspapers of the great battle of Chickamauga. It is claimed here in the army that it is the greatest battle of the war that has been fought so far. My regiment was in the hottest part of the battle for almost a whole day. Our captain and one of our lieutenants were killed. Yesterday I was promoted to captain of the company. I never got a scratch in the battle.

"We are now encamped along the Tennessee

River in Chattanooga. I knew you would be anxious to hear from me right away, but I was so tired and fagged out that I could not write you any sooner.

“My regiment was in General Thomas’ division and we held the position on the crest of Snodgrass Hill. We were at the rear on the left wing. The main part of the Union army was in front of us. On the evening of the 19th of September we could overlook the line of the Union army on the left wing. About a quarter of a mile from where we were was the Chattanooga road. The boys seemed to think that the hardest fighting would take place along this road, for the rebel army was on its way back to capture Chattanooga.

“As I looked over the line, I saw that Colonel Heg’s brigade was stationed squarely across the Chattanooga Road. I soon recognized the boys in the Fifteenth Wisconsin. After the battle of Murphreesborough I met Captain Tufte from Pine Lake and Captain Nelson from the Rock River Settlement. Captain Tufte spoke of you, father, and said he knew you very well. I think he is one of the finest officers in the Army of the Cumberland. He stands six feet two inches, broad shouldered and straight. He looks like a giant, which he is. He told me that in the wrestling bouts they had in the regiment nobody yet had been able to throw him. I could see him as he was walking up and down in front of his company talking to his men.

“Colonel Heg was very conspicuous riding on his white charger. During the forenoon word was passed along the line that Colonel Heg had received

orders to charge the enemy along the Chattanooga Road. Some of the boys laughed when they heard it. Some shouted, "The Norwegian coffee bloats are no good! Let the American boys do the job!"

"Others retorted, 'Let the Norwegian boys at them! They will down the Johnnies!'"

"I became very much excited. I was afraid maybe the boys in the Fifteenth Wisconsin might fail, and what a shame and disgrace it would be on the Norwegian nationality!"

"All at once they were getting ready to charge. Colonel Heg rode in front of the line, pointing with his sword at the enemy. How fine they looked as they marched forward in perfect order! Not a man faltered. They walked as though they were on dress parade. I could see them as they came in range of the rebel guns. A cloud of smoke came from the rebel line. I could see nothing but smoke. The enemy soldiers were lying flat on the ground. I lost sight of the Fifteenth Wisconsin. I could see nothing but smoke and hear nothing but the rattling of the musketry. As the smoke rolled away, I put my hand over my eyes. I was afraid to look. I feared that Heg had fallen.

"But efter awhile I looked again. Heg was still in the saddle. The men were lying on the ground. I could see them reloading their guns. Heg was giving orders to his officers and directing the fire of the men. He seemed to be all over the ground where his men were stationed.

"Again they got up and ran forward. There were no stragglers that came to the rear. At last I lost

sight of them. The roar of the batteries became intense. After awhile two Illinois regiments wheeled around and started down the road after Heg's brigade. I wondered what was the matter. Could it be that the Fifteenth Wisconsin had faltered? I saw no stragglers. The Illinois regiments followed in the tracks of Heg's brigade. Could Heg's brigade have been surrounded and taken prisoners? Nobody seemed to know. Shells began to drop around us on Snodgrass Hill. Every now and then stray minie balls whined in the air above us. Soon somebody shouts, "The Union boys are coming back!"

"I looked down the road and saw some Union soldiers running back from the battle field. At first I thought it was Heg's brigade, but as they came nearer I recognized the two Illinois regiments. My anxiety now became intense. I wondered what had become of the Fifteenth Wisconsin. Soon three fresh Union regiments marched down the road to the front. By this time we were being attacked on our right. Longstreet and Joe Wheeler had cut through the Union line to our right. They were coming up the hill with a rebel yell and we prepared to meet them.

"We reserved our fire until they were within ten rods of our line. Then we shouted, 'Fire!' Oh, what a slaughter there was in the rebel ranks! Our boys loaded again. About half the rebels kept coming. Another volley and the line reeled and broke. We followed them down the slope and the rebels ran back into the woods. We were ordered to again take our position on the crest of Snodgrass Hill. All the after-

noon and the following day the rebels charged against our line on the hill. Our colonel told us that we must hold our ground or we would all be taken prisoners, and the Army of the Cumberland would be annihilated. We held our ground and we took several rebel prisoners. But, oh, what a slaughter! The side of the hill was covered with the dead bodies of Union and Rebel soldiers. You could walk along on the corpses without touching the ground.

"That afternoon Rosecrans went back to Chattanooga. Sheridan's division was cut off, but on the morning after the battle we were safe in Chattanooga. We had held our ground better than we knew. We had stopped Bragg from taking Chattanooga.

"The next morning I met Colonel Johnson of the Fifteenth Wisconsin. He told me that Colonel Hans Heg had been mortally wounded and that he had died the night before. He told me also that the Fifteenth Wisconsin had held their ground; that the other regiments that had been sent to support them had fallen back, but that the Norwegian boys stayed on the firing line.

"Isn't that grand?" said Colonel Johnson, as he shook his fist. I also met a young man from the 15th Wisconsin by the name of Albert E. Rice,* who enlisted from Stoughton. He is a very fine young fellow. I think I shall see more of this regiment if we stay in Chattanooga some time, which now seems probable.

*Albert E. Rice moved to Minnesota after the war, engaged in the banking business at Willmar, and was subsequently elected lieutenant governor of that state.

General Bragg's army has surrounded us in Chattanooga and we hear that General Grant is coming to relieve us.

"Take this letter when you get it to Colonel Stevens' home and let him read it. With love to you and mother, I am, your affectionate son,

Peter Aspelund."

Chapter XVII.

THE SOLDIER RETURNS.

The children of the Norwegian pioneers learned to speak the English language without an accent. Their playmates were Yankees, some Irish, Scotch and German. Their thoughts, their education, their ideals were American. The Norwegian settlers were strongly in favor of educating their children. None of them had had the opportunity of obtaining an education in the higher branches of learning. In Norway they had learned the three R's. They were industrious readers, and in intelligence were probably above the average. When William O. Aspelund had graduated from the nearby village school, Ingebret, his father, sent him to the State University at Madison. William was bright and had formed a determination early in life to become a lawyer.

One who had seen Atle Sunmere's log cottage in the little clearing would hardly now recognize the place. Atle had prospered in the new world. He was a good carpenter and in the early days of his pioneer life had earned considerable money by building houses and barns for his neighbors. He had cleared up all the level land and had bought more. He had built a large new barn and other outhouses. He

still, however, lived in the little log cabin. Thora had planted wild grapes by the front porch. These had grown so that the whole front of the house was covered with wild grape vines. On the whole, the place looked inviting and hospitable.

The War of the Rebellion was drawing to a close. Peter had been promoted to the rank of captain. His regiment had gone with General Sherman through Georgia on his march to the sea. While camping on the low, marshy ground about Savannah, he had contracted rheumatic fever and was ill in the hospital for several weeks. Not until the first part of February was he considered well enough to leave the hospital. He was still weak from the effects of the fever, which had not yet entirely left him, and he applied for a furlough, so that he might return to his home in Wisconsin for rest and recuperation.

Peter's joy was great at the thought of returning home to his father and mother and of seeing Mabel and the Stevens family. He pictured to himself the delight in being able to tell the Colonel of his many experiences in the great war. He knew that Mabel and Mrs. Stevens would be overjoyed on receiving the letter telling them that he would soon be home again. He was advised by his doctor, however, that he was still too weak to start on such a long journey; that it would be necessary to wait two or three weeks before starting. Oh, how the time dragged! He counted the days to the time when he should board a boat for home. He could not travel by rail, for the rebel army still held Richmond and the sur-

rounding country. He was to go by water to Baltimore; from there by rail to Chicago.

* * *

In the little settlement in Wisconsin, changes had taken place. Colonel Stevens was dead. He had been laid to rest in the little churchyard on the hill, on the banks of the little stream. Mrs. Stevens and Mabel were greatly depressed at the Colonel's death. Mabel felt as though she were alone in the world. They had received a short letter from Peter that he was sick in the hospital. They feared they might never see him again. Mabel felt that, if Peter returned, she would be happy once more. Several weeks flew by, but she received no letter.

The interest of the neighbors in the war had subsided. There were no more meetings at the Stevens home to get the news from the front. Everybody seemed to know that the great struggle would soon pass into history.

One day, as Tom Swinton drove by, Mabel knew he came from the postoffice. She was at the window watching for mail. Tom waved his hand at her—he had a letter. Mabel rushed to the door and ran out to the little gate where Tom had stopped.

He shouted, "A letter from Peter! the postmark is Savannah."

Mabel's hand shook with excitement. She recognized Peter's handwriting on the envelope. "Thank you, Tom," she said, as she ran back through the gate.

"I hope he's all right," shouted Tom after her.

"I hope he is," replied Mabel, attempting to conceal her emotions.

As usual, Peter had addressed the letter to the Colonel. By this time Mrs. Stevens had come to the window. She opened the door as Mabel came on the porch and stretched out her hand for the letter.

"Is it from Peter?" she asked.

"Yes," answered Mabel; "it is in his handwriting."

"Open the letter and read it," said Mrs. Stevens.

"No, mother, you read it." Her eyes were fastened on the letter in her mother's hands. Her mother read:

"Dear Colonel Stevens:

Today I came from the hospital. I am at a hotel in Savannah. The fever has about left me. I have a furlough from the commanding officer to return home for rest and recuperation. I am feeling pretty well, but as yet am very weak. The doctor thinks I will not be able to travel for two or three weeks. Am going from here by boat to Baltimore, from there by train to Chicago, and expect to be home by the middle of April. When completely recovered, I shall return to my company. I do not believe a letter will reach me before I leave.

Your affectionate friend,

Peter Aspelund."

When Mrs. Stevens looked up, Mabel's face was buried in her hands and she was sobbing. On recovering herself, she said, "Mother, I am so glad, I had to cry."

Chapter XVIII.

RETURNING FROM THE WAR.

The spring of 1865 was late. The snow was still on the ground, and the rivers and creeks were still covered with ice. The snow was beginning to melt, however, and the roads were covered with water, slush and chunks of ice. Traveling through the country was very difficult. Peter Aspelund, with Jeff, a young colored man, stepped off the train at his home station. He had fifteen miles to travel before reaching the home of his father and mother. He wore a dark blue uniform with the shoulder straps of a captain; over this he had a light blue army overcoat. His face was thin and pale.

Jeff carried their baggage out on the platform. Peter asked him: "How are we going to get into the country? The roads look pretty bad."

Jeff shrugged his shoulders, and with a grin remarked, "Dunno, Massa Peter, suppose we get a team of horses in dis yer town. How far do we have to go?"

"Fifteen miles."

After a while they secured a driver and a team. The baggage was loaded into the buggy, and soon they were on their way to Peter Aspelund's home.

Peter noticed that a great many changes had taken place while he had been gone. A number of new houses had been built and the country generally had been much improved.

In spite of the bad roads, they reached the Aspelund homestead by three o'clock in the afternoon. Peter's brother Ingebret was splitting wood near the house. As Peter stepped from the buggy, Ingebret walked toward him, and recognizing Peter's thin face, he shouted, "Peter has come!"

The first thing Peter said was, "Ingebret, do you know me?"

Ingebret laughed and said, "You look pretty pale and weak, but Peter, I knew you when you stepped out of the buggy."

Peter and Ingebret walked side by side to the house. Tosten and Aaste were on the porch. Peter clasped his mother in his arms and covered her face with kisses, while the tears streamed down her face.

"For three years," said Aaste, "I have prayed for this moment. Thank God, it has come at last! You are so pale, Peter; are you well?"

"Yes, mother," said Peter, "I am feeling fine. How could I help feeling good now that I have seen you?"

"Who is the man you have with you?" asked Tosten.

"He is my hired man," said Peter, "his name is Jefferson Davis, but we call him 'Jeff'! Here, Jeff, is my father, mother, and brother."

Jeff smiled broadly and bowed politely to the three.

"Jeff," continued Peter, "was a slave down in Tennessee. He joined the army, and I took him to cook for me and some of the other officers. When I was taken sick he followed me to the hospital, and nursed me till I got well. He is a very faithful boy. When I left for home Jeff did not like to stay in the South and asked to come home with me."

"We have plenty of work for him," said Tosten. "It has been very hard to hire anybody to work during the war. I am glad you brought him, Peter. We have bought another eighty of land."

Aaste asked Peter if he had been wounded in battle.

"No," replied Peter, "nothing has hit me but the rheumatic fever."

As they were talking in front of the house, Nels Holtan drove by. He stopped his horses and shouted:

"Lee has surrendered! The war is over."

"When did you hear that?" asked Peter.

"I just came from the postoffice," answered Nels; "they told me down there."

This brought great joy to the little group. Peter went out to the road and greeted Nels. That afternoon was reunion time for the Aspelund family. Peter wished to know where William was and Ingebret told him that William was in town attending High School and that in the fall he expected to attend the State University.

When it was five o'clock, Peter asked Ingebret to

take him up to Colonel Stevens' house. Ingebret soon drove up with the horses, for now the horses had taken the place of the old ox team.

"What has become of the old ox team?" asked Peter. "Where are Duke and Dime, as we used to call them?"

"We sold them two years ago," said Ingebret. "The oxen got to be too slow for us."

They soon came to Colonel Stevens' house; and what a change had taken place here since Peter left it three years ago! The old house had been torn down, and a new one stood on the old site; a large roomy porch, with heavy pillars, faced the old government trail. The lawn had been made larger; the evergreen trees and the mountain ash that he had helped the Colonel to plant had grown into trees; there were lilac bushes, the locust and the walnut.

"What a beautiful place!" exclaimed Peter as they drove into the yard. The front of the house appeared to be vacant, so Peter ran around to the kitchen door. As he walked up the steps the door flew open, and there stood Mabel in her kitchen apron.

Before Peter went to the war, he and Mabel had concealed, as far as they were able from the outside world, their affection for each other. Now Peter could restrain himself no longer. He grasped Mabel in his arms and pressed her to his bosom. The long suspense was over.

Mrs. Stevens came out and welcomed Peter back to their home. They talked and chatted late into the evening. When Peter arose to go, Mrs. Stevens

asked him to stay there all night. Ingebret drove home alone and Peter stayed with the Stevens that night.

The next day it was agreed by Peter and Mabel that they should get married in the little church a week from the following Sunday. To this Mrs. Stevens willingly consented.

Soon the other boys that had left with Peter began coming back from the war. Only one of them had been killed in battle. Several had been wounded and some had died in the hospital. Soon soldier uniforms became common; not only the soldiers, but others also wore them, for the government sold a large number of them to civilians. Some wore them to church, some when they went to town, and others used them for working clothes. Wherever there was a group of men, there would always be seen soldier clothes.

Chapter XIX.

SORROW.

It was spring. The settlers were beginning to get ready to plow and sow their fields. Some of them were busy gathering the sap in the sugar bushes, as they were called, and boiling it down till it became syrup and sugar. The air was mild and spring-like.

A man was riding through the country on horseback. He seemed very much excited. He stopped at every farm house, staying only a moment at each place. He was from a neighboring town and was spreading the news that Abraham Lincoln, president of the United States, had been assassinated. No sadder news had ever passed around the little settlement. Strong men shed tears, others cursed, old women prayed for the safety of the country. Every one felt that a great man had passed away, that the best friend they had in all the world was dead. The men quit working and came in from the fields; they gathered together with their neighbors and talked about the great calamity that had befallen the nation. In the face of a calamity of this character, the people could do nothing but show their love for their fallen leader.

The morning following the sad news, Atle Sunmere arose early. He went out and did his chores. When he came back Thora had breakfast ready. Atle sat down at the table and said nothing, but appeared to be sad and much troubled about something.

"What is the matter, Atle?" asked Thora. "You look so sad and troubled. Are you still cast down over the news of the assassination of Mr. Lincoln?"

"Yes," said Atle, "I feel very bad about it, but there is another thing that is troubling me very much. I had such a peculiar dream last night. I dreamed I was with my father; I thought he stood beside my bed and beckoned to me. Then I woke up. I went to sleep again and then I dreamed I was back in my old home in Norway. I thought I walked down the little hill from our house with my father. We went into the old stable and there I saw the old sorrel horse that I thought so much of when I was home in Norway. Then I awoke, but I could not go to sleep again, so I went out to do my chores.

"That means that you will get some news from your old home," said Thora.

"Yes," said Atle, "I am afraid that something has happened to my father."

"Maybe he is coming over here to live with us," said Thora.

Atle shook his head sadly and said, "No, I am afraid I'll never see him again."

That day Atle received a letter from his old home. His father, Halvor Sunmere, had died. His mother had written the letter. Before he died he had told

Sigrid to go to America when he was gone and live with Atle and Thora. His last words were:

"Give my blessing to Atle, Thora, and all the children." Atle's mother wrote further that she was going to take Halvor's advice and come to America. Maren and Inger would come with her. They were planning on holding an auction soon and selling their goods. They hoped to be able to sail by the first of May. They did not know how long it would take them to come to Milwaukee, but they would write a letter as soon as they landed in New York.

"That is what my dream meant," said Atle. "It is very sad and painful to lose my father, even though I had not hoped to see him again. I know the best friend I ever had or ever will have is dead. I feel so sorry for my mother. It will be difficult for such an old person to make the trip across the Atlantic."

Thora comforted Atle with the thought that he would have his mother with him for the remainder of her life and that he would soon see his two sisters, one of whom had been a mere baby when he left Norway.

That summer Atle tore down the old log house and built a beautiful large frame house in its place. A large apple orchard grew in front of the new house. On the lawn were planted the evergreen, the locust and the mountain ash. The ox team had given place to horses. When they went to church they rode in a buggy instead of the lumber wagon. The work on the new house was pushed forward rapidly so as to have it ready when his mother should arrive. In

July he began to look for a letter from his mother, but none came. Time went on and it was August, but no news from his mother. The latter part of August he received a letter written by his sister Maren. It made Atle very sad when he read it. Maren informed him that his mother had died in quarantine in New York harbor. She had contracted a disease prevalent on the ship, from which she had died. She had been laid to rest in a little cemetery in New York, where unknown immigrants were buried. She said that she and Inger were well and were ready to start for Chicago and expected to be in Milwaukee in three or four days. Atle's cup of sorrow was now filled to the brim. In the course of three months he had lost by death three persons who were among those he most dearly loved—President Lincoln, his father and mother.

Chapter XX.

ADVANCED EDUCATION.

Hjalmar Summere was now fourteen years old. He had gone through all the branches taught in the little school house in his home town. His teachers had looked upon him as the bright boy in school. His mind was keen and quick to grasp the problems he had met in the district school. Physically he was strong, active and robust. Hjalmar had become a favorite, not only with his teachers, but also with the parents and pupils in the district generally. He was now pleading with his parents to send him to the village school, where he could take up advanced studies. They gave their consent, and it was determined he should enter the school in the fall. A neighbor boy was to accompany him, and they were to board themselves. A room was procured and the two boys started out on Saturday for the fall term of school in the village. They brought with them from home such provisions as could be readily prepared for the table by the boys themselves.

Helen McGregor, a little younger than Hjalmar, and another girl, entered the same school, at the same time as Hjalmar and his friend. They also were to board themselves. Every Friday afternoon some

one of the parents of these children would bring them home to spend Saturday and Sunday with their own people and replenish their stores of provisions for the following week. In this way the children had a good time and the school year flew rapidly by.

Hjalmar and Helen were in the same class. They were both preparing to enter the State University at Madison. Their life at the village school was uneventful, but pleasant. It was in the spring of the fourth year, just before their graduation, that the Sunmere family were visiting at the home of Donald McGregor. Helen and Hjalmar were studying botany. They were out hunting through the woods and fields for specimens of plants and flowers that they were required to present to their teachers on graduation day. A few miles from the McGregor homestead was a wide stretch of forest that had not been occupied by settlers. The little stream that flowed by McGregor's home wound its way in a deep ravine through this forest. The trees grew so thick and so large in these woods that the people had named it the Black Woods.

On this Sunday Hjalmar proposed to Helen that they take their botany cans and follow the stream down into the Black Woods where, he said, they would be sure to find rare specimens that the other scholars would not have. So down the stream they strolled until they reached the large dark wood. After following the ravine for some time, Hjalmar told Helen that he would go on top of the bluff where he knew he could find some rare specimens. While

Hjalmar climbed up the steep sides of the ravine, Helen sat down and counted and arranged the specimens in her can. She had not sat very long before three or four young animals, which she thought were little kittens, came playing around the log where she was sitting. They came up to her and one of them climbed into her lap. She petted and caressed them and admired very much their long, beautiful fur and the cute antics and capers they cut up about her feet. All at once she heard a terrible growl; she turned and there stood a large wildcat only a few rods away, ready to spring; her green eyes sparkling like balls of fire. Helen uttered a loud scream, dropped the kittens and backed away from the animal.

Hjalmar was not far away. Hearing the scream, he came bounding down the hill with a large club in his hand. He alone realized the danger of the situation.

"Run behind that large oak!" he shouted. As Helen ran she shouted back to Hjalmar:

"Don't kill the kittens' mamma!" Hjalmar advanced towards the wildcat. On perceiving him, the cat backed up slowly, snarling and snapping with her teeth. Again Hjalmar shouted to Helen to run as fast as she could up stream, which she did. Hjalmar stood still for some time and watched the wild animal. By this time she had succeeded in getting her cubs to come back, and she drove them into their hole and herself stood guard on the outside. Hjalmar retraced his steps in the direction where Helen had gone, retaining the club in his hand, all the while

watching the wild cat. On reaching the place where Helen was standing, he saw she was trembling with fright and could hardly talk, for she now realized how imminent had been her danger.

They continued their walk along the bank of the stream for a considerable distance, when Helen suggested they climb the hill and make a short cut for home. This they did and presently were busy collecting specimens—now a pasque flower, now some beautiful violets and then the large white flower of the blood-root. They had their cans full. The sun was near the western horizon. Hjalmar suggested that they had better start for home. They started in the direction they thought would lead to Helen's home, but soon became bewildered. Both were turned around and did not know what direction to take to get out of the forest. Wherever they looked they saw nothing but the giant trees and the green underbrush. The farther they walked, the deeper into the woods, it seemed, they were getting. Helen began to cry. She could not forget her terrible experience with the wildcat. Hjalmar laughed and said he was not afraid; that he wanted to sit down on a log for a few minutes to compose himself; then he knew he would find his way back. After taking a survey of the situation, carefully noting the direction of the setting sun, and concluding the direction of the course of the stream they had followed, Hjalmar pointed in the direction where he thought the McGregor homestead lay. They started out in that direction. After continuing their walk for about an

hour, they struck the public highway. They had not proceeded far along the road when they met Donald McGregor and Atle Sunmere, who were about to begin a search in the woods for the youngsters. After Atle and Donald had given them a little scolding for staying away so long, the two families were soon gathered around the supper table at the McGregors.

Chapter XXI.

WHEAT AND CHAFF.

It has been supposed in times past that education, refinement and culture are the result of several generations and the inter-marriage of the upper classes in society. This theory was to be exploded in America. Very few, if any, from the upper classes in the old country, came into the wilderness of the western continent. The most prominent families in America trace back their lineage to the poor settlers of the early days, who built their homes from the great trees that grew on their own land. The wild life of the pioneer, from whatever country he might hail, seemed to endow his posterity with such power of mind and natural refinement, that they became leaders in the settled communities that followed the pioneer life.

The Norwegian pioneers exemplified this characteristic to a marked degree. Their sons soon entered the colleges and universities; they entered the learned professions and became leaders in finance, trade, and industry. Their daughters grow up educated, cultured and refined women, who would adorn any home with credit.

William O. Aspelund, who was the little immi-

grant boy, Ole, had recently graduated from the University of Wisconsin, both in science and law, and had opened an office in the city of Chicago, where he was attracting some attention in the legal profession. Hjalmar and Helen had graduated from the graded High School, soon after the occurrence narrated in the last chapter. Both stood well in their classes and expected to enter the State University in the fall.

One day, during the summer, Hjalmar visited his grandfather, Tosten, who was now over eighty years old. Tosten delighted to sit for hours and tell Hjalmar of his hunting trips in the mountains of the old country. He told how they would go out in the early spring, and crawl along the sides of the mountains in quest of bears' dens. He would tell how in the fall the large brown bears of Europe would crawl into their holes to sleep all through the winter months and wake up in the spring when the sun thawed the snow off the tops of the hills and sent the water in streams down the mountain sides, into the valleys. And if a bear should wake up during the winter months, he would suck his paws and go to sleep again. When the bears came out of their dens in the spring, they were hungry and ugly, and unless you were quick with the gun or ax they would get you.

Tosten related that, when he was a small boy, only fourteen years old, one time he was walking on a narrow path on the side of a precipice. In the path he met Bruin face to face. He knew that either he

or Bruin would have to fall down into the deep gully below. Bruin raised himself and stood on his hind feet like a man. Tosten knew that in measuring strength with the bear in a wrestling match he would be overpowered and thrown into the abyss, so he loosened the ax from his neck and gave his opponent a powerful blow with the edge of the ax between Bruin's eyes, and had the satisfaction of seeing the powerful animal dashed to death on the rocks below.

"Mother has told me," said Hjalmar, "that when she was a little girl, the young men used to fight a great deal with one another. Did you ever have any fights when you were a young man?"

At this Tosten laughed dryly: "Yes," he said, "I took part in some of those fights, and I might as well tell you about the hardest fight I ever was in. It was in 1812. I was only a young lad, but I was tall, muscular and quick—Oh, how I wish I could jump and kick as I could then!" As he said this, the old man shook his head with a rather sad look on his face. "You know, Hjalmar, that during the Napoleonic wars Norway was a mere province of Denmark. Norway had had peace for nearly five hundred years; the country was prosperous; we had always had plenty to eat. In 1807 British war vessels with an army of 30,000 men sailed into the harbor of Copenhagen and demanded the surrender of the Danish and Norwegian fleets. After some negotiations the two fleets were turned over to the British by the Danish Government. A string of British men of war blockaded the Skagerack, so we could import no

bread stuff from Denmark. Denmark and Norway were lined up on the side of Napoleon. We could get no food from Sweden because that country had joined forces with England against Napoleon. The Norwegians realized they could not get sufficient food and the people were in desperate straits.

“But, my boy, there were brave hearts in Norway in those days, men who did not falter. We got together in southern Norway, for that was where I lived, as many merchantmen as we could and some we built in the shipyards along the coast of Norway. With these vessels we prepared to run the British blockade, get to Denmark and bring back with us into Norway wheat, rye and other grains; for we had plenty of meat in Norway.

“It was on a summer morning in 1812 that I joined the crew on one of the boats. I was to have charge of the cargo. We had as captain Rolf Bolstad, who was as brave a man as ever paced a deck. We doubled the southern cape of Norway late in the evening of the first day. We hove in and anchored for the night in a small bay on the southern coast. The commander of the expedition sent out fishing smacks the following morning to locate the British patrol boats. On their return the following day, we got quite definitely the location of the course we had to take to avoid the British war vessels. The commander ordered us to wait and stay in hiding until a good breeze should blow from the northeast. He also told us to sail our boats as nearly as possible side by side, in a straight line, three knots apart. All lights were

to be put out. The swiftest sailors were to make up the rear, while the slow ones should go through first. Our boat was one of the swiftest, so we were to wait until the others were under way. We were ordered to strike the locality of the British patrol boats between twelve o'clock midnight and three o'clock in the morning.

"We did not need to wait long for a favorable breeze. The second afternoon after we cast anchor we hoisted sail and started for Denmark. The distance across the Skagerack was not great. If we should be successful in crossing the British blockade line, we estimated that we would reach Denmark some time the following day.

"The name of our ship was 'Balder'. Oh, Hjalmar, how she flew through the water! We saw none of our companion ships. When we reached the locality where the British men of war were lying we were all on deck. The 'Balder' was plowing the waves and filling her sails with wind, like a seagull. I whispered to Rolf, the Captain, 'No British boat will catch us tonight.' Suddenly we saw a light on the starboard side,—it was a British patrol boat. The captain veered the boat to larboard; we could see no light in that direction. Soon somebody hailed us from the water. We all lay down on the deck and peered through the gaps of the railing of the boat. 'Straight ahead!' shouted the captain.

"The 'Balder' fairly flew through the water. It was British sailors in a yawl from the patrol ship. There was a crash, every timber in the boat shivered.

We had run down the British yawl. 'Run to the hold!' shouted the captain, 'and see if we are injured.'

"A sailor soon returned saying, 'There is a hole as big as my head in the bow, the water is pouring in.'

"'Man the pumps!'" shouted the captain. The captain and two or three of us went down into the hold. We picked up the sacks that we carried for the grain that we expected to get in Frederickshavn. We succeeded in plugging the hole with the sacks and stemmed the water. The men at the pumps soon cleared the hold of water. The wind was good and in half an hour we had left the British cruiser behind us, so that we were out of danger. We reached Frederickshavn late that afternoon and to our great joy found that the twenty vessels which composed our fleet were all safely anchored in the harbor. While we stood on the deck of the 'Balder' as we were sailing into the harbor, I said to the captain: 'It is too bad, but those English sailors must have gone down.'"

"'Yes,' said Rolf, 'it is too bad, but we had to do it because they are trying to starve our wives and little children.'

"'Yes,' I said, 'war is a terrible thing. We did only what those British sailors compelled us to do.'

"At the dry dock the 'Balder' was repaired and our boat was loaded with grain for the return trip. Again we waited for a favorable wind, this time from the northwest. On our return voyage to Norway we successfully evaded again the British blockade line.

When we were where we thought we were safe, the captain observed through his glass a British schooner bearing down on us.

“‘She is not a swift boat,’ said the first mate, ‘and we can out-sail her.’

“All our sails were hoisted. We steered direct for the Norwegian coast.

“‘She is on us!’ shouted the captain, and as he spoke a cannon ball screamed through the rigging of the vessel. No one was hurt; the ship was untouched. Then came another shot. It went wide of the mark.

“‘We are gaining!’ shouted the captain. After that we could see the cannon balls splash in the water behind us. Soon clouds began to cover the sky and it became dark. Our pilot had kept no reckoning, so we did not know just where we were. The navigator was cautious, some of the sails were reefed, the ‘Balder’ slowed up. The captain threw the lead.

“‘We are near land,’ he shouted to the pilot. Soon we saw the lights of a town. We recognized it as a town on the Swedish coast. The northwest wind had driven us out of our course. The sun had set and it was dark.

“‘We will anchor here and go ashore,’ said the captain. ‘The Swedes will be friendly to us and if there are any Britishers there, they will not know us, at least they will not know we are Norwegians. We will hoist no flag.’

“We left three men in charge of the ‘Balder’; nine of us went ashore in a yawl. The Swedish harbor

was wide and roomy. The 'Balder' was anchored a good mile from the edge of the little town. We passed on our way a British schooner, which was swinging at anchor about two hundred yards from the dock where we landed and secured our boat. In our walk up the street we passed a public house, where we stopped for refreshments. We noticed sitting around some tables about a dozen British sailors, who, we concluded, belonged to the schooner we had seen in the harbor. As we were talking over a glass of ale in the tavern, a Swedish sea captain that both Rolf and I knew, came in. We talked to him for a few moments. I noticed that while we were talking to the Swedish captain one of the British sailors was attentively listening to us. I suspected at once that he understood our language and would give us away to his captain, who was sitting at one of the tables. In this I was not mistaken, for soon after all the British sailors, including the captain and mate, were holding a whispered conversation at the other end of the barroom.

"I acquainted captain Bolstad with the situation and told him that we were recognized by the British sailors as Norwegian seamen and were being observed. The captain answered that we must either fight or run. If we ran, we were liable to lose our boat down at the dock, and the British captain would seize our vessel as a prize. The captain and I passed the word around to our crew that we would have to fight the British sailors. We figured that nine Norwegians could easily lick twelve Britishers. The cap-

tain told the boys that he would take the British captain and I would take the first mate. The Englishmen would start a fist fight, as that was their favorite method of fighting.

“‘We therefore will fight in the Norwegian style,’ said the captain. ‘As the British lean forward to strike, dodge the blow and kick them back of the ear.’

“Soon the British captain, followed by his crew, came up to us. Rolf stepped forward to meet him. The Englishman started in with a tirade of abuse and asked what business ‘you d—— Norwegians have here.’

“Rolf, who talked English well, answered that we had as much business there as they had, ‘and if you don’t think so,’ continued Rolf, ‘you had better try to put us out.’

“At this the Englishman drew back and struck with all his might at Rolf’s head. Rolf, nimble as a cat, dodged the blow, and, as the Englishman leaned forward to recover himself, Rolf kicked him back of the ear and he fell on the floor as though he were dead. I soon laid out the first mate in similar fashion. In a moment the fighting was general, and in about twenty minutes the floor was covered with prostrate British sailors.

“Rolf went to the door, opened it and called to our boys to make for the dock. We reached the dock safely, without being pursued, and were soon on our way to the vessel. On boarding the ‘Balder’ we lifted anchor and set sail for Norway. The moon had risen

and a light breeze was blowing from the east. The following day we sailed into the harbor of Brevik. One of the boys that had been in the fight with the British sailors had received a flesh wound on his left hip. It was an ugly knife cut."

"And did all the Norwegian boys kick their opponents?" asked Hjalmar.

"Most of them did," said Tosten, "but some of them came to close quarters with their opponents and threw them on the floor by sheer force."

"Was America in that war?" asked Hjalmar.

"Yes," said Tosten. "In this country they call it the War of 1812. What the American sailors did to the British on the Atlantic Ocean, we Norwegian boys did to them on the North Sea. The American boys drove British commerce off the Atlantic Ocean. We Norwegian boys drove it off the North Sea. It was due partly to our work in Norway that America was able to make a decent peace with Britain in that war, and I am very glad, Hjalmar, that my son, Peter, could go into the war and defend the flag of this country, that helped us against the British in 1812."

"Were you in the war, grandpa?"

"No, I was not a soldier, but I helped to run the blockade between Norway and Denmark, as I have told you."

"But did anyone in Norway starve on account of this blockade?" asked Hjalmar.

"Not that I know of, although at times they had to mix their wheat flour with flour ground from bark. In northern Norway the Laplanders and the Finns

brought sleigh loads of grain from Sweden. The Swedes were very friendly to the Norwegians, although technically we were at war with them. The Swedes did not enforce the blockade against Norway very strictly. In the course of time, we drove the British patrol boats out of the Skagerack and continued to get all the food we wanted from Denmark."

Chapter XXII.

LOOKING FORWARD.

After Hjalmar returned home from his visit to his grandfather, as told in the preceding chapter, he meditated long and often on the incidents related by Tosten. Never before had he known that his ancestors had helped his own country, America, in the War of 1812. He had always felt so proud of what the American navy did to British commerce in that war. He could not forget that Grandpa Tosten had told him that what the American navy had done to British commerce on the Atlantic Ocean, the Norwegian sailors had done on the North Sea. Hjalmar's grandfather had taught him how to kick, but he had never before showed him how to use the kick in a fight. Young, as he was, Hjalmar could easily stand on the floor and kick the ceiling in his home.

Hjalmar had always looked up to his cousin, William O. Aspelund, and had received much valuable advice from him as to his future education. He was a natural mechanic. As a boy he had made a clock and a steam engine. With very little instruction he had learned to make drawings of machinery. He intended to take the course in mechanical engineering at the University. He had now graduated from the village

high school and was planning to enter the University the coming fall. Helen McGregor and one or two other graduates were also planning to enter the University. Hjalmar and Helen had seen a great deal of each other during the four years they had attended the village high school. Hjalmar, although he thought Helen was by far the prettiest and brightest girl in school, looked upon her only as his girl playmate. He always felt happy in her company and never enjoyed anyone else for a playmate as he did her. This was as far as his thoughts went. Helen, on the other hand, looked upon Hjalmar as something of a hero. He was tall, slender, muscular and quick; he could outrun, outswim, and outplay the other boys at almost any kind of a game; nevertheless, he was popular with his play-fellows. Then, too, Helen thought that Hjalmar was very bright. Study as hard as she would, she could barely keep up with him in his classes. She still looked upon him as her playmate and greatly enjoyed his company.

The summer quickly passed and soon the little group of young people boarded the train in the little village for the State University. It was the first time that Hjalmar had ridden on a train, and he had never seen a city as large as Madison. He came into the old Milwaukee depot late in the evening and took a bus to the men's dormitory on University Hill. William Aspelund had given him instructions where to go.

And such a meeting as there was of the boys coming back from different parts of the state! It was

"Hello, Tom," and "How are you, George?" They slapped one another on the back, laughed and shouted. As the bus rumbled over the brick pavement along the Capitol Park, Hjalmar got a glimpse of the goddesses with lights on their heads lighting up the immense capitol building. Hjalmar was a new student, a prospective freshman; nobody knew him, and, of course, nobody greeted him. Everything looked grand to Hjalmar. They soon reached the foot of University Hill.

"Get off and walk!" shouted the driver. Everybody jumped out and ran up the hill behind the bus. Hjalmar had written for a room in the North Dormitory and had been informed that he could have room No. 41, with another student whom Hjalmar did not know. He had his trunk taken to the room, which he finally located, and found occupied by a young man about his own age. Hjalmar walked in and greeted him. They soon became acquainted. They both were to apply the following day for entrance examinations to the University. His roommate, whose name was John Stewart, had arrived the day before. He had gone down to the University farm and procured straw from the strawstack with which he had filled his bed tick. He asked Hjalmar to sleep with him that night, which invitation was willingly accepted. But Hjalmar got very little sleep that night; some were running up and down the stairs, some shouting "Fire!" and others were giving out most outlandish yells and catcalls. It seemed to Hjalmar as though all the young people in the state

had congregated on the campus and in the dormitories to make the night hideous. In the morning they were awakened by the clanging of a bell near by.

"What is that?" asked Hjalmar.

"That is the seven o'clock bell," answered John; "at the ringing of that bell we are supposed to get up and go to breakfast."

The following day Hjalmar secured board at a students' club, went to the University strawstack, filled his tick, and by night was quite comfortably located. The boys were required to furnish their own rooms. The morning following his arrival, he was called upon by the janitor of the dormitory, Mr. Patrick Walsh, who informed him that the furniture in Room 41 was for sale and could be bought for a reasonable price from him. The room during the previous year had been occupied by two seniors, who had left the furniture with "Pat," as the boys called the janitor, to be disposed of. Hjalmar struck a bargain with Pat for the furniture, so that before the next night he was completely settled in his new quarters.

Chapter XXIII.

REMINISCENCES.

On a certain Sunday morning in May, Captain Peter Aspelund and Mabel Stevens were to be married after service in the little English church. At the appointed time the church was crowded with worshippers. All the boys in Peter's company attended in full uniform. The rector preached that Sunday on war. He took as his text the twenty-third verse of the sixth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: "For the wages of sin is death."

"War," said the preacher, "is death. At no time or under no circumstances does death reap such a harvest as in time of war. It is not only death to the body of thousands of young men in the prime of life and in the strength of youth, but it is also death to the spiritual life.

"We conclude from this and from the text that war comes as a punishment of sin. If the wages of sin is death, war must necessarily be the wage. It makes no difference on which side in war a nation may fight; war is still the greatest calamity that can befall any nation. Of all the misfortunes that have visited the human race since the beginning of history, none has worked the havoc and devastation that

has been worked by war. The destruction by pestilence and famine is insignificant when compared with that brought about by war. The war from which our country has just emerged is the greatest calamity that has ever befallen this nation. The victors and vanquished suffer alike, for none can escape war's blighting influence. Some will say that the South alone was guilty in this matter, and not the North, but, my dear hearers, remember that God is just. He who knows the innermost thoughts of mankind brought this punishment upon the whole nation. In the very inception of our government slavery was left as the one undetermined question in our national constitution. The laws of our country, for which the North was responsible as much as the South, protected slavery. For nearly three quarters of a century the protests against slavery were few and feeble.

“You may not think much of the responsibility of citizenship, but you must not forget that every citizen of this great commonwealth is responsible from a moral standpoint for every law that is enacted in this republic. The holding of persons in subjection either by individuals or by the nation is a wrong and a sin which sometimes must be accounted for by everyone who has consented to it. It is the will and purpose of the great creator of the universe that men should be allowed to live their lives freely and untrammelled by the hand of the tyrant, be such tyrant an individual or a nation. History is full of incidents of one nation conquering another and subjecting it to the most

humiliating and degrading servitude, but do not forget that everyone of those nations has received the wages of sin—death; and so it will be in times to come, the nation that sins, like the individual, must die. Collective sin of a whole nation is not different from individual sin. When the Apostle spoke the words in the text he did not warn anybody; he laid down an immutable law, as immutable as the law of gravity. No greater sin can be committed by individuals or by nations than to rob another person or another people of the God-given right of liberty. The future welfare of our nation will depend on how free we can be from sin. If this people or this nation, by its laws or through its officials, causes suffering and destitution to come to those who are not able to defend themselves, this law, that is laid down by the Apostle in our text, will prove as immutable and as impartial in its punishment of the guilty as in the war that we have just passed through. Let me impress upon all of you that you cannot escape the responsibility of citizenship. You cannot leave the governing of this country to others. If you do, you will suffer for the mistakes that are made. It should be the prayer of everybody that our government may be kept free from sin, in order that our nation may escape the terrible penalty that has been imposed by divine justice on the nations that have gone before us.

“While our government won a great victory over the South, that victory must be used humanely and with toleration. It must not be used to glut our ven-

geance on our erring brethren. Remember that vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and the words of the Apostle who wrote our text, let not the sun go down on our wrath. Let us heal the gaping wounds of rebellion, so that our country can continue to advance to that goal of perfect liberty, equality and fraternity."

The sermon made a deep impression on the little group that was assembled in the church. Few had ever thought that the North had sinned on the slavery question, but when they began to think of the terrible punishment of the war, they realized the truth of the pastor's sermon.

* * *

In the afternoon Peter and Mabel strolled down to the little creek where Peter had saved her from the fangs of the rattlesnake.

"There is where I stood," said Mabel, as she pointed to a bog near the creek.

"Yes," said Peter, "and if I hadn't warned you, you would have stepped where the snake was lying."

"Do you remember all the beautiful cowslips I got?" asked Mabel.

"Yes," answered Peter, "but you dropped them all before I got you up to the house."

After visiting many places on the old farm, "where we used to play when we were little," as Mabel expressed it, they sat down to rest beneath the shade of a little oak tree that grew near the banks of the little creek.

"You were away from us three long years," said

Mabel, "and oh, how lonesome it was! If it hadn't been for the neighbors that came in evenings to talk about the war and listen to the reading of the newspapers, it would have been unbearable."

She then told Peter of the great suspense they had been under when they got the first news of the battle of Chickamauga.

"I want you to tell me something about your different experiences during the three years of service, Peter."

Peter stretched himself out on the grass as though in pain, and then raising himself up and looking steadfastly at Mabel, replied: "I don't like to talk about the war, Mabel, it is too horrible for you and me to think about. I have thought a great deal about what our rector said in his sermon today. War is a frightful thing, and when I think of those poor Southern boys that I saw lying stretched out in death on many a battlefield, I know now how completely they were fooled by somebody who had a selfish interest in the war. I can see those poor boys now as they rushed forward against our deadly gunfire. They were earnest, they were interested, they were brave. They believed, because they had been taught to believe it, that they were fighting for right and that they were driving cruel conquerors from their native states. These Southern boys fought for a lie. It is a lie that we came as conquerors; it is a lie that slavery is right. We happened to be on the right side, Mabel, because we were citizens of the Northern states. There were some good men in the South who knew that those

poor boys were fooled and led astray by the powerful slave holders with their hypocritical cant, and devilish arguments, that they were fighting for their native states, for their liberty, and for the right of perpetuating slavery. Those slave holders were the aristocratic class of the South; they belonged to the upper crust of society. I don't believe, Mabel, that there ever was a war that wasn't brought about by somebody who had a selfish interest to serve. These slave holders were not content with flooding the South with their hypocritical arguments. They spread them all over the North; with these unreasonable, un-Christian arguments they held the North at bay for over forty years. When I think with what ease a powerful and wealthy class can create a false enthusiasm for war among the unthinking masses, I tremble for the future of my country. You know, Mabel, that in the country I came from the people never talked about war. The Norwegian nation has not had what you might call war for five centuries.

"But this country will be rich and prosperous some day. With wealth comes power and with power comes arrogance. When this American nation begins to feel its strength, it will want to do something in the world, and, Mabel, that means war. It is fortunate that we are bounded on each side by a great ocean so wide that the difficulty of crossing it with an army is so great that the American people will never consent to do it, and they can defend themselves easily against anybody that should attempt to attack them either from Europe or Asia."

"But, don't you think, Peter, that you were right in going to the war and fighting the rebels as you did?"

"Oh, yes, Mabel, of course, I believe I was right and I am not sorry that I went, but I believe with our rector that this propaganda for slavery should never have been tolerated by the people of the North. If the citizens of this country from the beginning had confined slavery to the original Southern states and had then carried on a campaign against the immorality of slavery, they could have gotten rid of it without war and bloodshed."

"My father was always against slavery," said Mabel.

"Yes," replied Peter, "if there had been enough people like your father in this country, slavery would have been driven out twenty years ago."

Chapter XXIV.

SIDE LIGHTS.

Jefferson Davis, or, as he was familiarly called, "Jeff," the colored cook that Peter had brought home with him from the war, began, in the spring of '65, to work on the old Stevens farm for Peter. He was very fond of the captain and always addressed him as "Massa Peter." While farm work in the North was somewhat different from what he had been used to doing in the South, he soon mastered the requirements of Northern farm life. He often talked about the great change that had come into his life. Jeff could not at first realize that he was a free man and was working for wages, as the white men were doing. He looked upon Peter not only as his master, but also as his friend. In his heart he felt great gratitude to his new master, because he, with many others, had gone South to risk their lives that he and the other colored people might be free. He looked upon every white man and woman in the North as his benefactor. Another thing which seemed so strange to Jeff was that he was now privileged to sit at the same table and eat with his master and his family. Mrs. Stevens and Mabel did all in their power to make Jeff feel at home in his new surroundings. One eve-

ning after supper, Mrs. Stevens asked Jeff if he could read and write. Jeff shook his head and looked sadly at Mrs. Stevens.

"If you would like to learn," said Mrs. Stevens, "I should be glad to teach you."

At this suggestion Jeff seemed elated. "I certainly would be glad to learn," he said. So Mrs. Stevens brought out the old primer from which Mabel and Peter had read years ago. It was not long before Mrs. Stevens had succeeded in teaching him the alphabet. Then she taught him to count, to add, subtract and multiply small amounts. It was somewhat more difficult for him to learn the multiplication table. To overcome this difficulty, she taught him to sing it to a tune, and Jeff would hum the multiplication table as he milked the cows or cultivated the corn. In the course of a few months, Jeff was able to read little pieces in the primer, and it was wonderful how patient and persevering he was. When Mrs. Stevens had taught him to read his first short piece, he was so delighted to think he could read just like white people, that he kept reading it over and over again until he knew it almost by heart.

Some evenings Mrs. Stevens would tell him stories. Upon finishing a story, she would always add: "Some day, Jeff, if you are diligent, you will be able to read stories yourself out of books." This talk always pleased Jeff very much, for he was very fond of stories. When the family went to the little church on Sunday, Jeff would always drive the horses. He liked to do this because on the plantations in the

South he had always looked up to the coachman, although he was a colored man and a slave. After Jeff had been attending church with the family for some time, he asked if a colored man could belong to the same church that white people belonged to.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Stevens, "God is no respecter of persons. In His sight the soul of a colored man is as precious as the soul of a white man. In heaven all people, of whatever race or color they may be, are equal."

This talk seemed to interest Jeff very much. One day, Mrs. Stevens asked him if he had been baptized. At this he shook his head and said he did not know, so one day the rector of the little church called at the Stevens home. Mrs. Stevens introduced Jeff to him and told him that he was anxious to be baptized and confirmed and belong to the church. The rector pulled out of his pocket a small Calvary catechism and told him he might join their Sunday school and that after a while he could be baptized. Not long after, one Sunday morning, Jeff was baptized in the little church and about a year later he was confirmed. He became a general favorite in the neighborhood. He was always jolly and good natured and could amuse the neighbors by singing old plantation songs.

The second fall after Jeff began working for Peter, Mabel and Mrs. Stevens had invited guests for Sunday dinner. Peter's father and mother and Ingebret, Helge Nelson and his family, and the Sunmeres were to be there. On Saturday night, as Jeff was bringing the milk from the barn, Mabel said:

"Jeff, I wish you would cook the dinner for tomorrow."

Jeff looked up and laughed and said, "I should be very glad to do it. I will show you what kind of dinners we had in the South, but I want you and Mrs. Stevens to stay out of the kitchen and sit at the table with your guests."

This was agreed to by all. That evening Jeff went into the garden and selected the vegetables he wanted. Then he saddled the horse and rode to the country store to buy what he wanted for his Southern dinner. It was to be a chicken dinner.

Sunday morning came and after breakfast Jeff was busy in the kitchen planning and working. Mrs. Stevens gave him one of her aprons and soon the kettles and pots were humming over a bright fire. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that Jeff's dinner was a great success, for he not only cooked the dinner, but served it. In the afternoon he was induced by the company to sing some old plantation songs. This he did to the great enjoyment of all. He rendered "Nellie Gray" so well that he had to repeat it.

Chapter XXV.

INDEPENDENCE DAY.

No national holiday in any country has had such general observance as Independence Day of our great republic. At no time in the history of this nation has interest in that day lagged on the part of the people of the United States. On that day every person, whether rich or poor, whether he lives in the city or country, must go out dressed in his best suit to celebrate the birthday of his country. This day belongs not to the upper class, as most of the holidays do in the European countries, but to the great body of the common people. It seems as though it can never grow old. The Declaration of Independence is read and listened to with as much interest today as at the close of the Revolutionary War. The people can never forget the momentous progress in national life that began on that day. The principles of the Declaration of Independence seem to have woven themselves into every thought and every action of the American people. They look upon it as a great light that will always penetrate the shadows and dark places of their political life. In the country places, where picnics are held on this day, the speakers' platform is never omitted. Orators

have at every recurrence of this day inspired the people with unfaltering hope for the future of the republic.

Our little settlement in the woods was making ready for the Fourth of July celebration. A liberty pole was erected near the little school house and a picnic ground nearby was selected and prepared for the celebration. Notice was given that it was to be a basket picnic. Every family was requested by the committee in charge to make contributions of food for the dinner which was to be served under the spreading trees. Some brought chicken, some cake, some pie, etc., etc. A platform was constructed for those who were to appear on the program. The weather was fine and early in the morning the settlers drove in with their families.

Here is a copy of the program:

Thomas Phillips	Chairman
Invocation	Rev. Nels Hatlestad
Reading of Declaration of Independence	Helen McGregor
Orator of the day	William O. Aspelund
The Star Spangled Banner....	School Children, District No. 4
Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean..	School Children, District No. 3
Old Black Joe	Jefferson Davis

Thomas Phillips had moved into the settlement after the war. He was a strong Union man in Southern Kentucky at the opening of the war and had joined the Union Army. A man from the South, who had stood for Lincoln and the Union during the war, was sure to be popular in the North. It was largely

on this account that Mr. Phillips had been asked to preside on this occasion. Mr. Phillips, in introducing Mr. Aspelund as the speaker of the day, referred to the fact that he was born in a foreign country and had emigrated with his parents to the United States when a small boy; that among the staunchest patriots and supporters of the flag in the crisis just passed through were men who had left their native countries and enrolled themselves as citizens of the great American republic.

“These men,” said Mr. Phillips, “who have chosen America as their country, in preference to their native lands, are among the most loyal and trustworthy citizens of the republic.”

Mr. Aspelund began his speech by a eulogy of the flag. He referred to it as the flag that had been thrown into glory by Washington at Yorktown, that had been planted on the ramparts of New Orleans by General Jackson when he drove a foreign invading army back to the Gulf of Mexico. The flag that had been washed clean from the blot of human slavery in the blood of Abraham Lincoln. The war, said he, had raised the slave to the dignity of American citizenship. The American people will not tolerate inequality of persons within its boundaries. They had rallied to the slogan of Abraham Lincoln, that these United States must be either all slave or all free. The country had leaped forward and made it all free. The American people, though threatened by enemies from without, had never faltered in their purpose from the day when Fort Sumter was fired

upon until the surrender of Lee at Appomattox. "This principle," said the speaker, "must always be adhered to by our country. Never again must we have more than one flag, one country and one class of people. All the people must be equal in opportunity, in political and economic privileges and in their desire for the common good. Never again must selfish interests control the destinies of this free people. We have drawn our inspiration from whatever there was of good in the systems of former centuries. We have been warned by the calamities that have befallen the nations of the past. We have drawn our wisdom from the democracies of Greece. We have culled from the jurisprudence of Rome. Our methods of representative government are gathered from the Teutonic nations. We have profited by the political experience of England. We have worked the gold of political wisdom from the sands wherever it was found. Our forbears have established a government which they believed came nearest to the realization of the political equality of all men. Small republics have existed in the past. They have been usually limited to cantons and their dependencies. America, however, has done something which has never been done before, so far as is known. She has spread a republic over a whole continent and has made it the hope of the world.

"The great problem of the future is: will this great republic last? No popular government can last unless the people individually and as a whole shall always stand guard against selfishness and greed.

So long as we shall have men and women like those who weathered the great storm that burst upon us in 1861, the republic will live. The republic will fall when men shall no longer take interest in the welfare of their country, but shall be silenced and overawed by selfishness and personal advantage.

“We are producing in this country a new nationality that calls every other nation its friend, that has no interest in the diplomatic trickery, the monarchical ambitions and social animosities of the old world.”

The speech was listened to with eager interest by the hardy pioneers of the great West. When the speaker had finished, the applause was enthusiastic and hearty. The program was carried out very creditably by all those who took part. When Jeff had sung “Old Black Joe,” he was lustily encored, whereupon he sang “Massa’s in de Cold, Cold Ground.” The rest of the day was spent by the settlers in sitting under the trees telling stories of their early experiences in the woods.

Chapter XXVI.

HJALMAR MAKES A DECISION.

The Norwegians who emigrated to this country in the nineteenth century had certain well grounded reasons for so doing, aside from economic reasons. While their worldly possessions in the old country were not great, their lives were peaceful, happy and generally contented. Most of them had been reared in the country districts. While they had to work hard, at times, their lives were usually spent out of doors, either on the mountains or on the sea. While the climate of the country was cold in the winter, it was not characterized by great extremes, either of heat or cold. The people usually had plenty to eat,—meat, fish and bread. Their herds of cattle supplied them with an abundance of butter and milk.

The early immigrants were imbued with the thought of getting better educational facilities for their children. To them it appeared better to give their children an education than to give them wealth. All of them could read and, with few exceptions, they could write a legible hand.

Hjalmar was the first child whom Atle and Thora could give a college education. Not much had been said in the home as to what vocation he should fol-

low after he had finished his course at the University. It was after he had mingled with the students at the University that he began to plan his future life. He found that most of his schoolmates were shaping their education along certain lines that they intended to follow after their college days were ended.

About this time there had been provided at the University a course in mechanical engineering. As Hjalmar, since a child, had been much interested in machinery, this course received careful consideration. He soon became well acquainted with his room mate and discussed with him often the advisability of taking up this course. He was still in his Freshman year. His room mate, John Stewart, was preparing for the ministry. John was a bright student, not very aggressive, but rather of a gentle disposition. Hjalmar, on the other hand, was very quick to discern things and had a bold and aggressive nature, but withal was kind and considerate. He and his room mate got along very well together and soon became strongly attached to each other.

One day the two went for a walk along the lake shore back of the University campus. Stewart admired very much the large and beautiful trees that covered the slope, which rose gradually from the shore of the lake.

"I like this kind of tree best," said Stewart, as he pointed to a hard maple, "but I don't know the name of it." Stewart had come from a prairie country in the western part of the state.

"That is a hard maple," said Hjalmar, "it is from the sap of this tree that we make maple sugar."

"And what is the name of that tree with the smooth bark and large round leaves?"

"We call that basswood," quickly answered Hjalmar.

"Do you know the name of all the trees in these woods?" asked Stewart.

"Yes," responded Hjalmar, whereupon he pointed out the different kinds of trees.

"How did you come to learn the names of all the trees?" asked Stewart.

"My father was a woodsman in the old country, and he told me, when I was a small boy, the names of all the trees that grew in the wood down home, for in our settlement trees covered all the land when the settlers first arrived."

Hjalmar then told Stewart that his father and mother had immigrated to this country from Norway and that by descent he was a Norwegian. This amused Stewart very much, for he did not know that he had ever seen anyone of that nationality before. He laughed and told Hjalmar that he had supposed the Norwegians were only half civilized; that they drove reindeer instead of horses, and lived principally on wild bears' meat and fish, and had for houses small huts like those of the Esquimoes. Then it was Hjalmar's turn to laugh and he laughed quite heartily at Stewart's expense.

After strolling along the lake shore for some distance they came to a beautiful thickly wooded

bank, with very thick green grass, which sloped down to the water's edge.

"Let's take a swim," said Hjalmar. To this Stewart assented willingly, and soon the two boys were swimming, diving, and splashing in the lake.

"Your body seems so very white," said Stewart, "I have never seen anybody with such a white skin as you have." At this the two boys stood side by side and compared the color of their bodies.

"And you thought," remarked Hjalmar laughingly, "that the Norwegians were half barbarians."

"But what is it that makes the Norwegians have such a very white skin?"

"Maybe it's because our ancestors came from a country where they have less sunshine."

And so the boys talked and laughed and soon forgot the difference in the color of their bodies. After drying themselves in the sun, they dressed and lay down for a while on the grass.

"What do you intend to do with yourself when you get through with school?" asked John.

"I am going to be a mechanical engineer, and I understand you are going to be a minister of the gospel."

"Yes," said Stewart, "I want to preach every Sunday and try to make people better, so we can have a better world. Now, tell me, what purpose you have in being a mechanical engineer."

"I suppose," said Hjalmar, "that your purpose is also to get a good living, live in a nice house and wear good clothes, as preachers generally do?"

"Oh, yes, you know St. Paul said that they who preach the gospel should live off the gospel. But go ahead and tell me now why you want to be a mechanical engineer."

"For exactly the same reason that you want to preach the gospel. In the first place, I want to earn an honest living by my own exertions; I want to live in a nice house, wear nice clothes, and be able to associate with good people. Further than that, I want to make a better world for people to live in, and I think I can do it better as a mechanical engineer than in any other vocation that I might take up."

At this expression, Stewart smiled as though he were incredulous and, rolling on his side away from his companion, said:

"I am afraid you are fooling yourself; you can't appeal to men's better nature by making machines, Hjalmar. That is something new. If you really want to make this world better, you must go out and talk to the people and teach them how to live clean, honest and virtuous lives. That's the only way you can inspire mankind."

At the conclusion of this speech, for Stewart delivered it as though he were preaching a sermon, Hjalmar rose up and bent over him, as he turned his face to the ground. "Where do you find better people, in the jungles of Africa, among the savage tribes, or in a civilized country? I want you to answer that question," said Hjalmar, "before I say anything more."

After kicking the grass with his toes for some time,

Stewart reluctantly admitted that the better people are to be found in the civilized countries.

"Very well," said Hjalmar, with a look of triumph on his face, "what is it that has brought about civilization in the world? It is said to be the ability of man to control and use the power and substances that are in this earth. This has been accomplished almost entirely by the discoveries of scientists and by the inventor in designing and constructing machinery and apparatus for this work. What do you think this country, or this world, would be today if it were not for the printing press, the mariner's compass, the railroad, the steamboat, the telegraph and hundreds of other inventions and discoveries that I will not name? So, you see, civilization is indebted to the inventor of machinery and the discoverers of the laws of matter and physics more than to anybody else. Take agriculture as an example. In the middle ages a milk cow produced ordinarily from one to two quarts of milk a day. Only a few bushels of grain were raised to the acre—hardly a third of what is raised today. For two thousand years the world has been trying to lift the curse that was pronounced by the Almighty on Adam when he left the Garden of Eden. 'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread.'

"Do you know, Stewart, that I believe, if mankind had sufficient knowledge, sufficient food for all could be obtained from the earth with very little labor? The human race soon became supreme in the animal kingdom, but to abstract food from inanimate matter has been a much more difficult task and has progressed very slowly."

At this Stewart rolled over on his back and said, "When our Lord was on earth, he said to his disciples, 'Ye are the salt of the earth;' in other words the church was to preserve humanity from the curse of wickedness and vice, and if the church had not come into the world, where would the world be today?"

"I don't dispute the fact that the Christian church has been a great instrument for good, but remember that it is difficult to prove how much good the church has done. You must not forget that they had their Socrates and their Marcus Aurelius among the pagans, but we can prove, as you yourself have admitted, that the scientist and the inventor have positively made our present civilization possible. It may be the design of Providence that as long as men are ignorant and uncivilized it is better for them to be obliged to eat their bread in the sweat of their brows, but when people become more intelligent they can devote their energies to higher things than digging in the ground. I am firmly of the opinion that mankind will be relieved from hard, physical exertion when it may be safe, in the wisdom of the Creator, so to do. With most people it is a continuous struggle to obtain food, clothing and shelter."

"It will always be so," broke in Stewart, resting on his elbow and gesturing with his free hand. "Even now it is claimed by some that the financial crisis we are going through is due to over production, but has this over production made things any cheaper for the poor people? Have not the industries and the middlemen reaped the profits from the inventions and

discoveries that you are bragging about? Are there not people who are just as poor now as there were in the Middle Ages before the time of those great discoveries and inventions that you are talking about?"

"There are poor people today," replied Hjalmar, "and too many of them, but even the beggars of today are better off than the beggars of the twelfth century. I admit that the industries and the middlemen have reaped very largely the benefits of this progress in the world, but the world in its present form is young; these inventions and discoveries are going to stay after you and I are dead and gone, and soon they will be the common heritage of everybody. The exploiters of our day will soon be shaken off by a progressive and militant world that is continually marching forward to less labor and a higher life."

Stewart looked at his watch and suggested that they go back to the club for supper. As the boys walked up the hill to the old Main Building on the campus, they were still discussing these momentous questions that had been discussed and rediscussed by the wise men of all ages. When they reached their room in the dormitory, Hjalmar laughingly remarked to his roommate:

"So you are going to be the salt of the earth? I guess after this we'll have to call you 'Salty'," at which both boys laughed heartily, as they started down the campus for supper at their club.

Chapter XXVII.

NEW THINGS.

One day, after coming out of the Main Building, Hjalmar met Rasmus B. Anderson,* at that time professor of the Scandinavian languages and literature. Professor Anderson was a man of medium height and build. He wore a full beard and stooped a little as he walked. From beneath a pair of gold spectacles, which he always wore, gleamed a pair of penetrating eyes. His face and bearing easily betrayed intelligence and energy to a marked degree. He stopped Hjalmar, looked him squarely in the face and said:

“Young man, you ought to be in my class studying the language and literature of your ancestors. I take it that you are a Norwegian by descent, and I therefore take this opportunity of introducing myself. I am Rasmus B. Anderson, professor of the Scandinavian languages and literature in this University,”

Hjalmar was a little flustered by this unexpected meeting with a man who was so well known to every Norwegian family in the state. Hjalmar had often

* Rasmus B. Anderson resigned as professor at the Wisconsin State University in the eighties and afterwards served as United States Minister at Copenhagen, under the administration of Grover Cleveland.

heard his father talk in complimentary terms of the good he was doing the Norwegian immigrants and their children in this country. Upon recovering himself, he modestly touched his hat to the professor and shook hands with him.

"It is my father's wish," he said, "that I take a course in your department, and if you will appoint some time when I am not in class, I shall be glad to come and talk it over with you."

The professor appointed a certain hour the following day, at which time Hjalmar should call on him at his room, which appointment Hjalmar gladly agreed to.

As Hjalmar walked down the campus from the Main Building, he congratulated himself on making the acquaintance of a man of such general popularity and distinction. He could not forget the penetrating look that Professor Anderson had given him, nor the genial and frank attitude he had assumed toward him, who was only a poor farmer boy from the woods of eastern Wisconsin.

Thus far, Hjalmar had never mentioned to anybody, excepting his roommate, Stewart, that his father and mother were emigrants from Norway. He thought that Norway was a poor little country and that people would think less of him if they found out from what country his parents had come. He knew, however, that the Norwegians in the settlement at home stood very well with the other settlers, and that the Yankees had all treated them very kindly and had given them the same recognition that was

given other nationalities. As he hurried along to his room, it occurred to him that maybe the Norwegian people were not so bad after all.

When he came into his room, he told his roommate Stewart of his meeting with Professor Anderson and that he probably would take some studies in the professor's department. At this Stewart smiled broadly and said that he did not think it worth while for him to take up this line of work, because there is such an insignificant number of Norwegians in America, and he had never heard that there was any Norwegian literature worth reading. To this Hjalmar made no reply for the all sufficient reason that he knew very little about it. He knew that his father had read some stories by Bjornstjerne Bjornson and some things that had been written by Henrik Ibsen, but he did not know that those names were well known in the best literary circles of the United States as well as in the capitals of Europe. He was determined, however, to call upon the professor the following day, for he knew it would please his father very much, if he should write home and tell him that he was taking a course under Professor Anderson.

On the following day, at the appointed time, he met the professor in his study. The professor asked him if he could speak Norwegian and Hjalmar told him that he could. Professor Anderson then told him that the following week one of his classes would begin to study "The Political Tinsmith," one of Holberg's comedies, and suggested that he join this class.

This Hjalmar agreed to do, and entered the class at the appointed time.

The recitation was very interesting. Professor Anderson had the custom of lecturing to his class, sometimes on the history of Norway and sometimes on the works of the great masters of prose and poetry, who had illumined the pages of literature, not only of Norway but also of the world. He so filled his students with a love of this new field of literature that they went forth from his recitation room full of enthusiasm to give it its proper place among the foreign literatures that were read and studied in the United States.

After a month's attendance in Professor Anderson's class, Hjalmar felt strong enough to tackle his roommate. So one day he said: "Stewart, do you know anything about the great comedy writer, Ludwig Holberg?"

Stewart replied by a vacant stare and a shake of his head.

"I suppose he is one of those Norwegian authors you have been reading in Professor Anderson's class."

"That is true," said Hjalmar. "Have you ever heard of Moliere?"

"Yes, he was a great writer of French comedy."

"Well," replied Hjalmar, "Holberg ranks at least as high as Moliere, if not higher, and yet you never heard of him. I think it is high time that you Yankees begin to study some of the great world writers, even though they do come from a small country like Norway."

At this Stewart laughed and said, "Who cares about Ludwig Holberg, anyhow? You had better study your own Shakespeare and Milton and leave the Ludwig Holbergs to be read by the Norwegians in Norway."

It was now six o'clock and the boys were soon jumping down the stairs of the North Dormitory on their way to supper.

Chapter XXVIII.

BROADER VISION.

True to their early companionship, Hjalmar and Helen saw much of each other during their first year at the University. Helen stayed at Ladies' Hall. They went boating together, they took long walks together and they attended the social functions at the University together. The great Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull, had lately become a resident of Madison. One day, in his classroom, Professor Anderson announced that Ole Bull would give a concert in the city and urged all the students to go and hear him. Hjalmar took Helen to the concert, and that evening, as he went to Ladies' Hall to call for her, he could not help feeling proud that such a great artist as Ole Bull was of his nationality. On their way to the concert, Helen asked him all kinds of questions concerning Ole Bull and his violin performance. Hjalmar was glad to answer these questions promptly, and, as he thought, with full knowledge of the subject. Since he had come to the University he had begun to take some pride in his nationality and was glad to impress others with the virtues of his race. In the little settlement back home, Hjalmar had seen many different nationalities become citizens of this country, and he had begun to think that each nation-

ality or race represented should weave into the life of this American nation their own peculiar virtues and attainments. If this were done, he could see that the American people would tower high above all other nations in progress, culture and achievements.

It is perhaps unnecessary to say that Hjalmar and Helen were not disappointed in Ole Bull. In their home community they had known a violinist only as the man who furnished music for the country dances; now they were listening to the most beautiful music they had ever heard, coming, as it seemed to them, from an ordinary violin. Now the music was grand and sublime; then it was the music of lullabys and folk songs, that Hjalmar's mother had sung him to sleep with in his little cradle. Tall, straight and muscular, with his long gray hair, the musician, in Hjalmar's imagination, resembled an old "skald" from the days of the Saga literature. In the music he heard the waterfalls in the mountains, the twittering of birds in the trees, and the mighty waves as they dashed up against the rock-ribbed fjords of Norway.

On the way home, Hjalmar and Helen chatted about the grand music they had heard and the wonderful personality of Ole Bull. Hjalmar said he wished his father could have been there, and Helen added that she was sure her father would also have enjoyed it.

Hjalmar continued his study of Scandinavian literature with increasing ardor and enthusiasm. In the springtime he read the war poems of the Swedish

poet Runeberg. When spring came and the school year closed, he took home with him some of the Scandinavian books he had read, for he wished to read some of this beautiful literature to his father and mother. He had learned to read Swedish and recited some of Runeberg's war poems to his father. As Atle sat and listened, the tears began to roll down his cheeks, for this literature brought him back once more to his old home. He saw again the snowcapped mountains, the murmuring rivers and the foaming waterfalls tumbling over the rocks down into the valley.

Hjalmar had to lay aside his University clothes and go to work on the old homestead. He plowed, and sowed and planted; he harvested and threshed and helped garner the crops for the winter. One day, in the summer, he and his mother went to visit his grandparents, Aaste and Tosten—Tosten then in his eighties and Aaste in her late seventies. He had to tell them all about his school life in Madison and all about the new things he had seen and heard. Tosten and Aaste often expressed their thankfulness to Providence for having been guided to a country where their grandchildren could have the advantage of a higher education.

"What are you going to do when you get through at the University?" asked Tosten.

"Be a mechanical engineer," said Hjalmar.

This puzzled the old man, for he had never heard of such a profession or vocation in the old country.

So Hjalmar had to explain to him that a mechanical engineer is one who designs and builds machines.

At this Tosten laughed and said: "I should think that would be a very profitable vocation, for here in America they do so many things with machinery. I suppose some day machines will do everything here," he continued with a dry laugh. "They have all kinds of material in this country; they have an abundance of metals and all kinds of timber, and the energetic and enterprising people of almost every country in Europe are coming here to live."

"And where are you going to work at your calling?" asked Tosten.

"Oh, I will go to the city."

"And then we will lose you," said the grandfather, sadly. "After you have been educated to become an efficient and competent man, you leave your old home and your family to live and die among strangers."

"Oh, they will not be strangers, very long. I will learn to know the people I associate with as well as I know the people in the settlement here. You left your old homeland when you were well along in years, to live and die in a strange and new country, and now you find you enjoy life here as much as you did in Norway."

"Oh, yes," said Tosten, "it's the old, old story, all over again. Every generation leaves the old and strives to go onward and forward into a new life. Life is interesting to people only when they can look forward to something better, forward into something

newer. I presume the Creator designed mankind to have those longings and those aspirations. I felt blue and despondent when I left behind the scenes of my youthful activities, but when I came to this new country here in the West, my interest in life was renewed and revived. It was so fascinating and so compelling to build, to clear off the timber, to plow my own field and receive the bountiful rewards that nature bestowed upon us. But my life work will soon be completed. I have seen more and experienced more than is allotted to most men. The men and women were mostly younger than I, who built their homes around us. Yet, when I came here into this wilderness I forgot my age and infirmities. We plowed and planted on the virgin soil of this great country. We have been blessed with health and plenty, and when the last summons comes, I shall be laid to rest, not in the land of my fathers, but in the land of my children and childrens' children. I do not regret that I have helped to make you and my other grandchildren and my children citizens of this, the greatest republic of all times. I have nothing but love and pleasant remembrances of the country I left behind and nothing but hope and confidence in the country that adopted me. So Hjalmar, if the time should ever come when you shall become dissatisfied with your lot in life or possibly with the country you live in, remember how your parents and your grandparents loved it, made sacrifices for it, and helped to build it."

Aaste was very poorly; she had been ailing for

some time. She was very fond of Hjalmar and when she saw him, her face lighted up and beamed with joy.

“You are among the first, Hjalmar, of my grandchildren to have the benefit of a higher education,” said she. “When we left the old homeland, we trusted that in the new world our children and grandchildren would fare better and have an equal chance with others in education and environment. Tosten and I did not expect much for ourselves, for we knew that our life course was more than half over. I am thankful now to see in you some of the things we hoped for when we left our old home. Cherish the religious faith of your fathers. It helped them and it will help you. Be honest and just in your dealings with others. Never disgrace the good name and honor of your race. Although the people of our nationality are not as numerous as some others, they have always been honored and esteemed in the old world for virtue and devotion to duty. I am saying this to you now, because I shall see you but a few times more.”

Hjalmar could hardly repress the tears which came to his eyes. He knew that she was telling the truth when she said that she would not be long with them. The words of both his grandfather and his grandmother made a deep impression upon him. There was something so steadfast in their characters that he had always had great respect for their advice and admonition.

Before the summer was over Aaste Aspelund died. Some time earlier adherents of the state Church of

Norway had erected a church building in the settlement and services in the Norwegian language were held. In the graveyard, around this little church, Aaste was laid to rest.

Chapter XXIX.

ANOTHER YEAR AT SCHOOL.

Hjalmar returned to school the following fall full of energy and enthusiasm after spending the summer vacation working on his father's farm. He had now fully determined to make mechanical engineering his life work. He continued his studies in Scandinavian literature with Professor Anderson and took up a course in history in addition to his engineering work. Stewart also returned, and he and Hjalmar again occupied room No. 41 in the North Dormitory.

The study of Scandinavian literature and history had opened up to Hjalmar, as it were, a new world. He became more interested and enthusiastic as his college years went by. He read the burning pages of *Heimskringla*. He searched the lore of the gods of the Northern people. He culled wisdom from the Elder and Younger Eddas. In modern literature he found Ibsen as interesting as Shakespeare, and Bjornson as entertaining as Dickens. At first his roommate was inclined to make sport of Hjalmar's enthusiasm for this "foreign literature," as he called it.

"When it comes to that," said Hjalmar, "the best literature we read is all foreign. This country is supposed to extract the gold from all the great liter-

ature of the world. What difference is it whether we read Bjornson or Dickens—neither of them is American. When a Norwegian writes something of value to the world, why shouldn't we Americans profit by it? It will probably be some time before America can produce a literature as great as that of the European countries. I don't believe that this country can produce its best literature until all the nationalities are welded into one great, homogeneous people. In the meantime, let us enjoy what other nations have developed. It's not to be expected that a nation like the United States, when one section is Irish, another German, and another Scandinavian, can produce a national literature. The time is coming when these nationalities will be blended into one great people, and this great people will retain as its characteristics the good that is in each nationality. The American people will be the grand climax of the civilization of Europe. Reflect for a moment on the blood that is forming this great commonwealth. Perhaps in no country in the world has there been so much good blood mixed together as in this country. The bulk of the population is English, German, Irish, Scotch and Scandinavian. It is the cream of the nations of the earth that have met on the plains and in the valleys of this continent for the purpose of settling down together and making a great nation. Could we but exclude all the vices and include all the virtues of these people, what a nation would be brought forth! And it will be done. I believe that this continent was hidden from the rest of the world by a curtain, which

in the fullness of time, was lifted by great discoverers and navigators."

To this talk Stewart assented, and it was not long before John Stewart was reading Ibsen's plays in Professor Anderson's class.

* * *

It was in the spring time. Hjalmar and Stewart planned an outing to Black Hawk's cave on the beautiful shores of Lake Mendota. There were to be four in the party, the other two were engineering students from the junior class. The boys procured a tent and a boat. They planned to leave the dormitory Saturday afternoon to spend Saturday night in their tent and return Sunday afternoon. They had prepared provisions for supper, breakfast and a Sunday dinner. Edward Brooks, one of the classmates who was to accompany them, was from Chicago. Brooks was a large; powerful young man of a rather practical turn of mind. The other student was Clarence Foster from New York City. Foster was an industrious student, possessed of a clear mind and gifted with the power of analysis to a marked degree. In addition to his study of mechanical engineering, he had taken a course in history with Hjalmar.

At three o'clock the boat was loaded with all the equipment for the outing. Brooks seated himself on the rower's bench and the boat shot down along the south shore of the lake.

"Let us imagine that we are pirates," said Brooks, "and that like Captain Kidd we are looking for prize ships."

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" exclaimed Hjalmar. "Don't let us belong to a cheap crowd of murderers like Kidd and his crew; if we are going to imagine ourselves something else than what we actually are, let us imagine ourselves bold Vikings of the Mystic North, and that we are going down to harry the coasts of France and Spain."

At this the boys all joined in a hearty laugh.

"You are true to your race," shouted Foster. "You can be Leif Ericson and we will be your true and tried warriors."

"I had rather be Columbus," said Stewart, "traversing unknown seas to discover this great continent of ours."

Thus the boys talked and joked and laughed and sang until they reached Black Hawk's Cave.

"Why do they call this place 'Black Hawk's cave'?" asked Hjalmar.

"Because the Indian Chief by that name hid here," said Stewart. "You know there is an entrance to this cave from the water. You can dive down in the water right outside of that cliff and come up inside of the cave."

The boat was pulled upon the beach and the boys began to build their camp. Hjalmar cut a tent pole from a small sapling that grew on the bank, and the tent was soon set up. While Hjalmar and Brooks were doing this, Stewart and Foster built a fire for cooking their evening meal.

"We must have some fish for supper," said Brooks. "Hjalmar and I will go out in the boat and try to

catch some, while you fellows start to boil potatoes."

It was not long before Hjalmar and Brooks returned with a dozen beautiful silver bass. In a short time the boys were all sitting on the grass eating their supper.

"This beats a dinner at the club," said Foster. "Fish doesn't taste good after it's laid around a meat shop two or three days."

"Do you ever go fishing in salt water?" asked Hjalmar, addressing his remarks to Foster.

"Sometimes," said Foster, "but the fish in salt water is no better than this silver bass, if as good."

"Hjalmar ought to be an old seadog," exclaimed Stewart, "for his people have been on the sea ever since the days of the Vikings."

"The Norwegians may have been great sailors and great sea robbers, for that is what the Vikings really were, but we never hear of them doing much for liberty and progress," shouted Brooks.

"Is that so?" said Hjalmar, reaching for another potato. "I guess you had better revise your knowledge of liberty," he continued excitedly.

"I hope you don't claim that the Norwegians had anything to do with our Declaration of Independence and our Constitution," retorted Brooks.

"I certainly do," said Hjalmar.

At this Brooks and Stewart threw their plates on the grass, rolled over, kicked their heels in the air and laughed, and cried: "Oh, Hjalmar, let us hear your claim."

The boys resumed their former positions and

Hjalmar began. "I don't want to rob anybody of any glory in laying the foundation of this government. Our constitution and the civil rights our forbears fought for in the war of Independence, I admit, can be traced back to King John and the Great Charter. The contention of the patriots was that as Englishmen they were entitled to those civil rights that every Englishman was entitled to by reason principally of the Bill of Rights, contained in Magna Charta."

"We all concede that," said Stewart, "but I am waiting to hear where the Norwegians come in."

"Just wait a minute and I'll tell you," retorted Hjalmar. "Why was it that the Magna Charta became a great milestone in the march of liberty and freedom? The Magna Charta itself contained nothing that was especially new. It simply asserted rights that had been conceded and agreed to by the English kings, both Norman and Saxon. I now ask you what it was that made Magna Charta a great document."

Foster agreed with Hjalmar that the great Charter was simply a repetition of civil rights that had been in vogue in most of the Teutonic countries for centuries.

"You tell us, then," said Brooks, "why Magna Charta has always been referred to as the beginning of civil liberty, especially in the English speaking world."

"The importance of Magna Charta," replied Hjalmar, "comes from the fact that the Norman barons of England compelled King John not only to sign it,

but also to live up to it. You remember those Normans told King John that if he did not sign that charter, which they had prepared, and live up to it, he would be deposed as King of England and driven from the realm. It was the first time that a king of England had ever been compelled by his subjects to observe the recognized law of the land. I presume you will concede that nobody in England had ever before had the courage to do this. How did these Norman knights come to do it? These Norman knights were all descended from the Normans that had followed William the Conqueror across the channel and had fought at Hastings. They, in turn, were from the Normans who had followed Ganger Rolf from Norway to France, where he founded the Duchy of Normandy. In Norway a king was held to follow the law of the land as king, and if he did not, he was deposed. You ought to read the poem by Longfellow in the 'Tales of a Wayside Inn,' called 'Ironbeard.' In Norway the freemen always met at the "Thing", or parliament, armed. The session between King John and his Norman barons at Runymede was a Norwegian Thing held on British soil."

During this talk Brooks and Stewart had listened attentively. Foster, who had taken the history course with Hjalmar, remarked that Hjalmar's contention was borne out by history.

"But the English people have preserved these rights," said Stewart, "and for that they are entitled to credit."

"That's true," answered Hjalmar. "It took the

English people to preserve and develop those rights, but it was the Norman blood in England that made itself felt in introducing this principle into English law, so that it has never since been wiped out, although many attempts have been made in that direction."

"I always thought," said Brooks, "that Magna Charta contained rights that had never been recognized before by any king of England, and that it was the starting point for civil rights in England."

"You know," said Hjalmar, "that King John was a tyrant and had usurped the rights, not only of the barons, but also of the common people of England. It was to make him live up to the laws of the land that the Norman barons exacted from him the Great Charter."

"This outing has done me some good," said Brooks, "because I have learned something that I didn't know before."

"You told me, one time," remarked Stewart, "that the reason why the people of the United States haven't developed a great literature is that we have in this country too many groups of different nationalities. Are you not intensifying the division of our people into nationalities and groups, probably on account of studying foreign languages and literature?"

"I don't think so," replied Hjalmar, "most of our literature is foreign literature anyhow. This foreign literature must be worked into our national life and we must leave it to the American people to retain

what is good of it and forget what is of no consequence. In course of time the literary ideals of the different groups, because we have so many of them, will crystalize into American ideals. Then we will have a great literature. I can explain better what I mean by telling you of something that I observed down at the state capitol. I visited one day the rooms that have been added to the capitol building in that addition which has just been completed. The workmen were putting a capital on one of those beautiful pillars that are being put in. It was rather an artistic and delicate piece of work they were constructing. I became so interested in their work that I asked one of them where he had learned to do this kind of work. He said, 'I learned it in Copenhagen. Bill, over there, learned it in Glasgow, and Ole learned his trade in Stockholm.'

"'Yes,' added Bill, 'and we each did the work a little different, so we put all our knowledge together and picked out the good points that each had, and I think we are world beaters.'

"These workmen taught me a lesson," said Hjalmar, "and as I went away, I said to myself, why would it not be a good thing to do as these men did? Let us put all our knowledge together in every line of endeavor and we'll be 'world beaters' as Bill said, and our country will be a world-beater."

At the conclusion of this speech by Hjalmar, the boys all clapped their hands and shouted, "Bravo! Bravo!"

Brooks suggested that they should draw cuts to see who should wash the dishes, and Brooks himself got the short end of the draw. At this, the other three boys danced a war dance around the fire with a "Ha Ha" to Brooks.

The next morning the boys went in bathing and succeeded after a few trials in diving into the water and rise up in Black Hawk's cave. .

Hjalmar and Foster went out to catch fish for breakfast. While they were in the boat together, Foster asked Hjalmar what he was going to do in his line of mechanical engineering after graduation. Hjalmar said he had made no plans.

"You will have to get a good job, so you can marry that girl you have been toting around here," responded Foster.

At this Hjalmar laughed and said he had no girl—that Helen McGregor and he had been playmates since they were small children and that they were not engaged to be married,—“In fact we have never discussed that subject.”

“Well, you better discuss it with her soon,” said Foster, “or some city guy will come along and take her away from you, for she is a mighty pretty girl; and I want to say this to you, Hjalmar; whenever you want a job in a large manufacturing plant, I'll get you into our factory. My father is an officer in the company and I think you are the kind of man that our people want.”

By this time, Stewart was shouting from the camp and waving his hands for them to come in.

Thus the boys whiled away the time in schoolboy fashion until noon. After eating their dinner they packed their things in the boat and were soon pulling back to the old dormitory on University Hill.

Chapter XXX.

THE CANDY PULL.

The reader will remember that Peter Aspelund had eighty acres of land adjoining the farm of Colonel Stevens; that just before joining the army he had begun to clear some of it along the old trail. One-half of this eighty was still covered with timber, mostly hard maple. Every spring he would tap the maple trees, gather the sap and make maple sugar. One spring, when the sap was running, Mabel suggested that they have a candy pull in their sugar bush for the young people of the neighborhood. This was readily agreed to, and preparations were made for the event. Candy pulls were quite frequent in the early days in the settlements, where the maple trees grew. Some of you will undoubtedly ask, "What is a candy pull in a sugar bush, for the young people?"

When the sap is gathered it is poured into large kettles or pans and boiled down until the syrup gets thick and begins to "granulate." Then it is poured out into dishes and moulded into different shapes, when it is ready for use or for the market, as the case may be. The trees are tapped in the spring, just as the frost is thawing out of the ground. In order to make candy, the syrup must be carefully watched

and tested until it begins to granulate; then it is poured out on nice clean snow, especially prepared. This will make delicious candy that can be pulled out, without breaking, to almost any length.

In response to the invitations, the young people of the settlement gathered in large numbers in Peter's sugar bush. The boys hunted up some clean snow, for much of the snow had disappeared. The snow was spread on a long table and the maple syrup was poured on it. The boys and girls pulled and ate candy, laughed and sang, and had a fine time. It was Hjalmar's and Helen's last year at the University; they were home on their Easter vacation, and were to graduate the following June.

About this time a railroad was being constructed from Milwaukee that would run through the settlement. The construction of the road had progressed to such an extent that the track had been laid to within a few miles of the settlement. With the construction crew had come a young civil engineer, a graduate of Yale, who had charge of the work. His name was Robert Wilson. He was a man of medium size, with a fat face, and in appearance was a good looking young fellow. Quite formal in his manner, he had an air that seemed to indicate that he was associating with people not quite up to his standards. Robert Wilson had come from one of the oldest and most respected families in New England; was a graduate of one of the leading colleges in the country and, on close inspection of his conduct, it was not difficult to notice that he was conscious of all this.

Yet when introduced to the young people, he was affable and pleasant, but with a formality in his manner that was then unknown in the West.

The handsome Helen McGregor attracted his attention early in the afternoon. He pulled candy with her, sat with her in the swing, and was at her side most of the afternoon. Running races, jumping and pole vaulting were arranged for the young boys. Mr. Wilson, selected as referee in these contests, was not slow in telling how they ran, jumped and vaulted at Yale.

Later in the afternoon the older men wished to see a wrestling match. They asked Mr. Wilson if he could wrestle. He said he could and for the amusement of the gathering would wrestle whomsoever they would select. The boys yelled for Hjalmar Sunmere to come and wrestle with Mr. Wilson. Hjalmar declared that he had never had much experience in wrestling and that it would be presumptuous on his part to try to throw a Yale athlete; but the crowd was insistent. They wished to see what a backwoodsman could do with a Yale athlete. So the two young men took off their coats, vests, collars and ties, and entered the ring that was formed by the girls and boys. Peter Aspelund and Tom Swinton were chosen referees. The two young men grappled. Robert Wilson was the heavier of the two, and it looked as though Hjalmar would go down. Several times he was in danger of being thrown, but he always recovered himself. Finally Hjalmar got a low hold on Wilson, whose feet soon flew up in the air and he fell

squarely on his back. The crowd cheered and shouted. For a few moments Wilson lay on the ground, as though he could not get up; Hjalmar went to him and asked if he were hurt.

As Wilson got up he picked up a gold locket that had dropped out of Hjalmar's pocket during the bout, and he noticed that on one side of it was a picture of Helen McGregor.

This ended the athletic sports of the day. As the crowd dispersed each one thanked Peter and Mabel for the splendid time they had given them. Some of the people left in buggies, but those who lived nearby walked. Everyone was talking about the attentions paid by young Wilson to Helen McGregor, and it was generally assumed that Hjalmar would have a rival for Helen's hand.

Chapter XXXI.

AN AWAKENING.

Hjalmar walked home with Helen from the candy-pull. He talked very little, and when he did it was only to reply to what Helen said. His words were few and curt, and he acted as if he were thinking deeply and not much interested in the conversation. Helen at last ventured to say, "I was so afraid when you threw Mr. Wilson that he was hurt."

"Oh, yes," said Hjalmar, "you seemed to be very solicitous of Mr. Wilson's safety."

At this shot Helen's face flushed with resentment, "Oh, what's the use of acting so silly!" she cried. "You know, Hjalmar, that I did not want either one of you to get hurt. I think Mr. Wilson is a very fine young man."

"Oh, you showed that well enough by the attention you paid him."

At this Helen looked Hjalmar squarely in the face and said, "Now, if you keep talking this way, you need not come home with me, I can go alone."

Hjalmar knew Helen was serious, and, to avoid further friction, changed the subject: "School begins," he said, "next Wednesday; when are you going back?"

"I don't believe I can get ready to go until Wednesday morning. When are you going?"

"I think I'll go Monday morning. Our teacher in practical mechanics promised to take us Tuesday to visit the Fuller and Johnson Manufacturing Company's shops. The manufacturing of agricultural implements is one of the coming industries, and I should very much like to see their shops during operating hours."

"Say, Hjalmar, what are you going to do with yourself next summer when you get through school?"

"I have thought some of going to Chicago. I shall, of course, try to get the best position I can. I should prefer, however, to go with some plant that manufactures agricultural machinery. What are you going to do with yourself, when school is over?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Helen, "father wants me to take a trip to Scotland and visit my grandparents. They are both living. But I don't care to leave home for a while yet, and shall probably stay at home for a year."

Helen invited Hjalmar to come in with her and stay a while. They met Donald McGregor on the porch.

"The boys tell me that you threw young Robert Wilson, the engineer, in a wrestling match at Peter Aspelund's today," said Donald, as he patted Hjalmar on the shoulder. "Oh, Hjalmar, you're a chip o' the old block. You're like your father, Atle. When he was a young man, no one in the settlement could lay him on his back. Those eastern Yankees will find that we have some strong husky men in the West, even though we do live in the woods. I am proud of you,

my lad. Come, sit down, let us visit a bit. I haven't had a chance to talk to you for a whole year."

Hjalmar followed Donald into the house, where he visited until late in the evening.

That night, before he fell asleep, Hjalmar revolved in his mind the occurrences of the afternoon. He could not forget the attentions that Robert Wilson had paid Helen and the cheerful manner in which she had received them. He did not want to admit to himself that he was hurt or jealous. Of course, some of the students at the University had paid a great deal of attention to Helen, for she was not only a pretty girl, but sensible and good natured as well. But these students were his friends. To this Robert Wilson he had taken a strong dislike, not only because of his attentions to Helen, but also because of his manner, which indicated a feeling that he was a little better than the people living on the Western frontier. His thoughts reverted to the conversation he had had with Helen on their way home from the candy pull. Helen had seemed pleasant and agreeable until he had begun to twit her about the attentions paid her by Wilson. This she vigorously resented, and Hjalmar could not but think he had been very rude to her, and that his conduct on this occasion had been very unbecoming. So he resolved that the next time he met her he would make a full and frank apology to her. Their school life would soon be over, and he was faced with the stern necessity of leaving home and making a place for himself in the world. He did not know just how to approach Helen on this subject. He

kept running over in his mind how he should put it up to her. He did not wish to ask her to marry him right then, but he thought he would ask her to wait for him until he had been out in the world for two years, and then he would return to the old settlement and they would get married. He was confident his father and mother would have no objections, nor did he look for opposition from Helen's parents, for he knew that both families had looked upon them as being engaged, and it would come as a great shock to the parents of both, if any trouble should arise between them. Long after midnight, Hjalmar finally fell asleep.

The next morning he felt much refreshed and when he thought of the happenings of the previous day, they looked very different to him. He concluded that he had been laboring under great excitement during the afternoon of the preceding day; that Helen had acted like a lady, and that there was nothing in her conduct to criticise. He made up his mind to have a nice long visit with the McGregor family before he returned to school. This he did the next day, and went back to the University early the following Monday.

Chapter XXXII.

FOOTSTEPS.

The railroad that was being built through the settlement was pushed forward rapidly and by the first of May was within a few miles of Helge Nelson's farm. A surveying party had already located the point where the station was to be built. It was not far from Donald McGregor's home. Soon a little town sprang up on this site; a large boarding house, where liquor was sold, a small store, a blacksmith shop, and a livery barn constituted the business houses of the little village. On both sides of the village were several construction camps, where the men who worked on the road. The coming of railroad into a new country, like the settlement whose fortunes we are following, produces great excitement among the farmers. Some began selling the land near the railroad and others began buying more land. The subject of conversation at all gatherings was the new railroad and the influence it would have on the community. Jeff Davis, whom Peter had brought with him from the South, and who, up to the present time, had worked on Peter's farm, was influenced by this new excitement in the settlement. At times he was very lonesome, and his thoughts would wander back to the old plantation life in the South. There were

always so many people around a Southern plantation; on the one in Kentucky where he had been a slave, there had been fifty negroes. So, when Jeff saw the construction camps and the boarding houses along the right of way, the desire seized him to go along with the crowd. One night, after he had been down to the camps, he told Peter he was going to leave. He said he knew he never would find kinder people or a better place to work, but he had obtained a job as cook in one of the camps and he wished to go along with the men. It was not without feelings of regret and sadness that Peter and Mabel and Mrs. Stevens said good-bye to Jeff. Peter warned him to keep out of bad company and not to touch strong drink. He asked him to write to them, so they might know how he was faring. This Jeff agreed to do and left them the next morning.

That summer Helen and Hjalmar graduated from the University, and after graduation both returned to the settlement. Robert Wilson had his headquarters at the boarding house in the little village. He had become well acquainted with the McGregor and Summere families, and after Helen's return from school was a frequent caller at her house.

It was estimated that on the coming Fourth of July the railroad to the little village would be completed. This was an event that the farmers in the locality believed should be celebrated with much enthusiasm. It was decided to have the celebration of the Fourth during the day and to close with a ball in the evening. A temporary dance hall was construct-

ed and everything was arranged for the celebration. Robert Wilson had invited Helen McGregor to go with him to this ball and Helen had accepted the invitation. Without being aware of this, Hjalmar also invited Helen, only to be told that she had already accepted Mr. Wilson's invitation. With great difficulty, Hjalmar concealed his disappointment. On his way home he could not think; his mind would not function; it was difficult for him to realize that Robert Wilson was preferred to him.

On reaching home he went to his room and lay down on the bed. Not only had his hopes been blasted, but his pride had been wounded. Most of us live in the future. This is especially true of young people: Very few people live in the present. To most of us the present seems but a stepping stone to the future. To the young man with a strong, vigorous mind, the future is always full of promise. While to live in the future brings progress, it makes the present seem uninteresting. Old people generally live in the past; usually they have not much to look forward to; but if their lives have been filled with success and joy they can live it all over again. If a young man has built his future along certain lines and those lines suddenly become obliterated, he is thrown back into the present. His future hopes and anticipated successes vanish. He must begin again to build the life that is to follow the present.

Hjalmar was in this condition. Every thread in his future life was woven around Helen as the central figure. Now the central figure had disappeared, and

the whole fabric was destroyed. This was the reason Hjalmar could not think; his mind refused to function. The destruction of his hopes haunted him wherever he went and whatever he did. Whenever his thoughts reverted to Helen he felt a pain in the region of his heart. What was there, any more, for him, in the old settlement? The dearest memories he had were the times when Donald and Margaret McGregor had visited his home, and Donald and Atle had rehearsed their many adventures, on the mountains, on the sea, and in the wars. He could not even bear to think of those times, because, when he did, his thoughts unconsciously turned to Helen and then would come the pain in his heart. He tried to conceal his trouble from his folks. He realized that when Helen would attend the Fourth of July ball with Mr. Wilson the whole neighborhood would know the story.

After much deliberation he decided that he would absent himself from the ball. There would, of course, be inquiries from his own folks and others why he remained at home on such an occasion, but he would rather face that situation than to see Helen enjoy herself with his hated rival. He had now reached the point where he blamed Helen for all the trouble. No other interpretation could be put on her conduct than that she preferred Wilson to himself. He tried to argue with himself that Helen would be sorry for what she had done, but that gave him slight consolation.

In the end he decided to leave the settlement, not to return for a long time.

Chapter XXXIII.

LOVE AND INTRIGUE.

The ball that Helen McGregor had consented to attend with Robert Wilson was the most pretentious social event that had taken place in the settlement. Some of the office force of the railroad company had arrived for the occasion. A number of the younger generation, who had been away at school during the year, attended and took part in the dance. Helen watched for Hjalmar but was unable to find him there. Mr. Wilson was a good dancer and entertainer and for some time she enjoyed herself, but as the hours flew by she began to lose interest in the gathering. It seemed strange to her that Hjalmar was not there. After some reflection she concluded that he must have felt very much hurt because she had accepted Wilson's invitation. This feeling grew on her to such an extent that at twelve o'clock she asked Mr. Wilson to take her home. He pleaded with her to remain, but to no purpose, and at last he took her to the McGregor home. It was not far, and, as the evening was beautiful, they walked. Wilson asked Helen why she wished to go home so early.

"I was not having a good time," she answered. "I did not like the music. I could hardly keep step

with it, and then it was so warm in the hall that I could scarcely breathe. That hall was too small anyhow for the crowd that was there."

Mr. Wilson did not know just what to say, so they walked on for a time in silence. Finally he began:

"You dance very well, Miss McGregor. I am sure I could not discover that you had difficulty in keeping step. For a country string band I thought the musicians did very well."

"Oh, maybe they did; it was probably my fault."

Again there was silence for some time. Again Mr. Wilson ventured to begin the conversation:

"I did not see Mr. Summere there," he said.

"He is a very fine dancer," responded Helen.

They reached the McGregor home, and after saying good-night, Wilson slowly retraced his steps to the dance hall.

"That girl," mused Wilson, "is just as pretty as she can be. She probably felt badly because Hjalmar was not there. She evidently is in love with that boy. How she would shine if she had the opportunity to get into good society! And," he thought, "I could get her into good society. If I could only get her away from the young Swede they call Hjalmar!"

As he said this, he stopped, becoming at once very serious. He clenched his fist, "I'll fix that fellow," he muttered. "Where there's a will, there's a way. Helen McGregor shall not marry that Swede, and I am going to see that it does not happen."

He did not go back to the ball room, but stopped

in at the boarding house where some of his men were boarding. He asked the landlady if his foreman, Tom Langley, was in. Yes, she thought he was in his room. Wilson found that Langley was in bed. After pounding on the door and telling who he was, he finally succeeded in getting Tom to let him in and light a lamp.

"I am sorry," said Wilson, "that I am calling on you at this hour; I suppose you were sound asleep, but I want to see you on an important matter, which concerns myself. It has nothing to do with the construction of the railroad," said Wilson, as his face broadened into a smile. "You know, Donald McGregor, Tom, who has that beautiful home upon the river. I met his daughter, Helen, the other day at a candy pull up at Captain Aspelund's place. I tell you, Tom, she's a peach. She's a perfect lady in every way, very bright and very well educated. One could hardly expect to find such a jewel of a girl out here among the tall timber, and say, Tom, that girl is desperately in love with a young Swede by the name of Hjalmar Sunmere."

Tom nodded his head, "Yes I know that fellow. He comes down to the postoffice nearly every evening to get his mail. He looks to me like a mighty husky chap."

At this remark, Wilson's chin dropped, "I should say he is," said Wilson. "I had a wrestling bout with him at this same candy pull, and I'll be cussed if he didn't throw me. And you know, Tom, that hurt my

feelings. There was a large crowd there and they guyed me for being downed by a Swede backwoodsman. And somebody had the nerve to shout, 'What's the matter with the Yale athlete?' Another of them yelled out, 'the Yale athlete is lying on the ground.' "

"That fellow is not a Swede," said Tom; "he's a Norsky. The people around here are all Norwegians."

"I do not care what he is," said Wilson, "I want to humble that fellow's pride a little, and I have a plan. Now listen, Tom, tomorrow night you bring with you from the camp a half dozen of the toughest fellows we've got. Take 'em up to Nick's place and give them what they want to drink, and when this young fellow comes by in the evening, as you say he generally does, let those fellows tumble out of the door, run up against him and shove him off the walk. Just then I will come along and ask him why he is interfering with my men. I am handy with my fists and I don't think it'll take long to lay him flat on the ground, and if anything is said about it, you and I will claim that he was interfering with our men and I went after him to make him leave them alone. Of course, if I should get the worst of the fight, which is not probable, I want you to help me out."

"I think that can be worked all right," said Tom.

"Now, before I go," added Wilson, "I want to be sure that you carry out my instructions," and saying this he pulled out a ten dollar bill and handed it to Tom. "I want you to stand by me in this deal. I'm going to discredit that young Norsky."

"All right, you can depend on me," said Tom.

Wilson went to his rooms, very much excited, but with his mind made up that, with the aid of Tom Langley, he could do the "job."

Chapter XXXIV.

THE FIGHT.

The following evening Hjalmar walked down to the little village to get his mail. As he was passing the saloon next to the boarding house, a half dozen men of the railway construction crew came tumbling through the door. With oaths and rough talk they made a rush for Hjalmar. Perceiving that the men were drunk, he stepped back a few paces, and they fell in a pile in the gutter. Just then Robert Wilson came around the corner, walked up to Hjalmar and in a loud, insolent tone said:

“Mr. Sunmere, I’d like to know what business you have to interfere with our men on the streets of this village? They have as much right here as you have.”

Hjalmar stood still and listened while Wilson, as he was talking, advanced toward him, in an angry manner. Just then Tom Langley came out of the saloon, ostensibly to listen to what was going on. In the meantime the men, who had fallen in the gutter, had gotten up and, with the other two, were forming a ring around Hjalmar. Hjalmar appeared to view the situation with indifference. He kept his eye on Wilson, however, who was brandishing his fists in the air and talking loudly. Soon a small crowd was attracted by the loud talk.

"I was not interfering with your men," said Hjalmar in a cool and dignified manner.

At this Wilson became furious. "I'll teach you, little liar, to tell the truth!" he shouted, as he advanced toward Hjalmar and made a vicious lunge at his face with his right arm.

But he missed Hjalmar's head, and before he could recover his balance, Hjalmar had kicked him in the back of his head, so he fell forward on his face. Meanwhile, Tom Langley and the drunken men had also assumed a threatening attitude and it looked to the bystanders as though Hjalmar would have difficulty in extricating himself from the group without getting a thrashing, for Hjalmar, as well as the bystanders, realized that the men from the construction crew were there to help Wilson. Hjalmar's timely kick, however, changed the situation in the twinkling of an eye, for instead of attacking Hjalmar, they picked up Wilson and carried him into the boarding house.

Hjalmar got his mail and went home. Just before the fight he had noticed in the street James McGregor, Helen's brother. On his way Hjalmar decided that he would leave the settlement and would tell nobody where he was for a long time. His experience during the last few days had wounded his pride to such an extent that he did not care to stay any longer. And the thought that he should be mixed up in a fight on the street of the village with a group of drunken ruffians was almost unbearable. He felt that he

had brought disgrace, not only upon himself, but also upon his family. He had always thought much of Donald McGregor and Margaret. He felt that it would be impossible to make them a satisfactory explanation. Besides, the humiliation and pain of knowing that somebody else had Helen's heart would be too great. Furthermore he did not want Helen to know where he was.

He realized that the course he had mapped out would entail suffering on the part of his mother and his family; but he thought this suffering would be less on account of his going away than his would be if he were to stay.

He packed his bag with such clothes as he thought he would most need. He had enough money in his pocket to get to Chicago. Once in Chicago, he would go to see his friend Brooks and borrow from him enough money to pay his expenses to New York City. His classmate, Foster, had told him that whenever he should come to New York he could have a position in their factory. He waited until after midnight, when everybody was in bed, and, upon leaving, placed the following note on the kitchen table:

"Dear Mother:

I am going away tonight. You will not hear from me for a long time. But do not worry, for I will be a good boy, as I have tried to be in the past. Some day you will hear from me.

Affectionately,
Hjalmar."

Hjalmar had to walk several miles before he reached a railroad station, as the new road that was being built into the town did not yet run trains regularly.

After securing a loan from Mr. Brooks, he was on his way to New York.

* * *

When Thora, the following morning, found Hjalmar's note, she was very much depressed. The contents of the note puzzled her, for she had not yet heard what had transpired the day before. All that she knew was that Hjalmar was very much downcast because Helen had attended the ball with Mr. Wilson. Thora told Atle at the breakfast table that Hjalmar was gone and read the note he had left. Atle was even more ignorant than Thora of what had happened to Hjalmar; however, he was going over to see Donald McGregor and find out what he and his family knew about the situation. After consulting together for some time, they saw the whole situation. James McGregor told them about the fight between Wilson and Hjalmar.

Up to this time Helen had been a listener to what was being said. She felt guilty, for she knew that Hjalmar's despondency had been caused by her conduct. Her brother James' account of the fight confirmed her suspicion that Robert Wilson was an unreliable and despicable character. The more she thought about it, the more she admired the conduct of Hjalmar. How she wished that she could live over again the last three days! But alas! this was im-

possible. Would she ever see Hjalmar again? She did not dare to answer, for she feared the worst. Never before had she realized how dearly she loved him. Now it was too late; her youthful dream had been shattered.

Chapter XXXV.

FAILURE.

Upon hearing her brother's story of the fight between Wilson and Hjalmar and what Atle had told about Hjalmar, Helen determined to have a talk with Thora, and to see the note that Hjalmar had left before going away.

Thora looked sad, but pleasant, when Helen came in. Helen read Hjalmar's note very carefully—kept looking at it and reading it over and over again. But this gave her little consolation. It was just as Atle had told them at the McGregor home.

Helen and Thora talked over Hjalmar's departure all morning. Thora was firm in her conviction that some day Hjalmar would come back.

"I know," said Thora, "that Hjalmar loved his home above everything else, and I know he will be a good boy."

"But he is very stubborn," replied Helen, "and when he gets his mind set in any direction it is difficult for him to turn or change."

"That is true, but you can rely on Hjalmar that he will not disgrace himself; he will always be a good boy and will come back to me the same Hjalmar he was when he left."

"I'm sorry," said Helen, "that I went with Mr. Wilson to that ball, for that was the beginning of the trouble."

"Yes," said Thora, "that hurt Hjalmar's feelings very much. After that he did not appear to be the same boy. It seemed as though some great calamity had befallen him; he looked so sad and dejected. And then, when he got into that fight with Wilson, he must have felt as though he had disgraced himself and his family."

"But that was not Hjalmar's fault," broke in Helen, "for my brother, James, saw it. He said it was Wilson and his drunken railroad men that attacked Hjalmar and Hjalmar was forced to defend himself. I am so ashamed of myself now, that I should have gone anywhere with such an unprincipled man as Mr. Wilson. I feel just as guilty as can be, Mrs. Sunmere."

"Oh," said Thora, "you only acted the part of a thoughtless girl. Girls did that when I was young, and I suppose they will continue to do the same thing for all time. You know your family and our family have always been very close friends. Atle and Donald took to each other from the first time they met here in the woods. Your mother and I often talked about the coincidence that when one of us had a child the other had a mate to it, but the mates were always either both girls or both boys, but when you and Hjalmar were born it was different. Hjalmar, you know, is older than you, Helen. How well I remember, when he was born, your mother laughed and

said 'I will have a mate for him.' After you were born we would lay you two babies in the same bed, and even then you would call to each other and talk your baby prattle. You were baptized on the same day, in the same water. Atle and I were godfather and godmother to you. Donald and Margaret were godfather and godmother to Hjalmar."

This reminiscence moved Helen very much and she laid her head on Thora's shoulder and wept. Thora lifted Helen's head and pushed back her hair from her forehead.

"Don't feel so badly. Hjalmar will come back, and we will all be happy again, as we used to be in years gone by. If you will only be patient you and Hjalmar will play together again on the banks of that little stream in front of your home as you used to do long ago."

"I will be patient," said Helen, "and never again will I be guilty of such foolish conduct."

Dinner had been prepared by Hilda, Hjalmar's sister. The men came in from the field and Helen remained for dinner. After dinner she returned home, much encouraged by what Thora had told her. She made up her mind she would stay at home with her mother, and she imposed upon herself this pledge: that she would never keep company with any young man or join in any merry making with the young people until she heard from Hjalmar.

The following week, Robert Wilson called on Helen. The reader can imagine better than the author can describe this meeting. Helen acted the part of a

perfect lady. She met Mr. Wilson with a smile, but what a cold heart there was behind that smile! And Wilson felt it.

"There's to be a picnic over at the next village," said he, "it's to be given on Mr. Ochiltree's front lawn. I have been invited and should like to take you along as my partner."

Helen looked at Mr. Wilson coldly and replied: "Mr. Wilson, I have broken off all social engagements and ask you to excuse me from accepting your invitation to that picnic."

Mr. Wilson seemed to divine that Helen's answer was final. After a few moments of rambling conversation he took his leave, asking if he might call again.

"The McGregor home has always been hospitable, and you will be received with the McGregor hospitality whenever you come."

It was difficult for Helen to conceal her feelings in this brief interview. She felt that he was the cause of all her troubles, and she never would forget the cowardly attack he had made upon Hjalmar.

"Yes," she said to herself, when she was alone, "the McGregors are hospitable, but they never forget an injury. That has been the history of the clan in Scotland and I am a McGregor."

Chapter XXXVI.

LIFE IN THE GREAT METROPOLIS.

On his way to New York, Hjalmar had time to review the great changes that had come into his life in the last few days. He was only twenty-two years old, and he had never been so far away from home before. The country looked so different from what it did in Southeastern Wisconsin. His father and mother had talked a great deal about the high mountains of Norway, and he had often wondered how a real mountain looked, for he had never seen one. But on this trip he would cross the Alleghany Mountains.

And he had never seen a large river. The only traveling he had ever done was between his home and Madison, which were only about fifty miles apart. Now he was taking a trip across a third of the great American continent.

But, although he was much interested in the new sights, he could not help thinking of Helen McGregor. He had made up his mind that Robert Wilson was an unprincipled fellow and not a proper man for Helen to associate with. He knew that James McGregor had seen the fight between himself and Wilson, and he knew that James would tell Helen how it happened ;

that Wilson had planned a trap for him and that he himself was simply acting in self-defense.

How badly Wilson was hurt he did not know. When he had left the scene, they were dragging him into the saloon. He knew that his father and mother would grieve and would be anxious to hear from him, but he had made up his mind that no word should come from him to the little settlement for a long time.

On his arrival in New York, he found his class mate, Foster, who took him over to the factory, where he was working. It was not long before the management employed Hjalmar at a very comfortable salary, for mechanical engineers were not so plentiful in those days as they are now.

Hjalmar told Foster the whole story of the conduct of Helen and Robert Wilson.

"If you had been in my place, what would you have done?" asked Hjalmar.

"I should probably have done just as you did," said Foster. "While Helen McGregor is a mighty fine girl, she isn't the only pebble on the beach. Of course, you and Helen were together all the time at school and everybody thought you were engaged to be married. Taking everything into consideration, I think she treated you shabbily."

Thus the boys discussed it, and the more they talked, the more convinced Hjalmar became that he had done the right thing.

"I couldn't stay around home," said Hjalmar, "for everybody there thought it was a foregone conclusion that Helen and I were to be married. They also would

know that Helen had jilted me and was accepting the attentions of this railroad engineer. It was too humiliating, Foster; I couldn't stand it, so I thought the best thing I could do was to say nothing and leave home."

Hjalmar made good in his position, proving himself efficient and reliable. Foster and he were together a great deal. Foster moved in the best society and was a social favorite.

One day, during the winter months, the boys visited the swimming pool at the Cherokee Club. Just as they were going out, they passed Robert Wilson. Hjalmar pulled Foster to one side and said, "There goes that man Wilson." Wilson turned squarely around and recognized Hjalmar, but did not speak.

"He is a pretty smooth looking fellow," said Foster as the boys walked out to the street.

"That he is," said Hjalmar, "and he is very smooth with the ladies, too."

At this Foster laughed, "I guess you talk from experience on that point," he remarked.

Subsequent investigation showed that Wilson was a regular member of the club and came quite often to swim. During the whole winter, however, they never met him again.

Sometimes, alone in his room, Hjalmar would become very homesick. These spells of homesickness, however, did not last very long. Life in the great metropolis was so full of interesting events that time flew rapidly by.

One Saturday afternoon, late in the winter, when Hjalmar and Foster had been swimming at the club, Hjalmar missed the little gold locket containing the pictures of Helen and his mother. He felt certain he had the locket when he entered the club and that it had been taken out of his pocket while he was in the pool. There was a chance, he thought, that he might have dropped the locket on the floor while dressing. The next time he went to the club he inquired at the office for the locket, but was unable to find any trace of it.

In the spring, his employers, being anxious to find a market for their farm machinery and agricultural implements in Europe, proposed to Hjalmar that he make a general survey of all the European countries and report to them. They estimated that the work would take about two years. The salary they named was a substantial one, and after some consideration Hjalmar accepted the offer. He was to sail the following May.

Chapter XXXVII.

FURTHER INTRIGUE.

Robert Wilson had learned of Hjalmar's sudden departure from home. He was somewhat surprised, however, to meet Hjalmar at the Cherokee Club. The desire for revenge was still rankling in his breast. After Hjalmar's departure he had made strenuous efforts to induce Helen to accompany him on several occasions, without success. Whenever he called on her, she had received him courteously but coldly, and at last he realized that her heart still belonged to Hjalmar.

He now saw an opportunity of disgracing Hjalmar in Helen's eyes. He visited the club and asked the attendant in charge of the dressing rooms if he knew Hjalmar Sunmere; the caretaker shook his head. Wilson explained to him that Hjalmar came there always with Mr. Foster of the Agricultural Implement Manufacturing Company, and described Hjalmar to him as a tall, straight young man, of light complexion. The caretaker finally said he knew the man.

"I want you to do a job for me," said Wilson. "That young man carries in his vest pocket a small gold locket, inside of which is a picture of my sister, which he has obtained surreptitiously. The locket

belongs to my sister and when he comes here to swim, take it out of his vest pocket and keep it for me till I come again. Here's twenty-five dollars for your trouble. You needn't be afraid of this fellow, for I'll stand back of you. You know who I am."

"I know you are an engineer," said the caretaker. "That's all I know."

"I am the field engineer for the I. B. & O. Railway Company," he said. "Those two fellows will be here to swim next Saturday, and I'll be here the following week. I expect you to have the locket for me by that time."

The caretaker nodded assent, but remarked that he did not care to get into any trouble over it.

"Don't be afraid?" said Wilson, "for the locket belongs to my sister and I will see you through."

The next time Wilson visited the Cherokee Club he obtained the much coveted locket, containing Helen's picture. He carefully packed it in a box and mailed it to Helen, at the same time sending her a letter. Wilson felt quite jubilant over his success and congratulated himself on the clever plan he had laid to discredit his rival in the eyes of the woman he loved.

The following May Hjalmar took passage for Europe.

Chapter XXXVIII.

DARKNESS AND LIGHT.

In the little settlement down in Wisconsin, things went on as usual. The railroad had been completed; a flourishing little village had arisen around the new railway station.

Helen McGregor had scrupulously kept the pledge she made to herself after Hjalmar left. She was absent from all the gatherings of the young people in the little community. Every Sunday morning she attended services in the little church she loved so well. Some people thought she looked pale of late; others whispered that she looked very sad, but to most observers she was the same Helen they had known from childhood.

Often she went and talked with Thora. She had a feeling that some day they would hear from Hjalmar. Fall came and went, winter had gone, and now it was spring again. She and Thora would sit for hours talking about Hjalmar. Thora would tell of the cute things he had said and done when he was a little boy. Then Helen would tell incidents that had happened when she and Hjalmar had played together as children. These incidents would not be interesting to the reader, but were very precious and of great interest to these two women.

On the lawn in front of the McGregor home, down by the river bank, grew a weeping willow. Under this tree had been raised a little seat, wide enough for two. Here Helen spent much of her time. One day, as she was sitting under this tree, she recollected how Hjalmar had climbed to the top of it when a child and that she had dared him to jump to the ground, not thinking he would take the dare; but Hjalmar had jumped to the ground, on his toes, without in the least injuring himself. Thus meditating on things in the past, she looked down the road, and saw her brother James driving home from the postoffice. He held up a letter in his hand. Helen ran to get it. As she looked at it, she recognized the handwriting of Robert Wilson. James also handed her a little package addressed from New York City. She went back to the little seat under the willow and read the letter. Here it is:

“New York City, March 5.

“Dear Helen:

I sometimes wish I were back again on the old job of building that railroad through Eastern Wisconsin. I enjoyed every minute of the time I spent at your house and in your company. I know no place more hospitable than your home. At times I get dreadfully lonesome. My company has a contract to build a railroad in Southern Wisconsin, a little way south from where you live, and I may be sent out to take care of it. If I am, I shall certainly make it a point to run up and see you.

“By the way, you remember the locket that Hjalmar Sunmere used to carry in his pocket, inside of which, you know, he had your picture. A short time ago, one of the men that has worked for us several years was arrested here, and sent for me to come down to the jail to see him. At the jail he told me he had been arrested the previous night in a gambling house. He asked me if I could do anything for him to get him out of jail. As he said this he drew from his pocket the gold locket that Hjalmar Sunmere used to carry and on opening it I found that it still had your picture inside. I asked the man where he had gotten it. He told me he had bought it from an inmate of a disreputable house.

“You can imagine how indignant I became when I learned that your picture was being bartered around in places of that character. Poor Hjalmar! he has probably gone to the dogs, like so many other young men that come to the great metropolis from the Western country. I am sending you the locket in a separate package. I thought no one is better entitled to it than you.

“I hope you will find time to drop me a few lines. My address while in the city will be the Cherokee Club. With many good wishes for the future, I am,

Yours affectionately

Robert Wilson.”

Helen hastily tore open the little package and found that it did indeed contain the little locket! Helen's hands dropped into her lap; her eyes remained

fastened on the lawn a few feet away; not a muscle moved; she sat like a statue. After a few minutes she regained control of herself, and picked up Wilson's letter from where it had dropped on the lawn. With a determined expression on her face, she started to tear the letter, but hesitated and then concluded to take the letter and the locket and show them both to Thora.

At first, upon reading Wilson's letter and finding the locket in the package, she had been momentarily dumbfounded and puzzled. Soon, however, she began to analyze the character of Robert Wilson.

"It's a lie," she exclaimed, as she crumpled up the letter in her hand. "You may think, Mr. Wilson, that you're a gay deceiver, but you won't deceive Helen McGregor."

Helen did not tell any of her family what she had received in the mail that day. She determined that nothing that she did should in any way cast reflection on, or defame the good name and character of, Hjalmar Sunmere.

That afternoon she called on Thora Sunmere. She was certain Thora would put the same construction on the matter as she had. Helen invited Thora to go out with her on the lawn. There, on the grass beyond the hearing of anybody else, she disclosed the news to her. After hearing the letter read and seeing the locket, Thora shook her head.

"Oh, no Helen," said Thora, "if Hjalmar parted with that locket, somebody must have taken it from him by force or stealth. I know well enough that

Hjalmar would never part with it of his own free will."

On concluding the conversation, Thora said, "Don't worry. Some day Hjalmar will return, and when he does he will be the same dear, good boy he was when he left."

Helen felt much relieved after her talk with Thora. Before she left she prevailed upon her not to tell Atle or any of the family what she had showed her that day, for Helen was determined the lie that Robert Wilson had told about Hjalmar Sunmere should not be circulated.

Chapter XXXIX.

A GLIMMER OF LIGHT.

Fall had come and gone, winter had flown, spring-time came again—no word from Hjalmar. It would soon be two years since he had left. At times Helen would become very despondent. Her sisters had all married and gone away, but she stayed at home with her mother, father and brother. None of them knew the longing and anxiety that she harbored in her breast. Sometimes she would stay in her room alone for hours.

“Will this suspense never end?” she asked herself. “If Hjalmar is alive, why doesn’t he write to his mother?”

This question she could not answer. Her one consolation was to visit Thora, who was always cheerful and always assured her that some day Hjalmar would come back.

Donald McGregor’s father was still living in the old home in the Highlands of Scotland. Duncan McGregor—for that was his name—wrote to his son Donald in America about every two months. Helen usually read the letters to her father and sometimes answered them for him. It was in the spring of the year. Helen was reading aloud a letter from her

grandfather. Near the end of the letter was the following paragraph:

"A short time ago a young man from America attended services in our church. When the services were over, he asked somebody if the McGregor family attended that church. I was pointed out to him. He came up and saluted me and asked if I was the father of Donald McGregor who was living in Wisconsin. I told him I was and asked him if he knew my son. He then went on to tell me that he was well acquainted with Donald and Margaret and all the children. He came in a conveyance driven by somebody from town. He asked if we had heard from Donald and his family lately and also how they then were. I told him we had a letter about a month ago. He appeared to be a very nice young fellow. I did not get his name, but you probably know who it might be."

While Helen read this part of the letter, she was very much affected, but no one noticed it. The thought flashed across her mind that the young man was Hjalmar. Donald and Margaret, for some time, discussed who it might be, but never thought of Hjalmar.

Helen gained a great deal of comfort from this bit of news. She read it over and over again and each time she became more positive than before that the young man was none other than her Hjalmar—for she still looked upon Hjalmar as her own.

The following day she took the letter to Thora and read it to her. Thora agreed with her that it was

Hjalmar, whom Duncan McGregor mentioned in his letter. She was much interested and reiterated to Helen that he would come back to them. That night, as Helen went to sleep, a ray of light beamed upon her when she thought of Hjalmar inquiring from her grandfather about the McGregor family, and that he had followed that up by asking how they were. She made up her mind that he was still interested in the McGregor family and probably in her.

Chapter XL.

JEFF GOES BACK SOUTH.

With the completion of the railroad, the construction camps were broken up and with them went Jeff. After some time he drifted to Chicago. Here he procured employment as a cook in a restaurant, and met quite a number of colored people from the South, but no one from the vicinity of his old home in Kentucky. He soon tired of the busy life and turmoil of the big city. He began to yearn to go back to the country where he was born and raised. When he left home and joined the Union army, his mother was still living as a slave on the old plantation; where he also had a sister and a brother. He had never heard from any of them since he left. A desire seized him to return—perhaps he could find his mother, brother and sister. He threw up his job, packed his trunk, and started for the South—for the old plantation near Covington. Once there somebody would perhaps be able to tell him if his mother was still living.

One morning, in December, he started from Covington for his old home. What changes he now saw along the road!—small houses with little barns. Some of the old plantations had been divided up into small farms. The old mansions did not show the care,

neatness and thrift that had characterized them in the old slave days; most of them were out of repair; they looked old and weatherbeaten.

It was a little after dinner when he arrived at Colonel Mott's plantation, the place where he had been raised. The old mansion looked well, better than any he had seen on the road. The small negro shacks were still standing. The little shack where he had lived when a boy was intact. Jeff wondered if his mother was still there. He walked up to the little cabin in an expectant mood. Everything looked so natural to him that he felt almost certain that his mother was inside. He rapped at the door, which swung open, and there he stood face to face with his mother!

"Mother!" stammered Jeff, reaching out his hand. The old woman shaded her eyes with her hand and looked searchingly at him; for a moment she said nothing. Jeff could restrain himself no longer. He stretched out both his arms and said:

"Mother, don't you know me?"

When she recognized him she screamed, and ran forward to him and put her arms around his neck.

"Oh, Jeff, Jeff, my son, Jeff, is it you?"

As Jeff took her in his arms, the tears ran down his swarthy cheeks.

They went into the cabin and Jeff had to tell his mother the story of his life from the time he had left.

"But where are Sarah and John?" asked Jeff.

"Sarah," she answered, "married George Piedmont.

They are living in Chicago. He has a barbershop and John is working for him in the shop."

"How long have they been there?" asked Jeff. "I lived there a whole year and didn't know that my brother and sister were living in the same town."

"Two years," she answered.

His mother then told him that Colonel Mott was still running the plantation the same as he had in times gone by. He now paid the old slaves wages and most of them stayed with him.

"He takes good care of me, as he says, for past services."

Jeff told his mother that he knew something about the restaurant business and that he intended to open a restaurant soon in Covington, as he preferred to live in Old Kentucky, his native state.

"And," said he, "when everything is arranged, you can come and live with me."

This seemed to please her very much, although she did not like to leave the old plantation, "For," she said, "although I was a slave, Colonel Mott has always treated me well. But I'll come with you, Jeff, if you say so."

Jeff had saved some money, having always been a good boy, who never dissipated, as Peter Aspelund said; so it was not long before he was in business for himself in the "Old town of Covington"—as he called it.

Chapter XLI.

THE LAST ATTEMPT.

One day, as Clarence Foster was about to leave the lobby of the Cherokee Club, Robert Wilson, whom Hjalmar had pointed out to him, accosted him: "Mr. Foster, I believe," said Wilson.

"That's my name, sir," replied Foster.

Wilson put out his hand and said, "My name is Robert Wilson, I think I know a friend of yours. You have a friend, have you not, by the name of Hjalmar Sunmere? I have seen you and him together on several occasions at the club. I became acquainted with him while out in Wisconsin a few years ago."

As he said this, Foster shook hands with him.

"I would like to talk with you a few minutes," continued Wilson, as he sat down in a chair and pointed to another for Foster. "I shall detain you for only a few minutes. May I ask what Mr. Sunmere was doing while in the city?"

"He was working in our Farm Implement Company's factory," said Foster. "And how did you become acquainted with him?"

"I was building part of a railroad in Wisconsin some years ago,—had control of the construction crew. We were working through a little town near

where Mr. Sunmere lived. If Mr. Sunmere is in the city, I should like to see him."

"Mr. Sunmere is not here. The company sent him on a business trip to Europe. We expect him back next May," said Foster.

"Is the young man making good for the company?" asked Wilson

"He is a very competent young man," replied Foster, "and has done some very thorough investigation for the company in the old country. We are getting reports from him once a month."

"Excuse me for detaining you," said Mr. Wilson, rising, "the reason for my asking you is that I am about to make a trip to Mr. Sunmere's old home and I wanted to be able to give his people some information as to how he is progressing."

He shook hands with Mr. Foster, thanked him for the information and walked out of the room.

As Foster walked down the street he wondered what Wilson was up to. Hjalmar had told him about his troubles with Wilson and how he was trying to win Helen McGregor. "Why did I not ask him how Helen McGregor is," thought Foster, "I'm a chump. One of the first things Hjalmar will ask me when he returns is, 'Have you heard anything about Helen McGregor?' Maybe I'll see him again," thought Foster, "and if I do, I'll surely inquire about her."

* * *

"Coming back in May," muttered Wilson, as he walked back to the billiard room of the Cherokee Club. "I must see that girl before he comes back,"

he said to himself. He made up his mind to go out to Chicago to attend to some business matters that he had with the railroad company and then run up to the little town, where Helen lived, to see her. Robert Wilson was cunning, but he was not what men would call a very bright man. He had always had his own way when a boy and it was difficult for him to brook opposition. He could not understand why Helen McGregor, the daughter of a Wisconsin backwoodsman, should not jump at the chance of marrying him.

"I have disposed of that young Norwegian quite satisfactorily, at least for the present," he said. "Helen by this time will be lonesome, living out in the backwoods, and I am sure that I shall succeed. It is now or never with me so far as that young lady is concerned."

* * *

A few days later, Helen McGregor, sitting on the little bench under the willow tree on her father's lawn, was looking down the road as though she were waiting for somebody. Two summers had gone by and it was fall again. Nobody in the settlement had heard from Hjalmar. Thora still continued to say, whenever she saw her, that some time Hjalmar would come back and that he would be the same boy that he was when he left them. Helen complained to nobody. No one in the McGregor family knew how lonesome she was. She had lost her playmate; nobody could take his place.

While she was thus looking down the road, as was her habit, she saw somebody drive up to the little

gate. As he stepped out and hitched his horse, she recognized Robert Wilson. A feeling of bitter resentment came upon her, for she knew that he had lied to her about Hjalmar in his last letter. However, she collected her thoughts before Wilson came up, and made up her mind to treat him courteously, though coldly. As he approached, he lifted his hat and smiled sweetly.

"How do you do, Miss McGregor?" said Wilson.

"How do you do, Wr. Wilson!" said Helen, putting out a hand that was cold and limp.

Mr. Wilson grasped it eagerly and shook it with warm enthusiasm.

"May I share the bench with you?" he asked.

"You may," said Helen, moving as far as the bench permitted.

"You received the last letter I sent, I suppose, and the gold locket. I have received no answer to my letter. I acquired the locket and sent it to you, because I did not want your picture bartered about in the dens and dives of New York City."

"Now," said Helen as she turned about and looked Mr. Wilson squarely in the face, the color surging up into her cheeks, "I do not care to have you talk to me any more about Hjalmar Summere. I have known him since he was a little bit of a boy and I think I have a right to speak in his defense. I may as well tell you, Mr. Wilson, that I did not believe a single word of the last letter you sent me. You and I might as well understand each other now before we go any further with this matter."

She arose from the bench and stood in front of Mr. Wilson: "My brother, James, saw the fight between you and Hjalmar the night before Hjalmar left. He told me that you came upon him with half a dozen of your working crew, half drunk, and that you, with that crew, surrounded Hjalmar and intended to beat him up, but he was too quick for you and you landed on your back. No gentleman would take a hand in such a disreputable plot."

At this broadside from the lips of Helen McGregor, Robert Wilson completely wilted. He hung his head, but after the lapse of a few seconds, said: "My dear Miss McGregor, I am afraid you have been misinformed and are totally ignorant of the real situation."

"I don't care to discuss the matter with you any further," she responded. "I have made up my mind as to what actually occurred between you and Hjalmar, and nothing you can say will change it."

With these words she turned on her heel and said good-bye to Mr. Wilson.

Robert Wilson had been caught. The plot he had laid for Hjalmar had failed. He touched his hat gracefully, said good-bye to Miss McGregor, and was soon driving slowly down the road, never again to return to the house of Donald McGregor.

Chapter XLII.

COMING BACK.

Since the time that Hjalmar had left his home in Wisconsin so suddenly, he had never received any news from the old settlement.

He had spent nearly two years in Europe in the service of the company he was working for. It was the month of March. It would be three years the coming summer since he had left home. He was due in New York the following May. Before leaving Europe he decided to visit his father's old home in Norway.

The fog lay thick around the headlands of the Norwegian coast on the morning that Hjalmar arrived at the little seaport town where his father and mother had embarked on their voyage to America. Upon landing he inquired for the office of Consul Heltberg, the owner of the ship "Dea," on which his father and mother had sailed. Hjalmar introduced himself to a young man in the office, saying he was from the United States and inquired if Consul Heltberg was still living. The young man told him that he was a son of Consul Heltberg; that his father was quite old and had not come down to the office that morning. Hjalmar then asked him if he knew a farm in the neighborhood by the name of "Sunmere."

"I know a farm by that name," he answered, "but it lies about sixteen miles up the valley."

"That was my father's home before he went to America," said Hjalmar, "and I must go up there and see it. Can I get a conveyance in town?"

"You must go up and see my father first," said the young man, "for I know he will be interested in talking to you."

Hjalmar found that Consul Heltberg knew his father very well and remembered all about his sailing to America on the "Dea." He asked Hjalmar if Atle and Thora were still living. When told that they were the old Consul asked Hjalmar to be sure to greet them from him when he went back home. This Hjalmar promised to do.

As Hjalmar was driving up the valley, he asked the driver if he knew where Aspelund was.

"Yes, I know the place. It lies on this side of Sunmere, and we shall pass it on our way up the valley." That day Hjalmar saw the childhood homes of his father and mother.

On his way back he asked the driver where the parish church was.

"The parish church? Why that was the church we passed this morning. It lies about half way down the valley from the Sunmere farm." Hjalmar also learned from the driver that services were held at ten o'clock every Sunday morning, and made up his mind to stay over and attend services the following Sunday.

The church was a large, roomy stone structure, with steeple and bell tower. Hjalmar arrived early.

He spoke to the sexton and asked him if he could sit in the pew that used to belong to the Sunmere family. The sexton gave his permission and showed him into the pew. The church filled up with worshippers. The pastor preached for fully an hour. When services were over, Hjalmar told the sexton that he was the son of Atle Sunmere from America. The sexton was an old man and remembered both Atle and Thora well. Hjalmar was introduced to some cousins of his father, who were very glad to see him. Soon Hjalmar found himself surrounded by a group of interested people, who were anxious to talk with a man from America, for, so far as they knew, he was the first man they had seen from that country.

"A large number of people," said one, "have left the valley for America, but no one has ever returned."

Most of them had relatives in America and were anxious to get news from them. They thought that a man from America would know all about their relatives there, no matter where they lived, for they had a very slight realization of the size of the country. They were somewhat surprised to hear that Hjalmar could talk Norwegian so well, inasmuch as he was born in America.

Hjalmar concluded to sail for America in an English boat from Liverpool, so he took passage from Norway to Glasgow. While crossing the North Sea, he made up his mind to visit the little "kirk," as Donald McGregor called it, in the Highlands of Scotland, where Donald and Margaret had been married. After some inquiries he found that the old home of

the McGregors was about sixty miles up in the country. He timed his trip in such a way that he would arrive in the country Sunday morning and attend services in the little church.

After driving over ridges and down in valleys, he arrived at the little church just as the people were gathering for worship. After services he asked one of the worshippers if there were any of the McGregor family at church that morning. He was introduced to Duncan McGregor, a man in his eighties, the father of Donald McGregor. Hjalmar told him that he knew his son and his family very well. The old gentleman was very much pleased to hear from his son through Hjalmar and told him that he had received a letter from Donald about a month before, saying that he and his family were well, and that his granddaughter, Helen, might visit them the following year.

On his return to Glasgow, Hjalmar's mind became very active. If Helen McGregor, he thought, planned on visiting her grandparents, she is neither married nor engaged. This was good news, for Hjalmar admitted to himself that his reason for going to the old church in the Highlands was to make an attempt to hear about Helen through her grandparents. All kinds of thoughts began to crowd in on Hjalmar. Had Helen McGregor been true to him after all? This question he could not yet fully answer to his own satisfaction.

When, on the first of May, Hjalmar set sail from Liverpool for New York a strange feeling took possession of him. For the first time in years he felt

happy. Was it because he was going back to his native land, and because he might again see his old home and Helen McGregor?

Hjalmar reached New York Tuesday morning, May 15th. After dinner he looked up Clarence Foster. Foster was delighted to see him.

"You're looking fine, Hjalmar," said he. "You never appeared to be yourself here in New York before you left for Europe. Have you heard anything from Helen McGregor?"

"Not directly," said Hjalmar. "On my trip across the North Sea from Norway I landed at Glasgow, Scotland. I traveled about sixty miles into the Highlands to see the little church where Helen's father and mother were married, and where her grandparents are still living. I met her grandfather at church on the Sunday morning I was there. He told me that Helen was thinking of making a trip to Scotland; he said that he had had a letter from his son about a month ago, and that all the family were well. I concluded from this, Foster, that the villain, Wilson, had not captured her either immediately or prospectively. Have you seen anything of Wilson since I left?"

"Yes," replied Foster, "I met him one day last month at the Cherokee Club. He came up to me in the lobby, introduced himself on the excuse that he had seen you and me together, and that he knew you in Wisconsin."

At this both boys laughed heartily.

"He wanted to know all about you. When I told

him that you were in Europe, he seemed anxious to know when you were coming back."

"Did you tell him?" interjected Hjalmar.

"Yes, I did," said Foster; "I told him that we were expecting you back in May, this year. That's about all the conversation I had with him."

"Construing the talk that you had with Wilson," said Hjalmar, "with what Helen's grandfather told me in Scotland, I am confirmed in my opinion that Wilson has failed to make a hit with Helen."

"I think you made a serious mistake, Hjalmar," said Foster, "when you ran away that night after the fight with Wilson."

"That may seem so from your viewpoint, but from my viewpoint I could do nothing else. You may think, Foster, that the people who live in the country districts are different from city people, and that they do not see the fine points of etiquette and honor as you city people do, but I want to tell you that these country people are just as keen and alert to the social life of the community as you are here in New York City. The McGregors and our family had been so intimate and so friendly that I felt about as much at home at the house of Donald McGregor as I did with my father and mother. Helen and I—while we were not technically engaged—had a social relationship which was stronger than an engagement. For not only the immediate families, but also the community, felt that the two families were to be joined, as it were, by our marriage. I felt, under the circumstances, that Helen had no right to be flirting with

that stranger, as she did, unless she wanted to break up our companionship; and that I should get into a fight on her account with a band of thugs broke me up completely. I could not face either my own parents or the McGregors. The only way out of it for me, it seemed at the time, was to get away and break off communications with my home entirely. This I did. Maybe I acted rashly, but one thing I am satisfied of and that is, that Helen was equally to blame."

While Hjalmar was making this talk, Foster had lit a fresh cigar, was leaning back in his chair, and was blowing whiffs of smoke from his mouth. When Hjalmar had finished, he laid his cigar on the table, and with an interested air, said:

"I am not going to decide who was to blame in this matter. I am only going to consider your conduct, Hjalmar. Now, let us suppose, for argument's sake, that Helen was to blame. You must admit that you got angry with her. You assumed that Wilson had been preferred to you, that she liked Wilson better than she liked you, that your chances of getting her were gone.

"All these conclusions you arrived at without any further investigation. You made up your mind solely and only on these facts, as I have stated them. You threw up a life companionship on account of a few insignificant happenings that all occurred within a few days, and I'm frank to say I don't believe the conclusions you arrived at were either warranted or correct. You had no reason to believe that Helen McGregor did not think as much of you when she

accepted Wilson's invitation to attend the Fourth of July ball as she ever had done.

"In other words, Hjalmar, it was a lovers' quarrel, and nothing else, and your conduct was faulty because you did not realize it. I haven't the slightest doubt but that that little girl has been waiting all these three years for you with a broken heart. If you go back you will heal it, in all probability, and everything will come out as in the good old fairy tales."

Hjalmar seemed much impressed with this talk by Foster. His desire to go back to his old home was gaining ground. "I won't write," said Hjalmar, "I'll go there and surprise them."

"That will do all right," said Foster, as he was again puffing at his cigar.

"But," said Hjalmar, "I may not be able to get away. It will take me some time to go over my reports of the European trip."

"Now," said Foster, "it will probably take you two or three weeks to make a report of your work, but I know they are intending to send you West to check up their sales agencies. They want you to go down into southern Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee, and then strike their main Western office at Chicago, and while you're in Chicago, you can run up to your old home. I am planning to take charge of the Chicago office about the first of July. That will be about the time you will reach that city on your trip. At that time you and I can have a further talk."

The effect of this conversation upon Hjalmar was

to make him somewhat nervous. While he was rocking in his chair he was drumming with his fingers. After supper the two boys went to the theater.

After getting to his room that night Hjalmar's mind was so busy that he could not go to sleep. The suggestion by Foster, that he had made a mistake in leaving his home so abruptly, pressed for consideration. Could it be possible that Helen had been true to him all the time, and that she had been staying at home these three long years waiting for him? The only conclusion reached was that if he had made a mistake, Helen had made as serious a blunder as he had, and so he said to himself, "I guess Foster is right. It was only a lovers' quarrel."

Chapter XLIII.

NEWS.

If you should happen to stroll down the principal business street of Covington, Kentucky, you would see this sign: "Jefferson Davis, Restaurant, Oysters and Chops."

If you should go inside, you would soon recognize our old friend, Jeff. His old mother had left Colonel Mott's plantation, and was now living with her son. Jeff was one of the happiest colored men in the city of Covington. He had found his mother, and, as he used to say, was now a business man "on his own hook," in the old town near which he was born and raised.

Old Colonel Mott generally took a meal in Jeff's place, when he was in town. Many a pleasant moment was whiled away with Colonel Mott, as they talked about things that happened long before the war. Jeff told the Colonel about his experiences up North, and how lonesome it was to work all alone in the hot sun on a northern farm. This interested the Colonel, and he would laugh and say:

"I suppose, Jeff, you were mighty glad to get back again to God's country."

At this Jeff would retort quickly, "Dem Northern people, Massa Mott, are powerful fine people—no

nicer folks in Kentucky." And the Colonel would again laugh and say:

"Oh, I guess, Jeff, there isn't so much difference between the people of the North and South. So far as I am concerned, I am glad slavery was abolished. Now, when I have a bad nigger, I can let him go, and get a good one."

One evening, while Jeff was serving supper, he overheard a conversation between two men, while they were eating. One of them said:

"John, did you see that young fellow that was brought in sick tonight and taken up to the hotel? He was a likely looking young man."

"Yes," responded his partner, "I saw him. I helped carry him upstairs to his room. His mind seemed to be wandering. I understand they can't find out who he is or where he's from. He has the name 'Summere' written on his grip, but I don't suppose there's anybody in this neck of the woods that could give us any clue as to where he lives or where he came from."

"What hotel was he taken to?" asked Jeff, greatly interested.

One of the men answered, "To the Brunswick Hotel."

Jeff volunteered the statement that he had known a family by the name of Summere in Southern Wisconsin, and asked the men how old the stranger was.

"Somewhere about twenty-five," was the answer.

When supper was over Jeff took his hat and walked over to the Brunswick Hotel.

"I understand you have a young man here," he said, addressing the clerk, "who came in sick tonight, and that you're trying to locate him—that is, to get in touch with his folks. I think I can identify him, if you will take me up to his room."

Jeff was soon shown up to the room where the young man was lying. When Jeff came in the doctor was there. After introducing himself and telling the doctor the purpose of his errand, he said, "Is he asleep? If you could turn him this way so I could see his face, I think I could tell you who he is, and where he's from."

"I have just given him some medicine," said the doctor, "which, I hope, will put him to sleep. His mind is wandering, and I think he is coming down with typhoid fever."

While the doctor was speaking, the patient, with a groan, turned around, with his face toward Jeff, but gave no sign of recognition.

"That's Hjalmar Sunmere," said Jeff to the doctor; "I knew him very well, also his family. They live in the state of Wisconsin, not far from Milwaukee. I think I'll go down stairs and wire his father, but before I do so, I'd like to know what you think of his condition."

"That's difficult to say," responded the doctor. "As I said before, it looks to me as though he's coming down with the typhoid fever. However, I can't tell definitely till tomorrow. In the meantime I think you had better wire his people, and tell them that he

is seriously sick, and that somebody had better come down and look after him."

Jeff hurried down to the telegraph office. The doctor had written the telegram and Jeff had signed it. It was addressed to Atle Sunmere, and was as follows:

"Your son Hjalmar is here seriously ill at the Hotel Brunswick. Somebody better come down and look after him. He is under the care of a doctor.

Jefferson Davis (Jeff)."

Jeff was much interested in Hjalmar's condition. The following day the doctor told him that it was a severe case of typhoid fever, and that it would take several days before the patient would pass the crisis. Jeff called at Hjalmar's room every day. Thus far the patient had given no intimation that he recognized his old friend Jeff.

* * *

It was the twenty-fourth day of June, which in Norway is celebrated as Midsummer day. Quite a number of the Norwegian immigrants in our Wisconsin settlement had not forgotten the merrymaking and celebrating that usually took place in the old country on that day. The Norwegian women usually served, what might be called, a sumptuous dinner on this occasion. Atle had taken a grist to the little flour mill, down on the stream, and Thora had resolved to get up a good meal for Atle in honor of the day, when he should return.

She was preparing the cream pudding when Atle

drove into the yard. Atle shouted and waved something in his hand, but Thora could not leave the pudding, so Hilda ran down to meet her father. She soon returned, holding in her hand a slip of yellow paper. By this time Thora had succeeded in getting the cream pudding off the stove and met Hilda in the door.

"What have you got?" asked the mother.

Hilda was unable to answer, as she was out of breath from running up the hill to the house, but finally shouted:

"It's a telegram from Hjalmar."

At the sound of Hjalmar's name, Thora struck the palms of her hands together, and sank into a chair.

"Read it, oh, read it!" she cried. And after the reading of the telegram, she exclaimed:

"I must go and take care of my boy! Oh! Hjalmar, Hjalmar, why didn't you write to us before?"

Soon Atle came in. He had read the telegram on his way from the station. "What shall we do?" he asked.

"I am going down to see him. I'll take the train tomorrow morning," said Thora, who, by this time, had regained something of her usual coolness. After supper she continued:

"You and I, Atle, will drive over to Donald McGregor's, for I must show this telegram to Helen."

The telegram was discussed by the Sunmere family at the supper table. None of them could understand why Hjalmar should be sick in Covington, Kentucky.

Before leaving that evening, Thora instructed Hilda to pack the family trunk, enumerating the things which it should contain. Gunnar went to Peter Aspelund's place to acquaint them with the news.

As Atle and Thora drove down the road to the McGregor home, they saw Helen sitting, as usual, on the little seat under the willow tree by the little stream. Helen was always glad to see Thora and Atle. Thora always comforted her when she talked about Hjalmar. As they drove in through the large gate, Helen met them in front of the house. After exchanging greetings, Thora stepped out of the buggy, and walked over to Helen. She put her hand on her shoulder and said:

"Helen, I am bringing you news. It's both good and bad, but do not be disheartened. We have heard from Hjalmar."

As the last words fell from the lips of Thora, Helen grasped her arm, as if to steady herself, while Thora related the news. Thora drew from her pocket the little yellow slip of paper and handed it to Helen. Again Helen grasped Thora's arm as she read the telegram. Then she threw her arms around Thora's neck and burst into tears, so that her sobbing could be heard by Donald and Margaret, who were inside the house. Both came out and soon the discussion became general in the little group. Thora said she would take the early morning train for Chicago, and expected to be in Covington the following day. After some talk over the situation all agreed that this was the best thing to do.

When Thora and Atle left that evening, Helen followed Thora out on the lawn and whispered to her that she wished to go along to see Hjalmar, but Thora insisted that she would write to her as soon as she got down there and explain his condition to her.

"But," sobbed Helen, "if Hjalmar is going to die, I must see him before he dies."

"I don't believe he can be so very sick," said Thora, "and you had better compose yourself, and wait till you hear from me."

And this was finally agreed upon. That night, before Helen went to bed, she prayed earnestly that Hjalmar might recover, and that she might see him and explain to him her past conduct, and how much sorrow and anxiety it had caused her during the last three years. Before going to sleep she determined to get up early and go down to the station for a last word with Thora before she left.

At the station, Helen importuned Thora to send her a telegram as soon as she had seen Hjalmar.

"You will probably get there late tomorrow evening," said she, "and I'll get your telegram day after tomorrow."

This Thora agreed to do.

These were two long days for Helen McGregor.

She was at a loss to know how she should spend the time. She loved to think of Hjalmar, but then came the horrible thought: "If he should die and I should be unable to see him!"

She did everything; she hoed in the garden; she sat on the seat under the little willow tree and tried

to read, but her mind refused to pay attention to what she read.

It was indeed a long day, but the sun went down, and the twilight came. The moon arose and the song of the whippoorwill came clear and distinct through the open window in her room. She tossed on her pillow, but wherever she turned, and whenever she turned, there came to her the uncertainty of the situation. Early in the morning she fell asleep, and slept until the sun had nearly reached the meridian.

Another day dragged slowly by. When she awoke on the third morning she felt refreshed, and more calm than she had felt at any time since word had been received from Hjalmar. Before noon Thora's telegram came. At no time had Helen thought so much of her future life could be enclosed in a little yellow envelope. She tore the envelope open with firmness, and here is what she read:

"Hjalmar has a severe attack of typhoid fever. The doctor says there is hope for his recovery. He will pass the crisis in two days. Come at once."

Helen heaved a deep sigh of relief. A part, at least, of the suspense was over; Hjalmar was still alive and there was hope of his recovery. At the dinner table Donald expressed the belief that Hjalmar would recover.

"For," said he, "Hjalmar was always a good boy, and has never dissipated. Don't worry, my little girl," he said, as he stroked Helen's cheek, "when you get to Covington, Kentucky, Hjalmar will be on the road to recovery."

Margaret McGregor was cheerful, and agreed with what Donald had said. That afternoon Helen prepared herself for the trip; the next morning before the sun rose, she was at the station. Her brother, James, who took her to the station, thought she looked more hopeful and satisfied.

Soon Helen McGregor was speeding southward to meet her long lost lover.

Chapter XLIV.

BETWEEN HOPE AND FEAR.

It was a little after dark when Thora's train pulled up to the station at Covington, Kentucky. Hilda had sent a telegram to Jeff asking him to meet her mother at the train. As Thora appeared on the platform of the coach Jeff recognized her. As he was helping her down the steps to the platform, Thora asked him how Hjalmar was.

"He's about the same," said Jeff, "the doctor said this morning that he was not any worse. I had a word with the nurse this afternoon. She told me that she thought that Hjalmar was more quiet today. Have you had your supper?"

Thora shook her head, but said that she did not care for any supper; she asked to see Hjalmar immediately. Jeff, however, succeeded in inducing her to go with him to his restaurant and get something to eat; then he would take her up to the hotel and introduce her to the nurse.

Jeff's talk had quieted Thora somewhat, and she ate a good supper. A little later she accompanied Jeff to the hotel to a room that he had selected for her before she arrived. The nurse told her that Hjalmar seemed to be more quiet, which, she thought, was a good sign that he would recover.

That night Thora watched over Hjalmar. He was her youngest child. She was so glad she had an opportunity to take care of him.

At first he seemed to be asleep. Soon he began to talk, though not to Thora, for he knew nothing of her presence. He seemed to be talking to Helen. Suddenly he shouted:

“Run, Helen, run or the wildcat will get you!” Then he fell back on his pillow, staring wildly at the ceiling. He murmured:

“I’ll get that wildcat.”

Thora could understand during the night, that in his delirious condition he was talking to Helen. Sometimes it seemed as though he and Helen were playing along the banks of the little stream, sometimes he would laugh, and seemed to sink into sleep and was quiet; sometimes Thora thought he was talking about their life at the University.

The night went and the daylight came through the windows of the little room. The nurse told Thora to go to her room and get some sleep, and promised to wake her up when the doctor came.

The doctor told Thora that Hjalmar would pass the crisis that day. If nothing happened, he was reasonably certain that Hjalmar would recover. That morning the nurse wrote a telegram for her to Helen McGregor.

Thora slept till noon, and felt rested and composed. The nurse gave her the glad news that Hjalmar was a little better than on the previous day. His temperature was going down a little and his breath-

ing was more regular. In the evening the doctor came again and gave Thora the cheerful news that Hjalmar, in all probability, had passed the crisis of the fever.

Thora expected Helen the following day and had asked Jeff to meet her at the train. That night Hjalmar slept more quietly than he had done at any time since Thora came. The following day, for the first time, he recognized her. At first he seemed bewildered, for he did not realize where he was. Thora warned him to be quiet and when he was a little stronger, she would tell him all about it.

Before Jeff went to the station to meet Helen that evening, he had learned from Thora Hjalmar's condition. Jeff took Helen with him to his restaurant for supper. While she was eating he sat at the opposite side of the table. They talked about the old times up in Wisconsin. Helen was quite cheerful on account of the news of Hjalmar's condition.

After supper Jeff got his mother, brought her out, and introduced her to Helen. Then he told Helen he had some very confidential news to tell her. While down on the old plantation he had met one of the old girls that he used to play with when he was a child. They had renewed their friendship and, "Now," said Jeff, as he leaned forward and whispered in Helen's ear, "we're going to get married."

"And when is the happy event to come off?" asked Helen.

"In about two weeks," said Jeff.

When Helen arrived at the Brunswick Hotel she

found Thora in her room. Thora had watched over Hjalmar all day and now the nurse had taken her turn for the night. Thora told her the doctor had said that Hjalmar had probably passed the crisis. She informed her that Hjalmar must be kept quiet for the next two days. Any sudden excitement might bring on a relapse.

Helen stayed with Thora that night in her room. At the end of two days Thora took her to see Hjalmar. He was still very weak, but he grasped Helen's hand and asked her to sit on the bed. It was a happy meeting for both. Helen remained only a few minutes, telling Hjalmar that she would return the following day.

After this Hjalmar's recovery was quite rapid. In two weeks he was able to sit up and take short walks with Helen. One day, as they were out walking, they called at Jeff's place. Helen asked Jeff if he was married yet.

"No," he replied, "but next Sunday we are going to be married down on the old plantation. Mother is going with me and I would like to have you and Hjalmar come along."

Helen shook her head, saying that before Sunday they would all be leaving for Wisconsin.

"Then, I suppose," said Jeff, "there will be a wedding at Donald McGregor's place."

Hjalmar smiled, but neither said anything.

* * *

Saturday night the passenger train from Milwaukee pulled into the little station in the old settlement.

On the station platform were Atle Sunmere, Donald McGregor and Margaret, Helen's brother, James, Gunnar and Hilda Sunmere. Hjalmar, Thora, and Helen stepped off the train. Hjalmar was pale and thin, but had lost nothing of his former bearing and general appearance.

The little company all drove up to the home of Donald McGregor, where the two families sat down together for supper. It was now three years since Hjalmar had left them. The reunion on this occasion was the happiest event in the history of the two families. Everybody contributed to the good cheer around the table.

The next day Hjalmar sat with Helen on the little seat under the willow tree on the McGregor lawn.

While at Covington Helen had refused to discuss the past with Hjalmar, but had told him that when once more they should be seated under the willow tree at home she would tell him all. And now Helen made good her word—told Hjalmar everything. When she came to the story of the gold locket, the color came into Hjalmar's face, and he was very angry. But Helen warned him to keep cool, for it was now only past history.

"And now," said Helen, "I want you to tell me something. Did you visit my grandparents while you were in Europe?"

"I did," replied Hjalmar, as he turned his face half away from her and smiled.

"My grandfather wrote to papa about it, but he

had forgotten your name. I knew it was you, though, the moment I read it. I knew there was no one from America, Hjalmar, who was interested enough in my grandparents, to go and see them, excepting you. I read the letter to Thora and she agreed with me."

When Helen told Hjalmar how she had driven Wilson off the place by declaring to him that she did not believe a word of the gold locket story, Hjalmar grasped her hand and kissed her.

"He couldn't fool a McGregor, could he, Helen?"

Hjalmar then told about his travels in Scotland; how he had visited the battlefield of Bannockburn; that he had seen the statues of Wallace and Bruce.

"I also visited the home of Bobby Burns," said he, "and paid my respects to Abbotsford, the home of Walter Scott. The Scotch people have a great history and you should be proud of your ancestry."

"But did you not visit places of interest in Norway, as well?" asked Helen.

"Oh! yes," said Hjalmar, "I stood by the spot where Henrik Ibsen was born. I saw the Hall at Eidsvold, where the present constitution of Norway was brought forth. I wish you could have seen the cathedral at Trondhjem. I also saw the home of the great Bjornson."

* * *

Not long after Hjalmar's return to his own home he wrote a letter to Clarence Foster, who, as Hjalmar had been informed, was working for his old company in Chicago. Hjalmar wrote him of his sickness at Covington, Kentucky, and that he and Helen had

been reconciled. He told him he was recovering rapidly, and that he would be in position to go to work again in about a month. When he was completely recovered he expected to go back to New York, and would stop off and spend a day with him in Chicago.

Before Hjalmar left for the east, his engagement to Helen was announced, to the great satisfaction of the McGregor and Sunmere families. Hjalmar had determined to quit his employment with the company, and locate permanently in the little home village, which was growing rapidly. It was agreed that on his return from New York, he and Helen were to be married.

A little later, when Hjalmar walked into the office in Chicago to meet his old friend, Clarence Foster, the latter laughed heartily as he grasped Hjalmar's hand.

"So it's all riveted and clinched," said Foster. "That's what I expected last spring, when you went West. I knew that a companionship such as had existed between you and Helen McGregor could not be broken up by a dude from Yale College. As I expected, that little girl had been true to you all the time."

"True as steel," answered Hjalmar, with a smile. "I am going to be married in the fall, Foster, and while I have been sojourning in the woods some new ideas have been buzzing in my brain. That Southern Wisconsin is as fine an agricultural district as lies anywhere in the Northwest. The farmers up there are all prospering. I have made up my mind

that I am going to start an agricultural implement manufacturing plant in the little village on that new railroad. You know I have several valuable patents. You remember I showed them to you when I got back from Europe. I am going to build that seeder, that I showed you a drawing of, and then I intend to make a mower and certain other things along the same line, as business may develop. I want to make a proposition to you: if you will furnish part of the capital for the enterprise, I will turn my patents over to the company."

"No doubt," said Foster, "this western country has a fine opening for just such a concern as you propose."

The two friends spent the whole day in canvassing the situation, and, as Hjalmar left for New York, Foster asked him to stop off again on his return. In the meantime he would consider Hjalmar's proposition carefully. On his return from New York he spent several days with Foster, and before he left his project had been landed. A part of the capital had already been raised; the balance could easily be obtained, they both thought, in Hjalmar's home town.

Chapter XLV.

BIRDS AND FLOWERS.

It was nearly thirty-five years since Donald McGregor and Atle Sunmere met in Atle's little log cabin, for the first time.

The wedding of Hjalmar and Helen was set for the seventeenth day of August. Helen wanted to be married on her father's lawn, under the willow tree that grew near the bank of the stream. There she had sat for a large portion of the time for three years, and waited for Hjalmar's return. A platform was to be erected under a bower of green branches, where the young people could dance. Donald had engaged a Scotchman to play the bagpipe, and Atle had procured an old Norwegian musician to give the young people the benefit of Norwegian music. Atle and Donald had agreed that the wedding should be both Norwegian and Scotch, for it was to unite the two families by the marriage of the two youngest children.

The wedding day was propitious, and at high noon, under the willow tree, Helen and Hjalmar were made one. The lawn around the willow was strewn with wild flowers. To Hjalmar and Helen, wherever they looked, nature smiled. The little swallows, as they flew by, dipped their feathers in the water of the

stream, as if to curtsy to the bridal couple. The stream hurried by, now whispering, now murmuring, gurgling and laughing as it swung around the stones and boulders. The little minnows jumped up from the water to get a glimpse, as it were, of the happy wedding.

That evening was a great occasion for old and young. On the lawn of Donald McGregor Highland Flings and "Coming Through the Rye" were interspersed with Norwegian Spring Dances and Hal-lings. All the families of the old pioneers were there. The young people danced until the light of the new day began to glow on the eastern horizon.

Hjalmar and Helen left the next day for Madison to spend their honeymoon. They strolled together over the University grounds; they walked along the beach of Lake Mendota, as they had done many times in the old school days; they ate their lunch one day on the old picnic ground at Picnic Point. And Hjalmar told Helen of his plan to start an agricultural implement factory in their own town.

"I have already interested Mr. Foster," he said, "who will furnish part of the capital. The rest of the capital will be raised in the old settlement. I have already spoken to some of the people there, and they are willing and anxious to come into the company."

"Then you intend," said Helen, "that you and I shall live in the old settlement."

"That's it," said Hjalmar, "and won't it be nice to live there near our old homes, with the two families all about us?"

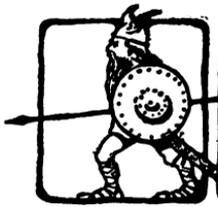
"I think that will be beautiful," replied Helen, "for I have never yet seen any place that I think is quite as pretty as our old home town. I shall always love your mother, Hjalmar, for she is one of the dearest persons in the whole world to me. When you were gone, and I was feeling so dreadfully sad, your mother was always calm, kind, and hopeful. She never lost faith in you. Every time I saw her she said, 'Some day Hjalmar will come back, and he will be the same good boy that he always was'."

"But where shall we live?" asked Helen.

"As soon as I get back," said Hjalmar, "I intend to acquire a site along the river bank for our manufacturing plant, and on the river bank near the factory I'll build a little home for you and me. Won't that be fine?" said he, as he grasped Helen by the shoulders and shook her playfully.

"I'm sure pa and ma will be glad to have us stay with them until our little home is ready," said Helen. And so they talked over the future.

"I have some very valuable patents on certain farm implements that I'll turn over to the company," said Hjalmar. "I know the company will succeed and prosper. Foster will have control of the business end of the concern, while I will have charge of the factory and foundry."



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