

THE OLD NORTH CREEK.

In the good old prosperous days of Aberdeen a pier was built 100 yards or so out into the river, affording a harbor along the city's front. On its stony area great buildings were constructed, warehouses and granaries, the precursors of modern elevators. For a time that haven was crowded to overflowing with all the various crafts of traffic. For a time those mighty structures were stored to overflowing, and deemed most reliable and valuable possessions by opulent owners. But the railways came and carried the distributing point into the West; from a terminus, Aberdeen dwindled into a way station.

Gradually the basin, as it was called, was slighted by even canal boats, and suffered to fill with silt and sewage. Gradually the property on the pier became more the subject of tax sales than the object of taxation. Business had no further use for it, for naught else was of any use. The huge fabrics stood empty and deserted, with weather-stained sides and broken windows, cared for only by neglect. Lucky the prudent merchant who had gathered and retired and kept. Well could he curse his foolish brethren who had failed to read the evident signs of the commercial skies.

Probably no one suffered more from this decay or received less sympathy than old Norman Druce, who had built the largest warehouse on the pier. He had been a hard man in his prosperity; in his adversity men and things were hard towards him. He was too obstinate to yield and sacrifice much for a little. He persisted and kept losing until that little seemed great; until all that remained of his wealth was that monument of his ruin, which no one would buy, and which he could not even give away. Then he died and left the vast barracks and a slender inheritance to his son Norman, his only child, a child born amid the depression foreboding disaster and of a mother who gave her life for his birth.

The care of the boy and of his sparse patrimony old Norman confided to Chauncey Maine, the one friend who had proved staunch against circumstances. A prosperous, sweet-natured man was this friend, one who undertook the charge as he did every duty—with a smile. Not even the doubts of his wife perturbed him, although his thought had ever been her reason. "Such a strange, sullen lad," she pleaded. "His great black eyes haunt me. I don't really think it will be good for Adele."

"Pooh, pooh," had laughed her husband. "She will be good for him. Remember the poor boy has been bred in the shadow of misfortune. The sunshine of our home will transform his nature, you may be sure."

And little Adele had clasped her arms protectingly around young Norman's neck. And truly that gentle home, with its hearty master, its kindly face, its bright little girl, did stir and quicken the boy's heart most preciously. He loved it all, he loved them all, fiercely, intensely, with the devotion of one who had been snatched from the tempest and brought into the very glow of the hearth. "A strange, sullen lad," he was indeed—dark, slight, with a touch of anticipatory suffering in his eyes and a melancholy shadow to his brows. But when he smiled, as he did at the call of one of those home voices, then his spirit shone forth and it was all gratitude, all tenderness. And so, against appearances and predispositions, he became a part of a simple joyous family.

Norman was not companionable. When he was not with Adele, and through her with Rufus Knowles, her playfellow, who lived next door, he was alone. Often, too, he left these two, because he felt loneliness in the knowledge that he did not share their mutual affection. Then he would wander out into the country, and in the gloom of the woodland and the seclusion of the thicket find the consolation of solitude for his thoughts. More often, though, he would stroll down to the pier and linger in the great vacant building which was his inheritance. It had voices, had that huge structure, and foreboded his own. In the dusty shadows he saw pictures, ghosts of events reordered even as his being had been. Yet there was comfort in the knowledge of common misfortune, for from its community came sympathy.

Sometimes, too, he would go aboard the squab schooners that lay along the wharf and climb up to the crossbeams, and there on dream hours away tranquilly, if not happily, watching the flow of the magic river. There were voices in its glitter—uninterpretable, indeed, yet yielding the impression of rest. A magic river truly it seemed to him, connecting the unknown with the known, leading from ice to heat, from cloud to glow. As he followed its course until it bent around the island and in a shining sweep disappeared, each little wave grew brighter as it that curve were the gate into a fairer world.

Thoughtful Norman continued as he advanced into manhood thoughtful, yet not sad. His temper, which had been unruly, he disciplined and controlled. His disposition, too, introspective, grew broad and unselfish. He ceased not from dreaming, yet his dreams were never ignoble. He would serve his benefactors. He would bring into their feet all the wonders of the world. He would lay down his life for their sake! Ah how he loved them all, and Adele in the highest! Passion gave to his youth the maturity of full manhood. Yet never in his brightest visions did this love smile with success. He was always doing something to aid her, and then going away, away forever beyond the bend of the river into silence and peace. And in this reassurance he discovered a melancholy content compatible to his nature, until the thought occurred that he must leave her to Rufus Knowles. Then mild, poetical fancy would flit before black, sullen rage, and he would hate the one who called him "friend," hate him because he realized how unworthy he was of the girl's pure affection.

And yet Norman continued and urged an intimacy which was so distasteful to himself? He felt how impotent he was to ward off the inevitable. Might he not at least clear away two brambles from his path? Poor fellow! Much as he condemned himself, he still appreciated that he did possess some noble attributes. These would not have existed in vain if from the unconscious imitation of association Rufus Knowles, too, should acquire such traits.

But Rufus Knowles felt no need of either imitation or emulation. His lines had fallen in pleasant places; let them remain where they lay. From a handsome, careless boy, the pet of all old women, he had leisurely advanced to be a handsome, careless man, endeared to all the maidens.

He was well satisfied with his position and possibilities. Whatever he did he did well; whatever he couldn't do he was sure would not be good for him to do. He was acutely sensible to the love which Adele felt for him. When the proper time came he proposed to cast toward her the handkerchief of his favor, for where could he find a sweeter wife? But that time depended on his leisure, and that leisure still had plenty of other matters with it to divert itself.

A young girl's love is apt to be a sickly growth when cherished before the family hearth. It requires the storm the sunshine, the change of season, and the open air. From another view it thrives on difference and interference, and not on evidence. Opportunity is more prolific than reason, is the more successful gardener. Rufus Knowles bore his comeliness with a certain gracious and dashing impudence. When he was present he was over-obliging and gallant; when absent these attributes enlarged into the noble. Thus selfishness served him in place of design, and apathy kept him before the larger end of the opera glass. Before marriage love argues from the particular to the general, and is satisfied; after marriage, alas, it may argue from the general to the particular, and doubt. Such however, is the common lot; only by ceasing to be man can man realize his anticipations.

Now, Adele loved Norman too sincerely to ever love him passionately, for there is not heat enough in "sincerity" or any of its derivatives to ever set free a tear. Like her father and mother, he was one of her daily blessings. Are these the blessings that one prays for? She was used to seeing him around; but so was she accustomed to the family furniture and the family cat. Romance requires a glimpse and then darkness for dreaming. When one scrutinizes one notices such little things as a mole on the face or a spoon left in a cup. An idol, when examined, is a senseless thing of wood and stone, but the true worshipper approaches with downcast eyes.

It happened one winter when Norman was beginning to show that skill in business which his father had at one time possessed that he was absent in the West for several weeks. On his return to his guardian's house his monotonous melancholy was of a sudden displaced by a fierce, ecstatic joy. Adele was so unforgettingly glad to see him and yet so strangely shy. When he had left her he had borne away with him the image of a pale pensile maid; now this same maid was blithe and winsome, with eyes full of light and cheeks changeful of hue. And she was so unforgettingly glad! What could it mean, save that absence had made that dear heart fonder; what could it mean, save that she loved herself and thus at last knew him? For once Norman's thoughts strode on the sunny side of life. A small hope whispered, a great hope asserted, that he was beloved. He left the path of resignation and wandered. He ceased to plod and he walked on air. Alas, poor Norman! When one wanders one is apt to be lost in the dark! Alas, poor Norman! When one who treads the air needs a solid footing, then that one fails!

It was the day after his return that Norman met his friend Rufus Knowles, that friend often so repugnant, but now so amiable. He greeted him with the effusion of a cool, collected man, which, because unwonted always seemed exaggerated and wild.

"What, Norman, my boy," cried Rufus; how fine your feeling, to be sure! Well I am glad of it, for I have a little excursion to propose. Mason wants us to come over to-night for what? What do you say? A jolly evening sandwiched between two envying trips on skates."

Norman looked up to the soft, heavy sky and shook his head dubiously. "On skates he repeated. 'I don't think it safe. I hear the old North Creek broke up last night. Of course, its ice is jammed at the dam. But then, the wind is from the south; there is a thaw in the very air.'"

"Nonsense," protested Rufus. "The ice is like glass and thick enough to touch bottom. I haven't been on my skates this year, and I feel the need of their tonic. You have always badgered me, winter and summer, to go on the river. And now, Norman Druce afraid? Well, I am surprised."

"I'm afraid," said Norman. "But I'll go. I like Mason and his cosy house on the heights, and whist with the concomitants of cigars and punch. I am afraid, but I will go."

"Of course you will. I guess if teams can cross, we can. I'll meet you—let me see?—why at your old rookery on the pier at 7 o'clock. There's an easy descent there."

Norman hastened that night to his appointment with a light heart. His steps seemed blessed by Adele's parting words: how could they go astray? So you and Rufus are going together," she had said; "oh, I'm so glad; I know you'll be safe." Poor Norman! He who translates a young girl's words literally loses not only the poetry, but also the intent of the text.

The evening was calm, the sky translucent; the ice, as Rufus had predicted, like glass. Only to the north there hung a mist above it, as if nature were preparing a drama behind the curtain; only along the tracks the teams had made was there water. Already in the eastern heavens the full moon rose high, giving splendor to heights they were approaching and an unreal beauty to the city they had left. An enlivening trip surely was their way.

tain glide side by side. Yet, once and again Norman broke this harmony by stopping short. His face glimmered so strangely white that Rufus said angrily enough:

"What's the matter? Are you daft?"

"I thought I heard something," Norman replied, "from underfoot. Listen; now don't you hear?"

"Hear, exclaimed Rufus, contemptuously. "Of course I hear. The ice cracks and groans as all old ice does. Come on."

But the sounds which Norman seemed to hear were the voices of the river, those familiar voices of his boyhood, repeating their sad, yet tranquil messages.

The evening at Mason's passed as pleasantly as Norman had anticipated, and it was late when the home stepped out of the comfort of his home into the obscurity of the night. A heavy murkiness prevailed, arising from the river, and veiling the moon. A strong wind was blowing, a soft wind, filled with moisture and redolent with spring. From below came heavy booms, the signal of alarm. Norman, realizing the eminence of his fears, tried

to hasten his companion's steps, but in vain. Rufus had been appreciative of a generous hospitality, and was not quite himself. The same on else that he was was discourteous, boastful, and, oh, so deliberate!

Ere they reached the bank Norman's patience was exhausted, and his temper aroused from the restraint of years. Even through the gloom he could detect signs of disintegration. The icy expanse was apparently unbroken from shore to shore, but a thin sheet of water was creeping over it. It quivered, too, and throbbed in regular pulsations, as if the monster below were breathing heavily. And yet, when they ventured on its surface it seemed as solid as an island's foundation. At least, so it seemed to Rufus, for he laughed to scorn his comrade's expostulations, and found delight in disregarding them. He skated, oh, yes and rapidly, but not as he should in the course of a frightened bird. No, like one in its dalliance, he whirled round and round, singing vociferously.

"Now, isn't she a darling, my cunning little duck?"

"Now isn't she, Norman?" he repeated when they were about half way across. But the clouds were thinning through the half gloom Norman could detect in the north the outlines of a huge white shadow, as if a giant were seated on a mount, meditating calmly, in conscious omnipotence, an assault.

"Now isn't she, Norman?" Rufus persisted.

"Now, isn't who? Norman asked, irritably.

"Adele, of course. Now, isn't she a cunning little duck?"

"You shouldn't speak of a young lady in such a vulgar way."

"Pooh! Shouldn't, indeed! Who has a better right? I guess I'll speak of my future wife as I please."

"Your wife? What? Have you asked her? Are you engaged?" cried Norman, seizing Rufus by the arm.

"Asked her? I can do that at any time. She'd jump at the chance."

"Curse you," began Norman, fiercely, when a deep roar drowned his words, when a terrible shock threw them off their feet. In an instant the vast expanse of ice leaped and cracked and broke. In an instant wave after wave dashed upward, disdaining all bounds. Away whirled the clouds and out shone the moon, smiling pitilessly in its serene security. One glance to the north told Norman the awful truth. The ice gorge had given away; the giant had sprung to his easy task! They were tossed in a vortex of crumbling cakes by the triumphant madness of restless waters. Opposite, but oh! what a distance opposite, shut off by such a dreadful gulf, lay the pier. At its head loomed the great deserted building, his father's pride and ruin. Oh that he might gain it! Oh that its ill-omened walls might prove a refuge!

Norman sprang up and sought his comrade. Rufus lay unconscious, his limbs and side cruelly pressed by the ice. Without a thought of affection, without a spasm of hesitation, Norman strove and lifted until he had forced the weights away, until he had the stricken man in his arms. Then he! for a struggle of spirit against force, of grim determination against relentless havoc! Creeping, staggering, tearing, rushing, Norman pressed on and, on until he won his goal, until he laid his burden on the floor of the great Druce warehouse, and even as he stood panting in exhaustion over him there was a crash, a crash, the onslaught of countless squadrons of infernal cavalry, and ice and wave dashed over the wharves and against the sturdy old walls. The structure shook, but Norman heeded not. He was thinking—thinking what a fool he had been.

On the very days of all days when hope had awakened within him, when Adele had begun to feel and reciprocate, he had saved to his own undoing this selfish, conceited, worthless fellow; this knave who had dared boast of her unsought favor. And had there not been truth in his words, if Rufus should persist and entreat would not Adele yield. Would not her heart turn again from him and toward this rival of his boyhood, who had ever been so easily successful? Oh, what a thrice-blinded fool he had been! The explanation would have been so simple so reasonable. They had become separated in the sudden cataclysm. It had been a miracle that he himself had gained land. Doubtless Rufus had been swept under the ice to a grave in the sea. A few tears, a few regrets, growing less and less with time, and then ineffable bliss."

Oh, what a fool! But was it too late? The thought came sharply like a voice out of the night. They were alone; no one had seen them; Rufus was insensible. A quick toss out of the door would be as fatal as sure, as abandonment in the river. It would be a service to Adele; he was sure of that. The man was unappreciative, cruel; he would break her heart. Dare he then do it? Aye, he dare do anything! But could he? Ah, the old thoughts thronged thick and shamed him. Was this his service, this his self-sacrifice. Perhaps Adele loved Rufus. He had always thought so. Why had a little kindness changed his mind? Was he himself a dog that he should judge the future and allot punishment in advance of offense? Had any evil that Rufus had done ever compared with the crime that he himself now meditated? No, he couldn't do it; not the crime; God forgive him the sin of its contemplation!

Mightily beat the battering rams of the ice against the north wall of the building. The great structure trembled and moaned as if in mortal agony. Could it withstand the whole unsheltered force of the freshet? For its location at the end of the pier gave it the brunt. Norman shook his head and smiled gloomily. At least they would die together, and he would have the satisfaction—

But no. Again the old thoughts thronged thick: once more the voices of the building and of the river cried out in remonstrance, in encouragement. Yes, there was a way. The warehouses on the pier were connected at the second story by a series of bridges. He could bear Rufus into the lower one; there he would be safe. He could do it, and he did. Tenderly he carried this unloved friend through the black lofts, along the quivering gangways. Tenderly he laid him down in a place of security and tucked his coat under his head. Then, as he turned away, the wounded man grasped his hand and leebly spoke:

"How good you are, Norman!" he said. "I was only jesting about Adele, you know. We have always loved each other."

I asked her two days ago. You shall be our best man."

"Yes, yes," replied Norman. "Now try to sleep, I go for help," and he gently shook away that grasp forever.

Norman returned to his father's house. The great fabric encompassed him with its shadows. The tempest raged, the waters surged, the old walls cracked and settled and fell. But above the hideous din arose the voices of his boyhood and these sung a requiem.

Drew a Cheque on Ice.

A pretty anecdote comes from Brussels illustrating the generous spirits of a banker of that city.

The banker is fond of outdoor exercise. As an exhibition of his skill in skating he made an autograph on the ice in a very artistic manner.

Some gentlemen having admired the signature, proceeded to write above it as follows:

"On demand I promise to pay for the benefit of the poor man the sum of 5,000 marks."

They sawed out the block of ice, and, having called a cab, proceeded to the bank and carried the frozen note of hand-of-foot, we mean—to the cashier's counter.

The cold temperature happily prevented the melting away of the icy draft, and the banker, having been appealed to, ordered it to be paid.

It is perhaps best to be overrated in this world. We may possibly slip through without being detected, and there is always time enough to take a back seat when we are actually obliged to.

BORN.

Digby, March 24, the wife of Thomas Crowell, a son.

Woolville, March 24, to the wife of C. B. Munro, a son.

Lighthouse, March 24, to the wife of James Ellis, a son.

Woolville, March 16, to the wife of Charles Paine, a son.

Amherst, March 23, to the wife of Richard Isaacs, a son.

Halifax, March 24, to the wife of William Graves, a son.

Deep Brook, March 24, to the wife of Edgar Adams, a son.

Amherst, March 27, to the wife of William Adams, a son.

Sussex, March 22, to the wife of Fred Whitney, a daughter.

St. John, March 16, to the wife of John Irwin, a daughter.

St. John, March 29, to the wife of Thomas O'Neil, a daughter.

Digby, March 24, to the wife of Captain James Ellis, a son.

Deer Island, March 17, to the wife of J. B. Wentworth, a son.

Victoria Beach, N. S., March 24, to the wife of Geo. Adams, a son.

Riverdale, N. S., March 13, to the wife of Alfred Cosman, a son.

Moncton, March 28, to the wife of Fred Cormier, a daughter.

Dartmouth, March 28, to the wife of Walter Creighton, a daughter.

Halifax, March 24, to the wife of Thomas H. Francis, a daughter.

Yarmouth, March 22, to the wife of Charles Clements, a daughter.

Dartmouth, March 28, to the wife of G. E. Van Buskirk, a daughter.

Upper Pictou, March 17, to the wife of Frank Kennedy, a son.

Newcastle, March 22, to the wife of Howard Williston, a daughter.

Milton, March 21, to the wife of Charles McElroy, a daughter.

Vernon River, F. E. L., March 17, to the wife of Dr. A. Ross, a son.

Deep Brook, March 20, to the wife of Hubert S. Vroom, a daughter.

Culloden, N. S., March 18, to the wife of Stewart Murphy, a daughter.

Moncton, March 30, to the wife of W. Y. Smith, M. P. P., a daughter.

Napman, March 10, to the wife of Wellington Canard, N. S., March 25, to the wife of Rev. W. Dawson, a daughter.

Tremont, N. S., March 24, to the wife of T. B. Messenger, a son and daughter.

MARRIED.

Preston, N. S., March 26, by Rev. E. Dixon, John Grant to Eliza Beas.

Halifax, March 22, by Rev. F. H. Almon, Philip Mosher to Minnie Walsh.

Truro, March 12, by Rev. Dr. Hertz, George T. Hamilton to Eliza Nolan.

Campbell, March 26, by Rev. A. F. Carr, W. A. Mowatt to Elsie Murray.

Windsor, March 29, by Rev. J. S. Coffin, Clara Kentville to Mary Rogers.

Kentville, March 17, by Rev. E. O. Weeks, Thaddeus Harvey to Ada Leopold.

Pictou, March 21, by Rev. James Sinclair, Daniel A. Grant to Jennie Cumming.

Digby, March 25, by Rev. A. T. Dykeman, Samuel Connor to Virginia Lewis.

Sussex, March 10, by Rev. M. Gross, William Steeves to Minnie Woodworth.

Hopewell Cape, March 12, by Rev. B. N. Hughes, James Macdonald to Eliza Thorne.

Andover, March 28, by Rev. John B. Young, William Pelchie to Mazina Jamer.

Rossway, March 28, by Rev. M. Morse, Arthur E. Sabean to Addie E. Sabean.

Halifax, March 25, by Rev. D. G. Macdonald, Joseph Elly to Virginia Lewis.

Tiverton, March 24, by Rev. H. A. DeVoe, Lyman Outhouse to Carrie E. Blackford.

Florenceville, March 28, by Rev. D. Fiske, James Macdonald to Elizabeth Atkinson.

Springhill, March 26, by Rev. Charles W. Wilson, John E. Armitage to Jane Wilson.

Fredericton, March 26, by Rev. George B. Payson, William Lindsay to Eliza Huffer.

Bridgeport, March 28, by Rev. E. D. Greatorex, J. Alboune Nelly to Mary Rolfe.

Fredericton, March 20, by Rev. George B. Payson, Sherman Scott to Sarah McKenna.

Gulls Island, N. S., March 29, by Rev. I. E. Bill, James Foster to Rosena Freeman.

Cape North, March 20, by Rev. M. McLeod, Norman McPherson to Lizzie McAvoy.

Amherst, March 29, by Rev. Father Milhan, Ferdinand LeBlanc to Jennie LeBlanc.

Yarmouth, March 21, by Rev. Freeman Bishop, William H. Cann to Ellen S. Annis.

Hantsport, March 21, by Rev. P. S. McGregor, Ezra Otis Lyman to Evangeline Wheaton.

Moncton, March 27, by Rev. E. Bertram Hooper, Port Thomas to Sarah Ann Vassell.

Wreck Cove, C. B., March 1, by Rev. John Fraser, Kenneth Morrison to Kate Morrison.

Digby, March 16, by Rev. A. T. Dykeman, Hanford Thomas to Eliza Atkinson.

Sussex, March 27, by Rev. James Gray, Henry Battison to Mrs. Frances Hutchinson.

Hantsport, March 24, by Rev. P. S. McGregor, Peleasant Hutchinson to Mary West.

Plaster Cove, C. B., March 15, by Rev. John Fraser, Norman Matheson to Elsie McDonald.

Four Falls, March 15, by Rev. Scofield Neales, Elbridge Dorsey to Victoria E. Watts.

New Annapolis, N. S., March 28, by Rev. C. Sedgwick, James Macdonald to Elizabeth Atkinson.

White Head, N. S., by Rev. James Scott, Walter H. Feltmate to Margaret E. Greenecorn.

West Head, March 26, by Rev. William Halliday, William T. Atkinson to Clara E. Newell.

Pleasant Vale, N. S., March 18, by Rev. F. J. Fentelow, Alexander Dickens to Lila Ward.

Lockeport, N. S., March 14, by Rev. Addison Browne, Stafford Wilson Townsend to Salome Gried.

Sussex, March 14, by Rev. M. Gross, assisted by Rev. H. L. Cornwall, Alfred Waincock to Sarah I. Lewis.

Beverly, Mass., March 28, by Rev. M. C. Kiler, James A. Green to Esther S. Gooles, of St. John, N. B.

All acknowledge that for Style, Health,

Comfort and Economy, no waterproof

in existence is equal to a

MELISSA

For either Men or Women.

DIED.

Halifax, March 29, Erik Olsen, 28.

Havelock, March 12, Mrs. Joslen, 73.

Halifax, March 28, Donald Fraser, 56.

St. John, March 28, John R. Lord, 27.

Halifax, March 28, William Barker, 56.

Halifax, March 28, Herbert Matison, 26.

Baddeck, March 17, James Crowdie, 74.

Boistown, March 25, John Vickers, 34.

St. John, March 18, Rev. Mr. Sisson, 32.

Annapolis, March 29, Martha Bailey, 76.

St. George, March 22, James Murray, 30.

Weisford, March 29, Thomas Godfrey, 61.

Annapolis, March 21, John H. Coster, 30.

Pembroke, March 10, Mrs. Maria S. Shaw.

Lower Truro, March 7, Adam Dunlap, 79.

Clements, March 1, Mrs. Edward Sprowle.

Truro, March 28, George E. Davidson, 26.

Oxford, N. S., March 1, Annie E. Read, 26.

Rollins Dam, March 25, John Peacock, 72.

Upper Mills, March 27, John Thompson, 57.

Campbellton, March 22, Mrs. John Smith, 67.

Clements, N. S., March 12, Avard Wright, 2.