

THE HOPE of the HEART

BY BALDWIN SEARS

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The scuttle in the roof of the farmhouse opened slowly, and a girl's head appeared. As she held up her face to the evening breeze, her fair skin, yellow hair and delicate features made her appear like some faint star just glancing above the horizon.

A young man with a scythe over his shoulder crossing the lane below the barn looked up toward the house. Seeing the girl, he stopped, straightened his shoulders as though he half expected her to speak and to speak himself, then walked on with lagging steps and disappeared below the orchard where the brook flows into the woods.

Mary leaned her arms on the edge of the scuttle and looked out. The hot air from the garret blowing in gusts past her face was like a twitch at her sleeves reminding her of the household she had left below.

She was the only one who had not already gone to bed. It was harvest time. They were cutting the wheat in the meadows, and all day the hum of the reaper had come up from the broad, white fields where the men were at work. Since dawn the house had been buzzing with lively toil, but now the day's work was ended.

In the front room off the porch the farmer and his wife were asleep. They had gone to bed immediately after supper, and while Mary had sat in the porch she heard their low voices talking over the potato crop and the grain, their drowsy words growing fever, slower, until at length they sank away and ceased, while yet the bobolinks were skimming over the meadow and the red of the sunset lingered.

Across the gate her married brother and a neighbor had talked politics. Mary had heard their nasal voices alternating like the wooden balls tossed by a juggler. In the south chamber just under the attic her sister-in-law had been putting her children to bed, the creak, creak of the rocking chair as it swayed over an uneven board dimly audible through the silent house. In the attic under the roof slept her little brother Bob, dreamless, tired and contented at the end of his long summer day.

Down in the kitchen yard the turkeys and chickens had gone to roost in the apple trees and the grape arbor, clucking and twittering in sleepy protest against the awkward ones as they settled themselves together.

In a few moments it had grown very still and dark.

The girl on the house top drew a long breath and leaned her head back against the edge of the roof. It was only 8 o'clock, and the faint yellow twilight lingered on the border of the summer night. A new moon hung low over the crest of the woods. The west wind brought up the hot smell of ripening cornfields, and a bat darted out of the orchard in swooping circles against the clear night.

From her eyrie above the treetops the farm buildings, the neighboring houses, the fields and lanes, even the wide post road, looked quite small and cheap, like a toy village. The countryside in its irregular checkerboard of pasture, corn and woodland, pale yellow with the wheat stubble, somber green where half ripened orchards spread, marked here and there by a cluster of roofs, a spire that told a hamlet in the hills, became significant only in the mystery of distance as it mounted toward the hills and ended at last in one vast, gray, sealike level against the trackless sky. Mary looked at it all as one upon whose mind the meaning of these familiar scenes had just begun to dawn—these fields, the chickens she must pluck, the bread she must make, the raspberries she must preserve, all grouped themselves before her in a coherent scheme of life. From dawn till dark, each day alike, cooking, washing, preserving, holding the babies—the burdens of each side were hers. So far she had carried them unthinkingly, unquestionably. It was only the lot of every farmer's life.

Tonight she was unusually tired. To escape a feeling of restlessness she had determined to go to bed. It was refreshing to lie in the cool darkness. But before she reached the top of the attic stairs she felt the dry heat of the sun baked roof. The great, timbered space, dark with its age blackened beams and scantily windowed twilight, held a strange odor of cedar shingles, of ancient leather trunks, of musty papers. In the solemn dusk the candle lost its bold glare and drooped to a wavering spark, eyed by the glimmering gray panes of the gable windows high under the ridge.

The two chimneys, like huge stone giants whom she had been feeding all day, stooped over her as they towered toward the roof, reminding her of tomorrow's kitchen work.

As Mary sat on the edge of her cot, thinking of these things, she looked up vaguely. A star, the first in the pale night, shone through the window upon her, clear, unwinking, pensive, holy.

A lock of hair loosened by the wind floated softly across her cheek like the

unseen sps. For the first time in her life she felt the restless longing for some good of which she was ignorant. What was it her simple, sweet existence lacked? Had she not everything that a girl could ask—father, mother, food and shelter, a place in the world? What else had any one? The aged farmer and his wife—those two good people fast asleep without a thought in their nightcaps beyond the potato crop; their daughter-in-law, the men at work in the fields, all those dependent on the great harvests, on the bountiful farm; were they not happy, contented, unquestioning? Was she not happy too? Had she anything to complain of, to regret, to wish for?

Suddenly out of the hush came the cry of the whippoorwill, that piercing, mournful voice of the vacant, wind-blown fields, of meadows flowering unseen and far away. It thrilled her like a pain. It stabbed her through and through and cut her to the heart with its questioning, solitary call, hidden in the twilight of the woods.

She had heard it so often, year after year, like the robin and the lark. Never had it sounded so lonely, so friendless and apart. A strange longing swelled up in her breast; tears filled her eyes. The years of her life, with their simple tasks, their ambitions, hopes and dreams, came to her like some vast tidal wave upon a sunny shore, withdrawing in a long resounding sigh at the absence of some unknown joy. She stared through the warm darkness toward the edge of the woods outlined against the evening as though one should try to read the soul of a silhouette. Then she dropped her face in her hands for a single minute.

At 6 o'clock in the morning Mary was in the garden picking the vegetables for dinner. The sunshiny, dew fresh day, the beans and cabbages in their prim symmetry, the tall scarlet hollyhocks nodding against the fence, made the experience of the night before very remote and visionary.

As Mary reached the end of the row of peas she pushed back her sunbonnet and looked up; then her song stopped and she knelt silently.

A young man was standing on the other side of the garden wall looking at her. He blushed as he met her steady, smiling gaze. "Picking peas?" he asked. "You've got a lot, haven't you?"

"Yes, indeed; plenty this year. Have you?"

"All we can eat and more too. Getting old, though. How are these?" He crossed the wall and stood beside her. "Yours are pretty tender yet." He tore off another pod. "Shan't I help you? Two can work better than one."

"Oh, thank you; you needn't bother." Yet she smiled at him.

"Oh, I like to do this. I'll take the inside of the row."

"It's very kind of you," she answered, looking up at him sweetly.

How brown and strong and sinewy he had grown since he had begun to work in the harvest fields. She had not seen him for a long while, not since they were in school together. She was looking at him again when he glanced up and caught her eyes. This time they both blushed. They said nothing for some time. Mary picked busily, and the boy whistled half to himself. They were beside each other, with nothing between them but the slender trellis of pea vines, enough to give the boy courage to say, "Did you hear the whippoorwill last night?"

Mary felt a flash that made her nerves tingle.

"Oh, did you, too?" she exclaimed, then stopped, abashed at her own eagerness. How could Alvy understand the confession she had made to a whippoorwill just because it was unseen? "Where was it?" she asked, with all the carelessness she could summon.

"Down in the wood lot about half past 8. I was coming home 'cross lots back of your barn; been up at the other farm all day."

They were picking slowly now. How pretty Mary was with her braided yellow hair, her rose pink ears, her smooth lidded, down drooping eyes! The ruffle of her apron, with its crisp curves, seemed meant to hedge her cheeks from kisses.

Alvy felt his heart throb dizzily. So many words and thoughts went round and round in his head that he could not say one. And there was the screen of brush and vines between them. The delicate film of green was strong as a prison grille through which the serene face of the girl glowed upon him. Somehow their hands met upon the same pods. Mary's trembled, then lay still in his.

"I saw you up on the roof," whispered the boy. "You were listening, weren't you?"

Mary nodded.

"Do you—do you like to hear it, Mary? Do you like the whippoorwill?"

What shrunk your woollens? Why did holes wear so soon? You used common soap.

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Mary's trip trembled. "I don't know. I guess so."

"Because he—he loves you, Mary."

"Mary, Mary, where are you?" The two in the garden sprang up as the shrill voice called from the kitchen. As the boy leaped over the fence into his own orchard Mary looked after him. From the trees among which he disappeared came clear, low and sweet the call of the whippoorwill.

The Model Army of the World.
What army was the strongest of its time? Judging by results, the Roman army was so from the fifth century B. C. onward until the division of the empire. Its fighting organization was as complete as and possibly more practical than that of any army of today. It was based on a territorial system which maintained the comradeship of locality without bringing it into antagonism with that of the corps, for each of the thirty-five Roman "tribes" was required to furnish to each legion four "centuries" of 120 men, each of which worked together as a local unit. The legion was divided into five cohorts or battalions, of which three were troops of the line, two were a kind of militia and the fifth was a depot battalion. For almost eight centuries the army thus constituted not only conquered the then known world, but acted as explorers beyond its limits, and at the same time made and unmade kings and emperors in Rome itself. In modern times the Prussian army, which won Sadowa and Sedan and overran both Austria and France, was the strongest the world has known.—London Answers.

Willing to Wait.

"I can't pay this bill just now. You will have to wait a little for the money."

"All right, sir," cheerfully responded the boy as he sent himself and unfolded the copy of the morning paper. "Them's the orders of the gov'nor."

"What are the orders of the gov'nor?" demanded the gentleman sternly.

"I'm to wait for the money."

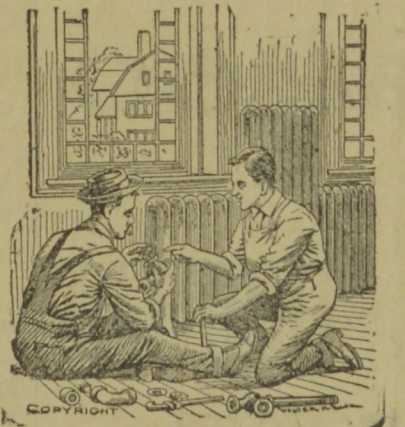
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No. 2 Express for Halifax and Campbellton	7.50
No. 134 Express for Quebec and Montreal	18.00
No. 26 Express for Point du Chene, Halifax and Pictou	12.15
No. 8 Express for Sussex	17.10
No. 4 Mixed for Point du Chene	13.15
No. 10 Express for Halifax and Sydney	23.25

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT ST. JOHN

No. 9 Express from Halifax and Sydney	6.20
No. 7 Express from Sussex	9.00
No. 133 Express from Montreal and Quebec	13.50
No. 25 Express from Halifax and Pictou	17.40
No. 1 Express from Halifax	18.40
No. 81 Express from Moncton, (Saturday only)	24.35
No. 3 Mixed from Point du Chene	16.50

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Moncton, Oct. 10, 1902.

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7.45 a.m.—Mixed, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, for Woodstock, Presque Isle, Edmundston, etc., via Gibson Branch. Leaves St. Marys 8.15 a.m.

9.15 a.m.—Mixed, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, for Woodstock, Presque Isle, Edmundston, etc., via Gibson Branch. Leave St. Marys 9.41 a.m.

9.45 a.m.—Express, week days, for Fredericton Junction, connecting with Express for St. John and points east. Palace sleeper Fredericton Junction to Halifax, N.S.

6.00 p.m.—Accommodation for Fredericton Junction, connecting with Short Line Express for Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and with the Pacific Express from Montreal for the west, Northwest and Pacific Coast, also connects for Bangor, Portland, Boston, etc., via St. Stephen, Houlton and Woodstock. Palace sleeper from Fredericton Junction to Montreal. Pullman sleeper Fredericton Junction to Boston.

9.00 p.m.—Express, week days, for St. John and points east.

ARRIVE AT FREDERICTON

9.05 a.m.—From St. John and points east.

11.35 a.m.—Week days, from Boston, Montreal, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Woodstock and Houlton, etc.

6.23 p.m.—Monday, Wednesday and Friday from Woodstock and points north via Gibson Branch. Arrives at St. Marys 7.35 p.m.

8.00 p.m.—Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, from Woodstock and points north via Gibson Branch. Arrives St. Marys 7.35 p.m.

8.10 p.m.—Week days from St. John and east

10.40 p.m.—Week days from Boston, Portland, Bangor, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Houlton, Woodstock and north.

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