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GOLDEN YEARS IN ACADIE.

CHAPTER 1.

"And the wintered keels go down to the calling of the sea."
Bliss Carman.

"It is better to be born lucky than rich", is an old proverb. It is also proverbial that luck is fickle and that riches fly away. One good luck gift there is, that can be retained all through life's journey,--the memory of a happy childhood.

That measure of good luck is mine. A happy childhood, spent in a shipbuilding village during the golden years of that great industry in Nova Scotia.

Our shipbuilding village of Maitland, Hants, is situated at the head of Cobequid Bay in the Acadian land, just beyond the Basin of Minas. A country of orchards and hillside farms, of wide green marshes with roads like red ribbons winding across them, of dykes high and strong to shut out the turbulent tides, of pleasant villages and gorgeous sunsets.

The golden setting is there, very much the same as in my childhood. Tide breezes still ruffle the orchards, bringing the salty tang of the sea to mingle with the sun-warmed perfumes from wild rose, clover, and honeysuckle. Twice in twenty-four hours our Cobequid Bay empties and fills; miles of shining mud flats, narrow channel and quicksand alternate with raging water, wide and deep enough to float the navies of the world;

but in these years no great sailing ships go out with the tide. The yards, where they were built, have been merged into hay fields, and this great and distinctive industry has vanished, leaving few traces of its all-engrossing activities. The blithe, busy years of the seventies and eighties, the sixties also, are now but as "a tale that is told".

The golden decades of the seventies and eighties were happy years for the children in our shipbuilding village beside the Cobequid Bay. Our 'little-pitcher-ears' were always alert for stories of the sea and of strange happenings in far lands, stories of Malay pirates, shipwreck, catastrophe, rescue. We glibly recited the names of the world's great seaports, and knew stories of the strangeness of life in many of them.

A young relative had the uncomfortable distinction of being the first white child in a Japanese seaport. The jinrickshaw, in which she and her mother were riding, was surrounded by a great crowd of Japanese who exclaimed in wonderment over the fair skin, blue eyes, and golden hair of the little girl, who though frightened, did not resent the touching of her long golden locks, but when the rickshaw was allowed to proceed, mother and child hastily returned to their ship and remained there.

The sea-going contingent of our village of Maitland, Hants, used eyes and ears when abroad, and later related

their adventures around the home firesides. Stories of Nature's wonder-workings in the great deep could always find a spell-bound audience, typhoons, hurricanes, water-spouts, earthquakes at sea, and other marvels of the wide oceans. There were home ships in the Sunda Strait that year of the tremendous upheaval, when volcanic ashes fell a foot deep on ships' decks, and new islands rose mysteriously in channels marked 'navigable' on the charts.

How thrilling to be on board a Maitland ship discharging cargo at Alexandria, Egypt, and to be ordered out hot haste before a bombardment of the city began, and even more exciting to be in Naples with Vesuvius in furious action.

There was one gruff old Captain whose experiences were hair-raising. He had 'run the blockade' in the war between the North and South, and had been chased, a hot pursuit, and had escaped. Surely, a water-chase holds more hazards than a land one. The "Alabama" also figured in the chase stories, for there were often Nova Scotians in the crews of American vessels, and there was more than one sensational story of chase, capture, and burning by that dreaded privateer.

The sea-serpent was not an ' unknown quantity' for I remember hearing a Captain "whose word was as good as his bond", tell how in mid-ocean, on a lovely summer's day, they saw a sudden heaving commotion in the sea, that told of an underseas fight of magnitude. Suddenly there arose from the troubled waters, a great ocean monster, that, to the

astonished eyes of the onlookers, seemed half the height of the mizzen-mast. It gyrated for an instant, and then fell back and disappeared. "It may have been a sea-serpent", finished the Captain; "I don't know what it was, but we saw it, and that was the end of it."

Time and again I have heard the 'Marie Celeste' mystery discussed, that wierd and most inexplicable story of the seas.

There were accounts of mutinies, shootings, stabbing, and foreign revolutions, "told with all the garrulous attention to detail born of long voyages at sea". My pitcher-ears were keenly alert at the knife stories. I had seen knife scars, and a knife carried more definite menace to childish imagination than a pistol, for there were seafaring men in our village, scarred from knife attacks.

In 1870 it was not well to be big, well-set-up, and blonde, not conversant with the French language, and obliged to travel across France from Havre to Marsailles. The war between France and Prussia was at its height. The Prussian grip was heavy upon France, and feeling was intense. During the journey the young Maitland man stepped out of the train at a country junction, in search of a restaurant. He was taken for a Prussian spy, was immediately surrounded, and roughly dealt with by an excited crowd. For a few minutes he was in grave danger, but fortunately a train official appeared. His papers and ticket were produced, and he was permitted to continue his journey.

As a small girl I listened to a home Captain telling the story of his first shore leave. When a lad of fourteen he had been taken as cabin boy in a home ship, that was sailing from a Nova Scotian port to Naples. It was Holy Week when they arrived at Naples and great crowds thronged the churches. It was the lad's first experience of the life and bustle of a foreign city, and one of the sailors, a Glasgow man, accompanied him ashore. It may have been curiosity, or perhaps homesickness, but, like the 'Ancient Mariner,' he was constrained to go up to the church. His companion, in the meantime, had been making hasty calls at wine-shops, and was in an impish mood. The Cathedral doors were open and the two made their way inside. The sailor, not content in the rear, pushed ahead, and jostled his way through kneeling crowds toward the altar. Hostile eyes were bent upon them, and the boy tugged at the sailor's arm in a vain attempt to stay his steps. Finally, by an adroit movement he slipped to his knees bringing the sailor with him.

"Be quiet", he whispered, "they're angry; they'll knife us!"

The sailor merely grunted, his eyes were fixed upon a small silver crucifix within reach of the boy's hand.

"Dick, Dick," he whispered, as he violently nudged the lad. "Steal wee Jesus! Steal wee Jesus!"

The boy turned a stern face and shook his head, but

louder and more insistent came the demand to "Steal wee Jesus", until the sailor suddenly thrust his long arm in front of the kneeling boy, snatched the silver crucifix, and made a wild dash for the door.

There was instant uproar, and knives flashed as the incensed worshippers rushed in pursuit of the daring, sacrilegious thief.

"I thought I was in a pretty tight place that time", said the Captain, "but I had sense enough to appeal to the priest, a fine-looking man, who stood aghast at the outrage. He answered in English, and I tell you that was for me one of the big times for the English language. I knew at once that he did not consider that I was an accomplice, and that he rightly attributed the theft to the irresponsible frenzy of a drunken man.

In a clear, warning voice he called instructions to the pursuers, quieted the angry congregation, and ordered me to remain where I was. By the time he had finished speaking, the pursuers were back with the silver crucifix, which the thief had dropped near the church door, and had made good his escape. The lanes and by-ways of the vicinity were being searched, and I was finally allowed to return to the ship, in charge of a police officer of some sort. There was no word of my companion, the mischief-maker, and the searchers had taken themselves off after being assured that the wanted man was not on board.

Neither Captain nor officers were aware that the sailor had arrived "badly winded" just in the nick of time, and was in safe hiding aboard. It was a case of lying low until the ship sailed, and I had no further shore leave in Naples."

In the long winter evenings our dining-room was a rendezvous for the Captains— those home for a voyage, those who were taking "the settling down at home" on the instalment plan, and the retired Captains. There was a fire-place, with andirons, pothooks, and a hardwood fire. There was also a special teakettle, porcelain lined, used for making the beverage desired, tea, coffee, or broma. Broma seems to have been dropped from present-day beverage lists. It was sweeter than chocolate and loved by the children. Doughnuts, pies, cookies, oat-cake, shiny molasses gingerbread, bread baked in a brick oven, were served, but the "Little pitchers" were off to bed long before the eatables appeared. One of the few trials of youth was having to bid goodnight, when there were Captains for guests. The good stories missed, and the tantalizing smell of hot mince pie and broma wafting after me on the chilly air of upstairs. so vivid still.

Our Cobequid Bay country was first settled by the French. The poet Longfellow has immortalized the story of those early settlers in "Evangeline", and the historian, Francis Parkman, has given a fine, succinct account of the Acadian deportation in "Montcalm and Wolfe," a story that lays compelling hold upon the reader.

It was the meddling activities of Abbé LaLoutre that blazed the trail of sorrow for the home-loving Acadians. In those troubled times nearly two centuries ago, the Abbé's Mission Headquarters for the Micmac Indians, was twenty miles up the river Shubenacadie, the largest river in Nova Scotia. This turbulent river empties into the Cobequid Bay at Maitland, then known as Tuitnoock, 'place where the waters run fast', and the district around Maitland bore the Micmac name of"Menesatung", 'healing waters'.

To the Acadians the Cobequid Bay settlements, north side of the Bay, south, and head, were known as Cobequid. On the north side was Father Gerard's Cobequid village, seven miles across the Bay from what is now the village of Maitland. The chapel of Cobequid village was an imposing building, with a bell that could be easily heard in the Acadian settlements across the Bay. It was on the door of this chapel that Winslow's summoning notice for the Cobequid districts was posted.

The Acadians stood not "upon the order of their going" when that word came. They knew that Fundy's tide waits for no laggard, and their up-and-doing tide aided their escape. The tide also prevented Winslow from completing his work of burning the Acadian houses and barns in the Upper Cobequid tract. Later the unburned barns were used 'by that other race with other customs and language', and the name "Old

Barns" is still applied to that portion of the Cobequid country.

The Acadians of the Maitland and Selma settlements buried certain treasure, cached farming utensils, packed their household goods, carried to the limit, and started off to drive their cattle and other live stock over the trail to the North shore. At Tatamagouche they took ship and sailed out into oblivion.

At Cobequid, on the north side of the Bay, Father Gerard's large chapel was burned along with the village. When the new settlers came, families from New England, the North of Ireland, and Scotland, the Chapel ruins were still a dominating feature. They termed it the "Mass House", and the district became known as Masstown. This name is today one of the definite reminders of the fanatic Abbé LaLoutre's despotic rule in the Cobequid country.

The village of Cobequid was the Bay rendezvous for Abbe LaLoutre's Micmac warriors with their canoes. From this village he directed war raids and doled out scalping money to fierce Jean Baptiste Cope, Chief of the Shubenacadie Micmacs. The Shubenacadie, with its lakes and portages, was the Micmac war trail to the English settlements on the Atlantic coast, and Chief Cope's scalping raids were an ever present menace.

Our south side (Maitland) of Cobequid Bay has a very meagre deportation history. With the exception of Noel, where there was a flourishing Acadian settlement, and

possibly Cheverie, no Acadian names have been handed down, though there must have been many settlers at the Shubenacadie's mouth, then the Micmac Tuitnoock, which was under the keen eyes of the Vicar General LaLoutre. No oral tradition nor written statement has come down through the years in regard to that name of peace and happiness, Noel; but we of the Cobequid country were always glad that it had been retained by our predecessors.

The Acadians had dyked the Maitland marsh, shutting out the furious tide, a work that must have consumed much time, and that had meant very heavy labour. They were good workmen, for their old running dykes can still be traced on the Maitland marsh. We ~~Selma~~ children knew the location of certain grassy depressions that marked the sites of Acadian homes. In my childhood, three gnarled old apple trees in a hayfield were known as the "French trees"; they have long since disappeared. During some drainage work in one of our own home fields, the workers unearthed a cache of Acadian farming tools, mattock, spade, shovel and crowbar, dropped no doubt when the alarm was given that Winslow's ships were in the Basin.

Sixteen years after the deportation, settlers from New England received grants of the deserted Acadian farms at the mouth of the river Shubenacadie, now Maitland. They came in peace and security and made homes there. More than a century later, one of their descendants presented to the

Presbyterian congregation of Maitland, land for a new cemetery. This gift was the beautiful oak-covered knoll in the Maitland marsh, known as "Oak Island".

The New England colonists were followed by families from the North of Ireland, and from Scotland. They were all busy people in this new land of needs and opportunities, and had scant interest in their Acadian predecessors, or their doings. Neighbourhood traditions faded, and only a very few of the older generation remembered, having heard father or grandfather say, that the southern slope of Oak Island knoll had been an Acadian burial place. No doubt it was a consecrated spot, for the Acadians were punctilious in regard to the observances of their church, and this burial ground was an outlying one in Father Gerard's Parish of Cobequid.

Work in the new Oak Island cemetery in Maitland was in progress, and I, as a school girl, listened with others of the family, to the story told by a surveyor who was making roads and marking lots in the new cemetery. During the progress of this work, greatly to their surprise, a coffin was uncovered by the road makers. A grave was dug in a nearby lot and the coffin carefully carried to the new location. As the bearers set it reverently down, the rusted nails gave way. The coffin fell apart, disclosing the linen-wrapped body of a beautiful young girl, with a great quantity of long golden hair. Her small hands were

folded, and for a few seconds her marble-white face stood out before the awe-stricken beholders, then swiftly crumbled into dust. The burden of life's brief day is apt to be taken lightly by youth, but for weeks that story haunted me. I listened eagerly to its repetition, and to the discussions as to whether the golden haired maiden was an Acadian, a fair Norse damsel of the Lief Ericson tradition, or some unrecorded member of the early New England settlers,--this the secret of the Grim Reaper 'that will never be told'.

GOLDEN YEARS IN ACADIE.

CHAPTER 11.

"Shipyard lures. Malachi Salter, Colonel Small, 84th Rgt. Selma Hall. Colonel William Smith and sons. Unusual church happenings."

The story of the Acadians' successful flight from our district had keen interest for me. It was indeed a joyous escapade to run away and not be caught. I ran away persistently, but was always caught, brought back and punished. There was magic lure on our tide-harried beach, and taut strings drawing toward the forbidden shipyards.

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Boys always had the right of way in our Selma shipyards, but for girls they were forbidden playgrounds, especially after a fatal accident to a little girl playing there.

The yards held overpowering appeal for the children of the shipbuilding community. To them the shipyards were high romance in concrete form. The incessant, orderly racket, the clean, aromatic scent from newly hewn timber, bubbling pitch and tar, the gum to be picked from spruce logs, with the chance of a present of pitch; for there was a brand of light, golden pitch as popular with the children of our generation, as the highly advertized chewing gum is with the children of today.

Through the winter and spring we had watched bob-sleds and rafts bring in the great spruce logs, and we were hovering in the vicinity on the raw April day when the yard was "squared away".

We saw the keel laid, the gradual growth of the framing and planking, and intelligently followed the varied details connected with work on the hull. Our ears were tuned to catch the various sounds. We easily distinguished the dull "thub, thub," of the dubber's adze, the sharp "klink, klink," of the fastener's mall, the sizzling hiss of steam when hot planks were withdrawn from the steam-box, to be carried off upon the gunny-sack wrapped shoulders of the planking-gang. All these varied sounds registered progress. The great crane grumbled steadily through all stages of the work, but when the wailing was followed by heavy crashes, we knew that ballast was being emptied into the hold, and that launching time was near. When masts were being stepped and yards braced, there was much activity in the section of the yard where the "riggers' gang" had set up their stakes. There were often vocal workers in the gang, who loudly proclaimed the number of years that they had "courted Sally", and joyously lilted "Blow the man down". It was delightful music to a small girl, peering through a pole fence, secure there in the property rights of the "Point Farm".

As the building progressed, the pleasant balsamic scents

of the earlier stages gave place to the stronger smells of pitch, tar, oakum, paint and raw linseed oil. From the open doors of the forge came fumes from galvanizing work, and, a day or two before launching, the disagreeable smell of hot grease to be used in smoothing the launch-ways.

In the humming years of our golden industry, "over-the-hills-and-far-away" tendencies seemed to be a natural heritage of the Bay children. Our great ships were sailing into every busy port of the world. Full-rigged ships and stately barques, modelled, built, sailed, and largely owned by the men who built them. The ship-building industry opened the way to wealth and adventure for many a poor and plucky lad, and the up-and-doing Bluenose, through energy and perseverance, garnered his golden harvest.

We Bay children had the same consuming desire for "far horizons" as our elders, and a restlessness like that of our tide.

There must have been mind readers in our home, for neither by word nor sign did I ever make known my shipyard intentions. I watched my chance and stole away, but — I was always caught by a temperamental Irish girl, well shaken and brought home. Her arresting hand usually clutched me in the vicinity of a shallow pool, where the boys sailed boats and engaged in the joyous pastime of "polly-wogging in Pratt's puddle". I did not mind being shaken, nor the loud jeering

of the boys, but I did grieve over being sent to bed on glorious days when all the many activities of childhood were calling - "Come!".

An especially disturbing thought was that investigating boys might be ransacking the "cubby-house", our name for a playhouse. I have often wondered as to its derivation, whether cuddy or cub. The cubby-house was a summer residence in the shade of a giant maple, with our swing on a nearby spruce. We affiliated the big maple with the "Old Mountain Tree", the first song we were taught at school. We sang it with the joyous abandon of possession, our tree and our song.

Playing lady in borrowed "garments of gladness" was another joy of youth. On one well-remembered occasion I had made a noiseless get-away, arrayed in a trailing cashmere shawl of mother's, and her dainty best bonnet. I had added the gold watch and chain of a visiting aunt, and as I slipped around the porch I met father. He stayed my steps, secured the watch and chain, and ordered me back to replace the garments; a fortunate meeting, no doubt, both for child and garments.

There had been school-district dissensions, and a first-class neighborhood row, when I started out on the thorny, uphill way of knowledge.

I was five years old, and father had taught me to read from an "Old Country" primer that I called the "Guldy

Book". It was probably one of Mavor's Series.

The burned schoolhouse was being replaced, and while this work was going on the school for Selma district was held in the partially finished Baptist church, a mile away on the country road.

I started out shortly after eight, carrying lunch-basket and book, and the feet inside the copper-toed boots were very weary when I reached home between four and five in the afternoon. We, of the primer class, had no desks, and the benches were too high for my feet to reach the floor, but I got much satisfaction from gazing furtively up at the small trap-door in the ceiling, that led to the tower. To my childish imagination that door led to the home of Santa Claus, a bit of fantasy that I wisely kept to myself. Occasionally I was entrusted with "Blackwood's Magazine" for a mysterious old Doctor who lived across the road from the school. He was a newcomer in our village, and an invalid. He would pace slowly up and down the lilac and syringa-bordered walk, leaning heavily upon his gold-headed cane, arguing loudly with himself. I was a bit afraid of the "old doctor", but the magazine and the chance for a peep at the kittens bolstered my courage. His wife was a super cat-lover and there were kittens by the dozen.

It was during these early years that I became familiar with the history of our home district. After the Expulsion of the Acadians, there was an interval of peace for the

Micmacs in possession at the mouth of the Shubenacadie. In 1765, Malachy Salter of New England, a merchant and man of affairs in Halifax, obtained a shore grant of twenty-five hundred acres on the south side of Cobequid Bay. The bold bluff, jutting into the Cobequid Bay at Selma, two miles from Maitland, is still called Salter's Head, the only memorial of that long-gone ownership.

In 1771, New England and other settlers took up land along the Shubenacadie and at its mouth. After the close of the American Revolution, Colonel John Small purchased the Salter Grant, and along with many of his men of the disbanded 84th, or Royal Emigrant Regiment, settled in what is now Hants County, Nova Scotia. This Regiment was the first Highland Regiment to be enlisted in Canada.

Colonel Small had an eye for beauty. He chose his home site on a hill over-looking the Cobequid Bay, the Mountains, and the glory of the setting sun.

The Colonel was a Scot, and a lover of Ossian's poems, therefore the name "Selma Hall" for his fine home. The Bayside district still retains the name, but with the dubious letter "h" added to the spelling--Selmah. Mungo's Brook, and Selma, are name memorials of the two officers, Lieutenant Mungo and Colonel Small, who settled on the Bay shore. The other two members of the quartette of friends, Captain Hector Maclean and Lieutenant Robinson, settled in the Kennetcook river country.

We heard many stories of the grandeur of Selma Hall, told by a very old lady, whose father, a son of Colonel William Smith of Stanley, had been a frequent guest of Colonel Small's. Windows, doors, stair-railings, wainscoting, were brought from England, as well as the furniture, pictures, china and silver. In 1804 the fine mansion burned to ashes as briskly as Bay spruce would have done.

The Selma Hall site was but a few rods from our new home, the grassy depression that showed the cellar and the level that was evidently lawn, were plainly marked in my childhood. A similar depression in our field where wild strawberries grew on fine upstanding stalks, marked the home-site of the Colonel's farm steward.

In 1926 at the Chateau de Ramezay, Montreal, I chanced upon the portrait of the first English resident of Selma, and I read with interest the accompanying inscription:-

"Major General John Small, Governor of Gurnsey, Channel Islands, Lieutenant in the 42nd Regiment, Highland Black Watch. Was at Ticonderoga in 1758. Afterwards Colonel of the second Battalion of the Royal Emigrant Regiment".

It is a half length, life-size portrait of a man in the full military trappings of the time. It shows a very fine interesting face. The serious dark eyes have a look that might well have been left there after the horrors of Ticonderoga. It is a pleasing thought to know that he had time to enjoy an interval of peace, in the beautiful Bay country, before he went back to the turmoil of Napoleon-harried Europe.

The records show that he was dead in 1803, for in that year my great, great grandfather, Colonel William Smith of "Stanley", Douglas, Hants, bought the Selma Hall property from the heirs of Colonel Small (Major-General John Small died 17th March, 1796), and conveyed it to three of his sons. They built homes and settled permanently at Selma. The home of one of the brothers is still standing, a substantial stone house with the date 1825 carved over the front door.

Old Colonel William was a very staunch Anglican, as was also the son, who succeeded him at "Stanley". Colonel William was doing garrison duty at Halifax during the troubled years of Napoleon's wars; and in an old letter written by the Colonel in 1807 to his wife, a native of Newport, Rhode Island, he describes the daily round of his duties in the Halifax garrison, and mentions his dislike of the noise and commotion at "Fennels", a well-known inn of the time, where he and his son Richard, serving as Adjutant, were boarding. He writes that he has made the acquaintance of Mr. Black, the minister - (The Rev. William Black, father of the Methodist Church in Canada) - "Who has recommended a boarding house which I intend going at once to see".

Mr. Black's influence was far-reaching in the Colonel's family, for when the three sons settled on the Selma estate they were all Methodists.

Adjutant Richard, and his elder brother, known as the "Old Squire", both of the Methodist communion, built the first church in Selma, a small picturesque building with tower, arched windows, and a high pulpit with stairs leading to it. The pews were high, and the pew doors buttoned on the outside, making a safe corral for restless juniors. However, when opportunity offered, the youth of that day were quite ready to seize it.

On one occasion a small descendant of the old Colonel spied the pew door ajar, and at prayer time slipped stealthily behind his kneeling relatives and out into the aisle, then up the steep stair leading to the high pulpit. He made a noiseless way up the stair and peeked in. The clergyman, with closed eyes and clasped hands, was kneeling in fervent prayer when a raucous voice bellowed close to his ear "Peek-a-boo! Peek-a-boo!"

It was a most disconcerting interruption. The startled minister jumped, and face and manner expressed stern disapproval. The friendly small boy glimpsed the face, and turned in sudden terror. He grasped at the pulpit door, missed it, and tumbled backward down the steep stairway, bumping at every step, and his big voice bellowing his terror. A member of the family hurried him home, and when it was found that he was not badly hurt, he would no doubt be dealt with according to Solomon's method.

There were occasional unusual happenings in our Selma and Maitland churches. A disconcerting one, that I remember, took place during evening service in Trinity Anglican church.

It was a golden summer evening, with the mingled perfume from roses, honeysuckle and new mown hay drifting in through the open lattice windows. The peace and calm of the day of rest brooded over the busy ship-building village. Its stillness emphasized by the far-away tinkling of a cow-bell, the bleating of a lost lamb, and the penetrating murmur that heralds the incoming tide.

Trinity is a small church with a main aisle, and the entrance at right angles to the aisle. The doors were wide open on that summer evening, and the glory of the Cobequid sunset floated in on long lines of dancing, golden motes. Up the gravelled walk came the quick patter of running feet, and into the church burst a rosy, small boy with tousled hair on end; while a pursuing maid hovered on the threshold. He had evidently made a quick get-away from bed. His white nightgown was partially tucked into "knickers", and his flapping suspenders tap-tapped as he sped up the aisle. With one hand he clutched his knickbockers, the other was waving wildly as he whooped:

"Grandmother, Grandmother, come home quick! The cat has kittens in your velvet bonnet!"

There was a sudden rustle over the congregation like that of summer wind over a field of ripening grain. The appealed-to grandmother arose swiftly. Her arm enfolded the small boy, and her hand covered the rosy mouth, smothering further details,

only the word "bonnet-basket" floated back as they made a rapid exit.

The Rector's clear voice went steadily on with the service, and giggles were suppressed, though the occasional spasmodic twitching of shoulders showed that the leven of laughter was still working.

GOLDEN YEARS IN ACADIE.

CHAPTER 111

"Fires. Joe Howe Election 1867. Fenian Fears.
Target field activities. Tide changes and tragedies."

Long-settled, isolated communities are always a tangle of relationships, and our Bay district was no exception to this rule.

New comers had to be wary about expressing opinions, for affairs of church and state were taken seriously. Maitland, in the seventies and eighties, was largely Presbyterian and Anglican. Selma was a Methodist community, with a few Presbyterian families. The Methodists had a fine Sunday-school, which I attended, carrying with me the "Westminster Shorter Catechism". There were no doctrinal comparisons with the Catechism used by the Methodist members of the class, the only interest was, which Catechism had the shorter and easier answers to questions.

My first appearance as a public speaker was at a Sunday school entertainment in the old Selma church, where I was lifted onto a seat to repeat the fifth verse of the twenty-second chapter of the "Revelation". "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall

reign for ever and ever."

Many a time in the busy years of my work for the blind, I have thought of that fore-shadowing verse.

Delightful memories are interwoven with that long-gone Sunday school, its officers and attendants. We scholars were fairly breathless with anticipation when once a month the new papers from England were distributed. We exchanged them, read the stories and talked them over.— "The British Workman", the "British Workwoman", and "Sunshine", that dear wee magazine so aptly named. J.M. Barrie was a youthful subscriber to "Sunshine", and probably read the serials and solved the puzzles that we too enjoyed. In the touching story of "Margaret Ogilvy" he pays a fine tribute to "Sunshine" and its cheer.

Our winters are raw and cold on the Fundy coast, and in my childhood the majority of the children were clad in homespun, with which we wore soft knitted scarves that we called "clouds", wool mittens, and hoods.

One Sunday the three Douglas girls of Selma, who had been previously outfitted with hoods, appeared at Sunday school in hats, bought in Halifax. The next Sunday others were wearing hats, home manufactured it is true, but hats, nevertheless. For the hatless the situation was acute. I put in my plea for a hat, but my new scarlet hood with its soft satin strings was considered more comfortable for a small daughter's wear.

I wore the hood, but I felt certain that I was to have a hat, for I was praying for one. I had been deeply impressed by a Scripture lesson upon asking and receiving.

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them".

I wanted a hat, and was asking for it with a faith that never wavered. December days passed. I was still wearing the hood and still earnestly putting up my petition, though no one but myself knew of this exercise of faith. On Christmas Eve a dearly-loved Aunt came to visit us, and brought me the prayed-for hat. To this day I remember the thrill of joy and awe with which I regarded it. I had asked and I had received. The little grey felt hat with its trimming of pale blue velvet, marked a milestone in my life, for in that little girl petition was sown the seed of an abiding faith, that has carried me through many hard experiences and heavy sorrows.

A destructive fire, witnessed in childhood, is a memory picture that is apt to hold fast for all the years to come.

The shining water of a Pacific inlet is but a stone's throw from where I write, and beyond are the snow-capped peaks of the Olympics. But even nearer and more definitely clear is a memory picture of a sunshiny morning in a far land, and fire, in long writhing tongues leaping from the windows and licking up the roof of the "Old Squire's" house on the hill.

Men rushed frantically from the shipyards to lend aid, but to no avail. The big, rambling old house burned to ashes, its going accelerated by the incoming tide-breeze, and with it went the old mahogany furniture and family treasures of china; but not the tall, old grandfather's clock, The clock had a holacust of its own a few years before, lighted by a small girl with forbidden matches. In those days matches were neither so plentiful nor safe as they are today. She was leisurely breaking them off the card and burning them one by one when a door opened, and footsteps sounded in the upper hall. Trouble loomed large for the small girl, but her eyes lighted upon the tall old clock. In an instant she had swung open its door, thrust all the matches inside with the blazing one, then exit small girl.

The cherished old clock had made short work of burning itself up, and narrowly missed including the house. The mysterious second fire took the fine old home with its winding stairways, large rooms, and added sections having a step up or down. The many treasures therein all went up in smoke. All that remained was the very deep old well in the back kitchen, the chief source of water supply.

A new up-to-date home, which is still standing, was built on the old site, one of the loveliest spots in the beautiful Bay country.

That year of 1867 brought my first election memory, and like the fire, an abiding one. It was the great epoch-making

Confederation Election. It is still spoken of as the "hottest election in Nova Scotia", and to the native-born that means much. Elections are always hot in Nova Scotia, as I know from personal knowledge of later elections.

The whole Province was in a turmoil of political strife and doubt. Party lines were criss-cross, issues dubious, feeling intensely bitter, and those who had formerly been the best of friends were turning into acrimonious foes.

The candidates in our County of Hants were Joseph Howe, the great outstanding Nova Scotian, and his opponent, Monson H. Goudge, a well-known citizen of our county town of Windsor.

Our household was early astir that morning. Father, with other Selma voters hastened village-ward. My small brother and I took our station at the gate, eager to keep in touch with what was going on. I remember one hurrahing, shouting crowd driving in a hay-waggon drawn by three horses. They yelled derisively as they passed the homes of Howe supporters, and we two mites at the gate, with true Nova Scotian election spirit, piped a shrill "Hurrah for Howe".

I remember nothing more of that eventful day until eventide. My brother George and I were playing in the hall, overlooked by a nice, young girl who was living with us. We had been called inside early, and after carefully fastening doors and windows, Mother had taken my baby brother upstairs and was singing him to sleep. There was a sudden break in the soft lullaby; she tiptoed to the head of the stairs and

called in a sharp, insistent tone.

"Quick, quick, take the children and hide under the bed in the back room!"

Quickly and quietly we obeyed. The old-fashioned bed had a starched valance that reached to the floor. We were effectively hidden so far as outside observation went, and the wise young helper watched that we made no betraying movement.

We were barely in safe hiding when a loud insistent banging began on the front door, accompanied by angry demands that the door be opened. The door was kicked and shaken, and presently we heard voices at the back of the house, and a fierce hammering at the porch door. The men shouted and swore, and angrily proclaimed their intentions of thrashing father "within an inch of his life". Never again would he be able to take an active part in an election. We children shivered in terror as we listened to those blood-curdling threats. The men were drunk, of course, and one of the trio was a noted fighter. After trying the doors, they made the rounds of the windows. All had been securely fastened, but O, how frightened we children were when we heard their angry voices and pushing fingers at the bedroom window. Twice they made the circuit of the house, went away and came back, hung over the gate, and finally departed.

Election returns, brought by stage coach, were slow in coming, and the seething excitement lasted for days. There

were no telegraph lines along the Cobequid Bay in those days, and telephones, wireless, automobiles and airplanes undreamed of. There were then but two short lines of railway in the Province of Nova Scotia, and the bridging of the Atlantic by cable was a great world event.

Joseph Howe's convincing oratory carried the Confederation election. The great Nova Scotian had a wonderfully magnetic personality which appealed to all sorts and conditions, to children as well as to grey-haired politicians.

I well remember the friendly notice he bestowed upon my brother and me as we hovered in the hall anxious for a glimpse of the great man. His sparkling eyes, his fresh face, his kindly manner held strong appeal, and his fine overcoat and suit of black and white shepherd's plaid were, to us, the acme of elegance.

One lively summer of the late sixties brought fears of a Fenian raid to our isolated village. There was drilling and target-practice, and the thrill of seeing men in scarlet coats scurrying around the village.

A target was set up in one of the wide level fields of the "Point Farm", known for years after as the "Target Field". It is now the Selma-Maitland Race Course. In my youth the wide level of the target field was the setting for many lively adventures. "Distant, secluded, still," it afforded an excellent practice ground for those learning to ride.

In the late seventies the property was owned by a horse-loving sea Captain, and the target-field was used as a pasture

for a miscellaneous collection of horses. Among the number were nine unbroken Sable Island ponies and a retired circus-horse that had been taught to interpret the driving order "Get up!" as a call to rise on its hind legs and paw the air with its fore-feet. A fearsome performance for a driver unaware of this idiosyncrasy, and whose casual order "Get up!" had brought such an astounding exhibition of energy, and especially embarrassing if the driver was not aware of the word of command used to end the frantic pawings.

The nine unbroken Sable Island ponies,used to the bleak pastures of their home Island, wandered to and fro, over the wide target field, went to the shed for their hay ration,and diligently scraped the snow from the frozen grass.

The Captain and family were away and the care-taker was busy with many duties. The winter had been one of heavy snow-falls and continuous cold, and in March the snowbanks covered with a heavy crust, were firm against the high fences, and the road-bed was beaten hard and smooth by the heavy timber teams.

During the month of March there had been many complaints in regard to losses from stables; bridles, halters, ends of rope, stored gunny-sacks, oats and other forage. There was always a large supply of oats stocked for the use of timber-camp teams. For a month or more a number of Selma boys had been hastening home from school in a rush to get chores done and lessons prepared. These duties over, there was a quiet disappearance, always casually accounted for, if questioned.

It was a glorious moonlight night in March. The air was

frosty and still and the snowbanks against the high fences glistened like polished silver. Sleigh runners creaked over the f frozen snow, and the great maples in the lane leading to the Point Farm cast a net-work of shadows. The gate to the highway was wide open, and suddenly there swept through it a hooting, yelling company mounted upon snorting,squealing horses. Into the highway they charged, scattering the "salt-of-the-earth" on their way to a church meeting. Stern admonitions and loud threats rang out from startled men, and calls for help from terrified women.

The riders swept down the hill whooping their joy, and within five minutes all Selma was out of doors in wondering fear of what was happening. Sound carries far on a still winter night and as the cavalcade tore by, a pony and rider whisked through a gate across the street and fell in once more with the main company. On the hillside his wild pony had charged up a high snowbank against the fence and had leaped down into a neighbour's field. As the rider swept by he saluted with a war-whoop well-known and well-practised.

For the ponies it was a gala night--the spirit of wind and waves and raging surf animated their fierce small bodies. The word "whoopee" had not come into our country vocabulary--but surely the spirit of the word lurked in the shaggy bodies and looked out of the glittering eyes; a grand "whoopee" for the ponies and for the riders war-medicine was mixed.

The "Point Farm" staged many lively scenes of my happy youth. The homes were occupied by relatives of my mother, and I was always welcome. A farm and its activities hold keen interest for childhood, and the "Point Farm" had the added lures of a vantage spot where shipyards could be overlooked, and a gully down the cliff leading to the beach. A fallen tree lay in the gully, by its aid we scrambled down and defied the steep cliffs.

Cobequid Bay never freezes over, nor the mouth of the Shubenacadie at Maitland, the tremendous inrush and outflow of tide prevents freezing. The first heavy snowstorm of winter lays the sea-wall foundation, and the great masses of ice formed on the Bay shores, and in creek estuaries, swirl back and forth with the furious tide, and pile up in a great jagged ice-wall along the beaches. Dwellers by the Cobequid Bay know that when the sea-wall goes out, Spring has knocked at their doors.

There is constant change in the shore line of Cobequid Bay. The fierce tides cut and burrow into the soft, red-sandstone cliffs, and frost and the grinding sea-wall add to the work of attrition.

The long stretches of mud flats, where creeks

and small water-courses enter the Bay are gradually built up by this process of attrition, and in the course of time are covered by sedge and other salty, coarse growths. To the native born no cultivated green, such as spinach or chard, can compare with the wild "goose-tongue" of the Cobequid salt marshes, and it is boasted of in far lands. During the march of the years the new land grows, and man comes to its aid with dykes, to "shut out the turbulent tides". Thus Nature's beginning of mud and sedge grows into the lush stretches of Fundy marsh-land. Until it is dyked no one can predict with certainty as to the sedge-bank's story; for a long-continued, fierce wind accompanied by an unusually high tide will in an hour or two sweep away the slow, patient, building-work of years.

Every Spring, when the sea-wall goes out, there are shore changes in Cobequid Bay. The great cave at Salter's Head, which was the beach Mecca of my childhood, has been washed away. No one seems to know of a dreaded, small patch of quicksand on the beach, not far from the Head, though familiar with the location of quicksand danger spots near the channel. We knew of those, too, through the Micmac shad spearing activities, but a foot inadvertently set on that wee bit on the beach always brought trouble.

One Spring when the sea-wall went out, it carried a great slice off the cliff side, leaving an immense skeleton of a prehistoric creature exposed high on the side of the red

sandstone cliff.

We children always looked for treasure on the beach. Ambergris was the great objective, and we also hoped that a stray amethyst might lurk among the gay beach pebbles. We found neither, but we had the joy of anticipatory search.

Another joyous quest in shore fields was the search for holes, where Captain Kidd's pirate treasures had been dug for. This work of treasure hunting required solemn, speechless night-sessions, and from generation unto generation this search for the pirate Captain's elusive treasure, has continued in Nova Scotia.

The only treasure-trove that I remember being found was on a raw March day, before the sea-wall went out. Ship timber was being sledded into the yard, and a worker noticed a glistening, golden spot on a mud-splashed ice-cake. He investigated, and found a gold-plated watch-chain imbedded in the ice. He cut it out, and exchanged it at the shipyard store for groceries.

Cobequid Bay, whether at low-tide, half-tide, or high water lapping against the cliffs, held an irresistable attraction for Bay children. We knew the few safe places where we could reach the beach at low water, or when ebb-tide had set in. We kept ears and eyes open as we played, for we knew the danger of that swift-running, treacherous tide. We were alert to a tremulous vibration in the air, and the sighing murmur that accompanied it. A shout would go up,- "The

tide is coming!" - and though it was miles distant we took no chance, but hurried to our safe climbing spots. Our Bay tide, with its phenomenal inrush, and rise of over fifty feet, always had the right of way.

The tide swept up Cobequid Bay in a great wedge-shaped bore, flecked with foam. The bore was usually about four feet in height, and always roared as if it meant business. In a very short time it covered the miles of bare, red flats and quicksands, hurried into the river-like channels on the flats, and in an incredibly short time would be snarling and biting at the cliffs. It was well to be safe above that seething commotion on the white clover sod of a shore field, for the tragedies of the Cobequid Bay tide were many and very pitiful.

GOLDEN YEARS IN ACADIE.

Chapter IV.

"In Joy and gladness on ye go my Country's pleasant streams,
And oft through scenes as fair ye flow as bless the poet's dreams."
Joseph Howe.

The Shubenacadie river, with its lakes and short portages, was the well-travelled way of the Micmacs to the Atlantic coast. It was by this route that the fierce Jean Baptiste Cope led his scalping raids, and the early English settlers got supplies from Halifax. In 1827 the Assembly of Nova Scotia decided to use this route, deepened and straightened, as a waterway to connect the Atlantic coast settlements with those of the head waters of the Bay of Fundy. This was the era of canals. Work was begun at Dartmouth and carried on vigorously for a time, but George Stephenson's great invention side-tracked the Shubenacadie Canal. The triumphal march of steam had begun, and after a very considerable expenditure, in work and money, the canal scheme was abandoned. The massive granite work in connection with its building can still be seen after more than a century of neglect.

As children we learned that the name Shubenacadie signified ground nut, or potato, an édible that we diligently searched for and never found.

Wild berries were plentiful, "sunkist" strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, gooseberries, white-berries on a dainty vine in the moss of cradle-hills, thimble berries, and for the birds' table, gay pigeon berries and Indian pear. In golden September days mushrooms dotted upland pastures, and grew by hundreds overnight on the wide stretches of dyked marsh.

In those golden years the Cobequid Bay teemed with shad, there were salmon too, and other fish in the Bay, and they were trout streams that we diligently fished. When the tide ebbed in the Bay, shad and salmon were left in the shallow pools on the "Big Flat". Every summer of my youth the Micmacs came back to their old haunts on the Bay to spear fish. Their camps were built in the shore pastures, they fished, sold baskets, tubs, quill and bead work, and had a prolonged family picnic.

They always received a warm welcome from the usurpers of their ancient lands and waterways. We children knew all the fishing families of the Pauls, and the Thoma, the little Louies, the Madelons, and the Peters.

In those busy ship-building years the Bay shad and salmon made a Providential addition to boarding house menus; what a boon, either fresh or salt, for busy housewives. Fried fresh shad for supper--one could smell it floating out through the open doors and kitchen windows. Strawberries too, and hot biscuit, and nobody that I can remember featured digestive troubles.

There was great satisfaction in the Selma community when the school-district dissension was finally settled. In the Autumn of 1868 the burned school house was replaced by a fine up-to-date building, that is still being used for school purposes.

The two departments of shipbuilding days, with every seat filled, and spare floor space occupied by extra benches, have dwindled to one.

Shipyard workers, who could find winter employment in the timber camps brought their families, and in the seventies and eighties the Selma district swarmed with children. Selma was a neighbourhood of large families, four households could combine in a muster of forty-three children. They were mostly boys, big husky lads, with the restless urge of the Fundy tide in their blood, and an "over-the-hills and far-away" spirit that carried them abroad, "strange countries for to see".

During those busy years there were many notable teachers in the Maitland and Selma schools. The late Edward J. Lay of the Selma school, was a teacher whose influence has reached from Atlantic to Pacific.

His was not a happy regime for dawdlers. There was no relaxing, no shirking, nothing but work, and plenty of it.

There were pupils who carried around "Chambers' Practical Mathematics" and worked the problems with a zest, similar to that induced by the Crossword Puzzle of today. Love of

mathematics, and a desire for far horizons were heritages of the Bay youth, they talked knowingly of latitude and longtitude, of trade-winds, tides and currents, while Singapore, "The River Plate", Valparaiso, Galveston, Melbourne, Bordeaux, Liverpool, Iquique, were far more familiar names than those of the towns in our own Dominion.

The Shipbuilders of our district drafted and modelled their ships. A keen brain and mathematical ability were required for this work, which I once heard a very successful builder described as "considerable of a job". It certainly was, and no mercy was shown the inquisitive boy or girl who dared to meddle with the intricate sheets of figures, or the long flexible wooden moulds. "The Epitome" was a much-discussed book of my youth, and I have vivid recollections of young men coming in the evenings to be coached in Navigation by my Aunt, before they went to Halifax to pass the Marine Board Examinations as ships officers. The following reference is made to her work in Wallace's fine book - "Wooden Ships and Iron Men",- "Many Windsor, Maitland, and Hantsport ship Captains were taught navigation by Miss Eliza Frame, a school teacher in Maitland, Nova Scotia".

Maitland village school, like that of Selma, had a succession of notable teachers. Those short-term years were convenient for college students who wished to help out their tuition expenses. The late George W.T. Irving, known and loved

by hundreds of educationists throughout Canada, was an outstanding teacher in the Maitland school. Clever, patient, kind and courteous, his appointment to the Provincial Education Office at Halifax was a distinct loss to our Bay district.

The Province of Nova Scotia has always been a leader along progressive lines in education. Nova Scotia had the first free schools in Canada. Nova Scotia was the first country in the world to grant free education for blind children, putting the handicapped ones upon an equality, educationally, with their brothers and sisters with sight. It was Nova Scotia that stirred up the matter of the unfair postage on Braille books for the Blind, with the result that Canada led the World in this altruistic movement, and other nations are following.

The story of the first school in Selma is characteristic of the three Smith brothers, who were the first permanent settlers. Two of them had large families, the other brother had no children. A neighbourhood meeting was called for the purpose of voting money for a school. This was long before the time of free schools. The three Smiths, large land owners, and the men, mostly with families, who worked at their gypsum quarries or on their farms, comprised the company.

Colonel Richard Smith, Member of the Legislative Assembly, a rich man with no children, was chairman. He was opposed to the expense of the school undertaking, as a large share of the needed money would have to come from his pocket-book. The "old

Squire" and the youngest brother both had large families, and were keen for a school. The youngest brother deliberately set himself to bait and annoy Chairman Richard. In vain the peaceable "old Squire" tried to 'pour oil upon the troubled waters'. At last so heated did the discussion become, and so incensed grew Colonel Richard that he finally jumped up, stamped out, and slammed the door, a most unusual action on the part of the courteous gentleman. The company watched his angry exit in surprised perturbation. All but the offending youngest brother, who tip-toed to the vestry window and peeked out. Yes, brother Richard stepping quickly and flourishing his cane was homeward bound.

The youngest brother rubbed his hands gleefully, and blandly announced to the old Squire;- "Now, Brother, you take the chair. The Objection is removed; we'll proceed to business and vote our school money."

The money was voted, Colonel Richard of course paid his share, and the first school in Selma was opened in a small storehouse, or shop, in the "old Squire's" dooryard.

The tree-shaded avenue, down which Colonel Richard took his wrathful way, led into a beautiful circular garden. Trees and garden have now completely disappeared. The long lane leading to the "Point Farm", with its magnificent maple and birch trees was even more beautiful, but these too have vanished.

A particularly vivid memory of my childhood is that of the great Saxby gale and tide. A storm the like of which has never since been recorded in the Bay country. That record-making tide and gale occurred during the first week of October, 1869. It was a most impressive and destructive exhibition of wind and water on the rampage. All along the Atlantic coast from New England it raged, and especially in the Bay of Fundy and its tributary bays. Even after the lapse of more than half a century there remain evidences of its savagery.

The great gale and tide were predicted by Lieutenant Saxby of the British Navy. A clipping from a newspaper of the time gives Lieutenant Saxby's warning:

"On October 5th, 1869, the moon will be at that part of her orbit which is nearest the earth. Her attraction will, therefore, be at its maximum force. At noon the same day the moon will be on the earth's equator--a circumstance that never occurs without marked atmospheric changes; and at 2 p.m. of the same day lines drawn from the earth's centre would cut the sun and moon in the same arc of right ascension (the moon's attraction and the sun's attraction will, therefore, be acting in the same direction); in other words, the new moon will be on the earth's equator when in perigee, and nothing more threatening can occur".

Halifax papers printed the warning paragraph and commented upon it. It was a lively topic in our Bay villages. To heed or not to heed its warning was the big question discussed by sailors, fishermen, farmers, and shipbuilders. There were those who considered that "there might be something in it", others sniffed scornfully at the idea of "a fellow in London trying to tell a Cobequid country dweller anything about a tide".

"Of course there was a big tide at the mouth of the Severn", for the Bristol Channel tide was familiar to many of the seafaring men of our Bayside villages. It was a big tide but not in the running with the Cobequid.

It is wonderful how tenacious the hold upon a child's memory, school talk about neighbourhood events can be. What fathers, and grandparents, and uncles, and the Captains, said about the predicted storm.

There were great herds of cattle feeding on the rich aftermath of the dyked marshes, and I can still remember the names of cattle owners who intended driving their cattle off the marsh, and of those whose cattle were to remain, a bucolic challenge to the naval predicter of calamity.

That fateful October day was a quiet, brooding one, and the lowering horizon grew more forbidding as the day waned.

We children stood at a window and watched all the cattle being driven from the marshes, for when the test came, even the most vociferous scoffers had decided that it was "better to be sure than sorry".

The storm broke in the early evening in a furious tempest of rain, thunder and lightning, and a howling hurricane of wind. Fearful that the roof might be blown from the house, father and Mother took us to a downstairs bedroom.

The roaring, crashing gale filled me with abject terror. I've always feared wind. Many years afterward I read Robert

Louis Stevenson's tersely expressed opinion of a gale. "I have always feared the sound of wind beyond anything. In my hell it would always blow a gale".

The two small brothers were being carried, and I was pattering behind. We were opposite to the open door of a room where the curtains had not been drawn. Suddenly room, windows and sky were filled with ghastly, greenish-white light as a great blazing meteor cut across the sky, lighting the whole countryside.

"A meteor!" Father cried, and I shivered a new word into my vocabulary.

When we reached the hall, three dishevelled, hatless neighbours were waiting to be let in. Our house was on the shipyard road beside the marsh, a very good vantage spot to watch for the predicted tide.

I was very wide-awake and had been allowed to remain up. My fear-alert ears caught that sudden portentous lull in the shrieking inferno of sounds. The wind had gone, all would be well. It was a brief, sinister lull, followed by a crash as if the foundations of the earth were being ground to powder. Nature had been merely drawing a long breath, before the raging tide swept in, carrying away dykes and everything in its path. There was a sudden, sharp uncanny slap, slap, against our house. Father opened the porch door and salt water rolled in. The dyke had gone, a tremendous calamity in a farming community.

Grey morning showed a scene of desolation. Salt water filled the marshes, covered roads, and lapped death to beautiful trees. Haystacks, drowned animals, timber and debris of all sorts floated on the sullen, muddy flood, while out in the Bay channel, the hull of a schooner drifting to and fro suggested tragedy. To Selma dwellers the "Big Hole" was the most impressive object lesson of the Saxby tide's power. More than half an acre of dyked marsh near the creek had been lifted out, leaving a great half-acre hole twenty feet deep. Think of the time and energy required to dig a cellar covering half an acre and twenty feet deep. The Saxby tide did the work in less than five minutes.

It was estimated that a swift-moving wall of water, four feet higher than the dykes, had swept the Cobequid Country. Naturally our dykes are built high, and very strong. Usually six feet in places where there is likely to be heavy strain. Fortunately, no lives were lost in our district, but there was great destruction of property.

Roads were under salt water for two weeks, the tide sweeping in unchecked. Buildings were damaged, fences laid low, shipyard cranes down, timber adrift. Great rifts of debris left by the flood tide were reminders, for many a long day, of that raging tide. The rebuilding of the dyke was arduous work, as its course had to be changed, and the half-acre hole turned into the creek. The Saxby tide was a weather calamity-prediction amply fulfilled.

We had short, fierce thunder storms during our hot summers. These storms usually rolled in with the tide, and at times left their mark. We Bay children had inborn respect for such storms, and were not fool-hardy in regard to thunder-storm "don'ts".

Our clear cold winter days, alternated with thaws, sharp frosts, snow, bitter winds and blustering snow that filled the roads level with the high fences of those days.

In the evenings, if we happened to be alone, Father always read aloud. I remember an irruptive interval in one reading. The book was "The Northwest Passage by Land" (Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle). Father, with eyes still on the book, reached out, grasped the poker and pushed back a log in the fireplace.

A voice, shrilly anxious, piped up - "Be careful, Father, it's loaded!"

Father had inadvertently picked up the barrel of an old gun that had been sawed off and fashioned into a pop-gun. A long one it was, and, moreover, it WAS loaded. The young brother desirous of keeping it under his eye had placed it behind the heavy, old-fashioned tongs and poker until the reading was over, then it would be safely cached. It was one of the unexpected "whoopings up" of inanimate objects, that Father's hand should come in contact with the gun-barrel instead of with the poker.

We were occasionally snowbound, during our rigorous winters, but after the roads were cleared there was coasting on the long hills, and moonlit skating on the miles of frozen marsh.

Spring, long in coming, was often a fickle, disappointing season, but when we found on mossy cradle-hills the dainty pink and white mayflowers (trailing arbutus) hiding under their browny-green leaves, we felt that Spring had truly come. The robins were with us too, and the little brown linnets with red top-knots, while far overhead a line of black marks in the clear, cobalt blue told us that wild geese were honking their way to the far North. Spring had come, "then up my heart and sing!" Maple sugar in birch bark cones tickled the palate. April had an "r", so clams were dug on Lower Selma beach, and later dandelion greens in the home orchard. Fishing-rods were geared, and alder whistles tapped. Winter mat-hooking activities gave place to Spring sewing, and the upsetting racket of house-cleaning in our homes.

Summer was a long delight of beautiful days and warm evenings. We had a profusion of lovely wild flowers that followed the trailing arbutus, and violets (white, blue, and yellow) of Spring, wild rose, lillies, iris, meadow-sweet, gentian, trilliums, orchids and dozens of others.

Fireweed, golden rod, and Michaelmas daisies heralded Autumn, and its riot of brilliant coloring in our Bayside forests. How gorgeous, too, was the rich blue of the Cobequid mountains in the still sunshine, and how magnificent the coloring of the Bay sunsets; no sunsets can be lovelier.

We had a great variety of birds,- the robin, beloved of all as the harbinger of Spring, led the year's procession, and the hardy, cheeky chick-a-dee ended it. The birds and their habits were a never-failing interest in our home. No Prima Donna has ever awakened for me the wild thrill of delight that was called forth by the first bob-o-link of the season, as he swayed on a branch at the marsh edge, pouring forth a flood of melodious song.

GOLDEN YEARS IN ACADIE.

Chapter V.

"Activities and Joys of Youth. The French Doctor and Acadian Treasure."

There were few special entertainments for children in my youth. Those were years in which the old maxim, in regard to children being seen and not heard was enforced.

A party, exclusively for children, was an almost unheard of proposition. The first school-picnic stirred a neighbourhood breeze, and the first school entertainment brought an audience that had driven miles through mud and darkness to be present.

The first party invitation, for my brother George and me, was a mid-day dinner party for the older children of the McDougall family, and a few added for the younger members, George and I were of the latter.

It was Christmas day, fine and frosty, a large company, and a 'noble feast', roast goose, roast chicken and all the accompaniments. Captain Alex' eyes twinkled as he watched the celerity with which filled plates were emptied. After dinner there were games for the younger children, and "Sir

Roger de Coverly" for the older ones. It was the first entertainment given in the fine new home, a fitting house-warming by the parents of a very large family.

That Christmas also brought the delight of my first book-present, "Little Prudy," by Sophie May, a cousin of Louisa M. Alcott. All the world of childhood owes a debt of gratitude to those charming writers.

The book came by mail from New York addressed to me. My name on the fly leaf and "A gift from Captain Wilson of the 'Bina'". Hand in hand with "Little Prudy" I walked out into one of the joyous trails of life's uphill journey. Another book gift that year was the "New England Primer", my grand-mother's gift. It had a rhymed Scriptural alphabet, and many stern, admonitory maxims, which I committed to memory, and as a reward was taught to knit. The knitting knowledge was revived to fever heat in the Great War years.

Those who went to sea brought back stories of concerts, theatres, and pantomines, but to the stay-at-homes, they were merely names. In our community there were many young people who could sing, recite, and play well on the piano, accordion, concertina, and violin. Money was needed for the new school building, and an up-to-date teacher decided that money might be raised by a Cinderella entertainment, playlet, and music.

Never was there such a joyous-talk-fest in our neighbourhood as that very successful entertainment evoked. Aunt Isabel (sister of Judge McCully of Confederation fame) took hold of the affair, saw to the training, costumes and general pull of preparation.

There was always an abundance of flags and bunting in our shipbuilding village. The woods supplied spruce, feathery hemlock, and trailing evergreen vines, and at a distance paper flowers can masquerade as the real thing.

That first entertainment was an immense success. Play, music, and recitations went off without a hitch. The building was packed with a most appreciative audience. One sympathetic listener grew greatly incensed over the behaviour of the cruel stepsisters, one of whom was his own daughter, the other her chum.

"Well, well", he mourned audibly, "if those two 'aint a pair of mean wretches." "Of course, I know that X (his daughter) would do it. She's a clear deal; she'd do anything! But I never thought that of E. She always seemed such a nice girl! O, dear, you never can tell!"

I shed my first "play-goers' tears" on that evening. They were not called forth by the excellence of the acting. My tears were merely those of envious self-pity. The sight of Cousin Alice, flitting to and fro as a fairy, amid that wonderful

greenery where I fain would have been, so overcame me that I lifted up my voice and wept. I am quite sure that my young mother, still in her twenties, understood as she snuggled me close, but the relative who was with us inquired crisply- "What's the matter with her? What has she eaten? Give her a dose of vermifuge when you go home."

"Vermifuge". At that dread word I sat up and dried my tears, envy and self-pity vanished, and for the rest of the evening I strove to efface from their memories and my own all thought of that horrible dose.

The success of that evening's entertainment set a fashion that was followed by nearly two generations, but motor-cars, movies and radios seem to have ousted the fine, old-fashioned country entertainments. They, like many others of the old-time, have had their day and ceased to be.

When I look back and compare the home life of those years with that of today, we "old-timers" seem to have had very few of the luxuries of life, but we got along happily without them. A safe horse and side-saddle, a good driving horse, a top buggy, a family carriage with two seats, or a cheaper style with an adjustable seat, and sleighs and pungs for winter use.

We had a delightful old lady relative who told us entrancing stories, and who could always command an interested audience. Her specialties were stories of the early settlers, of Indians, and of buried treasure. She told one story of massacre by

Indians, that always commanded breathless attention. It was the story of a trading ship's crew cruelly massacred. Only one, a boy in his teens, was spared. For years he lived with the savages, all the time planning ways for escape. There were spectacular attempts, and ups and downs of magnitude, told with a wealth of detail, and we followed his final get-away with breathless interest. We knew the ending, but that story never palled.

"O, yes, Father and Mother saw him - John Jewett. They were in Maine and talked to him, and bought his little book, and I read it".

Not long ago a Victoria newspaper recalled the story of the Massacre, and of John Jewett's adventures and escape. I learned then that the coast of British Columbia was the scene of that long gone tragedy.

Woods and Indians were familiar, and of course we played "John Jewett". There were minor accidents, but I do not remember any serious disablement from the reckless use of bow and arrows.

The various massacre and war plays culminated in the "Fall of Badajos". Father had been reading aloud "Napier's History of the Peninsular War". We were all greatly impressed by the thrilling chapter on the capture of Badajos, and the boys studied carefully the diagram of the fort. Our new home had just been finished and building materials were at hand, limestone

and half a barrel of quick-setting calcined plaster. A site behind a high wood pile was chosen, and the fort building went forward. Ammunition was a problem, for none of the village merchants would sell powder to my brothers. However, the brothers belonged to the dauntless tribe, "and where there is a will there is a way". The "Way" was an unsuspecting Aunt, with a good knowledge of Chemistry, who supplied the formula for making gunpowder. There was abundance of charcoal for use in an old-fashioned flat-iron, and no embargo on the purchase of sulphur. Other materials were at hand, and the powder was manufactured in secret.

On a fine Saturday afternoon in late October, all the boys in the neighbourhood were gathered in our back yard, ready for action. The home-made powder had been reinforced by gifts from boy friends, and there was a lot of it.

The explosion bang that jarred the house was terrific. Glass shivered to pieces, dishes fell, and flying limestone battered the new paint. There were howls and yells from the yard as the boys crawled from cover. It was a miracle that no one was badly hurt, though there were minor casualties. The whole neighbourhood was out of doors in a panic of fright, for the explosion had been heavy. Fort Badajos was effectively razed, so was the cord wood pile, and our boys did penance in replacing it.

The delightful relater of the adventures of "John Jewett", had many local traditions of our neighbourhood. The scene of a favorite one was laid in Selma. Given briefly, without the captivating details of what the French doctor said, and the Colonel, and her brother, the facts were these.

Her Uncle, Colonel Richard Smith, was a member of the Legislature of Nova Scotia. During one of his sessions he met a very agreeable French gentleman from Paris who was visiting in Halifax. He proved so interesting and friendly that the hospitable Colonel invited him to visit Selma. Then would follow a long discourse upon the French gentleman's manners, his learning, clothes, tastes in music and food, his facility in topographical sketching, and the number of neat pen and ink maps in his possession.

Botany was his Selma hobby, and from early morning until twilight he searched the fields for wild flower specimens. Later it was remembered that the search had always been carried on in Acadian fields.

For three weeks in the fine May weather that diligent search went on. One noon he came back flushed and excited, and it was noticed that when he slipped off again he was enveloped in a long cloak, although the day was warm. As he passed through the yard he must have heard one of the men grumbling loudly, over the disappearance of a dyke spade that he had specially sharpened.

The French gentleman did not return for supper, and the long Spring twilight had deepened into dusk when, still draped in the cloak, and evidently very weary, he slipped in. He hurried at once to his room, returning very shortly to arrange for transportation in a gypsum schooner that was sailing at midnight for a port in Maine, U.S. The matter was easily arranged, he paid his passage money in advance, spent a pleasant evening with the Colonel's household, and at tide time drove off in the farm waggon that was taking supplies to the schooner.

At midnight the anchor was weighed, and the schooner swung out on the swift ebb tide, bound for the port in Maine where the narrator's brother held a position in an office. The young man, a nephew of Colonel Richard's had recently been in Selma and had made the acquaintance of the French doctor. As soon as the schooner swung out into the Bay the Doctor took himself and his luggage into a bunk, and remained there until the schooner arrived at its destination. The exclusiveness of their passenger was resented by Captain and crew, but one of the crew finally carried a message to the young Selma clerk. It was noon and the lad hurried to the schooner. The interview with the French passenger was secret. He finally produced several gold coins, and desired the lad to take two of them uptown and change them into American money, to tell no one, and not to show them to anyone on the schooner. The lad

glanced at them, and saw that they were French coins, but not until they had been offered for exchange was the date examined. They were valuable indeed, but not as exchange for American currency. It was a disconcerting message for the French doctor. He finally decided to accompany the lad uptown, and producing a rust-covered iron box, extracted several more coins. The boy piled his luggage on a wheel-barrow, and the cloaked doctor, with the box concealed under his arm, accompanied the boy. After some difficulty the coins that he had taken from the box were sold for their gold value, and the money for the stage journey to Portland provided. The lad was given a small gold coin of France, a coin of ancient date, kept as a curio.

When the strange story was written home to Selma, treasure hunting fever clutched the community. The location of the cache unearthed by the Frenchman was easily found, in a shore field at the western end of the aboiteau dyke. The hole, rotted wood, heaped mud, and the Colonel's missing spade were there. The field is now overgrown with forest trees, but in my youth there were cleared spaces and grassy knolls showing that it had once been the site of an Acadian home. A well-to-do owner, no doubt, who considered it safer to cache his treasure than to carry it with him. Treasure in hand was liable to be levied upon, for La Loutre's needs were many. No doubt the Acadian owner expected to return, and soon,

for English threats and English leniency in carrying them out, were well known to the Acadians. If the New Englander, Winslow, had not been so "efficiently onto the job" the probabilities are that the Acadian deportation would not have assumed the tragic proportions that it did.

Digging for treasure buried by the Acadians, Captain Kidd, or other looting pirates, has for generations held absorbing interest for the youth of Coast villages in Acadie. Down through the years treasure has been found, though not by organized search parties. It has usually been unearthed in the prosaic work of drain-digging, or stumbled upon in some shore-pasture following frost action and thaw.

A number of silver dishes, evidently used in church service, comes to mind as being found in drainage work. A tangible reminder of the hasty preparation for flight made by some careful parish priest. Another surprise cache was unearthed in a shore pasture. It was a warm Spring day, with frost coming out of the ground. To avoid water and slush, a young man leaped to a cradle-hill near. His weight, aided by frost action, broke off a section of moss and mud disclosing a handful of gold coins. One wonders as to what was the fate of the person who had placed them there.

There were Maitland traditions of a pirate ship having tide misadventures in Cobequid Bay, and of its crew having wintered on the Cobequid shore. Our Bay is so beautiful in

its setting, and so wierd in its behaviour, that almost any fantastic legend in regard to it might well be true.

We know for a certainty that in 1747 the Prince of French adventurers, Coulon de Villiers, with his force of three hundred men, crossed the river Shubenacadie on his way to massacre the New England garrison at Minas.

The local tradition of my youth was that the main force of the expedition, dragging their equipment and frozen rations on handsleds, crossed the Shubenacadie on the ice of the trail far up river, and then followed the route across country to Minas.

There was also the story of the crossing at the Shubenacadie's mouth of a daring small party of De Viller's scouts, who recklessly ventured in a canoe across the river's mouth at high water, a mile or more, between Black Rock and Maitland. What a fearsome and hazardous undertaking that must have been. It was February, bitter winter weather, a raging wind, and a tremendous sea-wall piled at the mouth of the river. The crossing would be at high water, and how deftly the paddles must have worked to take over that valiant scouting party in safety. Challenged by grinding ice-floes, watching warily lest the narrow channel between the jagged ice masses suddenly close, paddling cautiously to keep out of the track of the great tossing masses of shore ice, torn from the sea-wall, and splashed with the red mud of the Bay shore, in dark

crimson patches, "like the blood of dragons".

That scout crossing was surely an heroic one.

We of Maitland were very chary of crossing the Shubenacadie in winter, but in the early morning of a fine New Year's day, more than a century and a half later than De Villier's scouts, I was one of a small party of relatives from Truro who crossed in the morning and returned in the evening, a once-in-a-lifetime happening.

The ferry of those days was an open boat with sail and oars. The quiet ferryman was an expert in tide vagaries and gave us warning notice of the minute we were to start on the return journey. There was no ferry accident in the many years he managed sail and oars. An up-to-date motor ferry now makes the crossing for the shore highway number 13 between Truro and Windsor.

GOLDEN YEARS IN ACADIE.

Chapter VI.

"Home changes. A runaway. Our dogs. Tryie."

The summer of 1870 was a stirring one across the Atlantic. In our little out-of-the-way corner of the world, we watched with keen interest the struggle between France and Prussia. Our ships were in their ports, and we heard of freight-rates, cargoes, and personal adventures, news of far more poignant interest for our village than the newspaper accounts of Prussian victories.

One cablegram of that year brought world sorrow. The word of the sudden passing of the great novelist, Charles Dickens. Father left the office during an hour that he was busiest and came home to tell mother. Years before, he had come home in a similar way, but with an open letter in his hand instead of a newspaper. The letter had brought the sorrowful news of the death of his youngest brother, a medical student at Harvard. My earliest definite recollection of the ravages of the Grim Reaper.

There were changes in our home affairs that year. Captain A.A. McDougall was a busy shipbuilder in Selma, and father took over the supply part of the business. A new home

site was purchased on the hill, not far from the spot where Colonel Small's "Selma Hall" had stood.

We spent a glorious summer in the big old home of a relative, who was absent. The house was one of the first built in Selma, and there was a delightful garden and beautiful trees,- two immense silver-leaf poplars at the gate, fruit trees, lilacs and rose bushes. Long rows of asparagus had been left to grow tall and feathery. Under its arching green I spread an old rug, and whenever the chance offered I slipped out to read. There was always plenty of reading matter in our home, and books for the children. In my retreat there was a tin box that usually held a book, not on the Children's schedule. That summer I read everything I could lay my hands upon,- "Martin Chuzzelwit", "Old Curiosity Shop", "The Scarlet Letter", "Oliver Twist", two of Scott's long poems "Marmion" and "Lord of the Isles", and was deep in one of Wilkie Collin's finest thrillers when the retreat was discovered and my reading summarily curtailed.

A marking event of the summer was my first remembered journey from Selma to the old Frame homestead on the Shubenacadie river, a family location since 1797. That journey took "the whole long day from morn to eve".

A neighbour's son drove us the twenty-three miles in a two-seated waggon, the "outfit" consisting of my mother, two brothers, myself, luggage and lunch, the last item being of vast importance.

It was a sweltering hot day, and a heavy load for the horse. As we journeyed inland we missed the cool breeze from the Bay. There was a halt at noon, the horse was unharnessed and fed, and we ate our lunch beside a brook under the shade of a giant maple.

We travelled the last half dozen miles before reaching Shubenacadie Station, by the picturesque old river road, a winding, hilly way with fine farms bordering the river. The first route used by the settlers was the Shubenacadie river, the next was the road that we were travelling. Within a few years this road was set aside, and a more direct route with fewer hills was chosen as the highway to the Station, a road much easier to travel, but lacking the beauty and interest of the old highway.

By three o'clock the mercury was climbing in the nineties, and we drove into the yard of the Bell's big farmhouse, a thirsty "outfit". Mrs. Bell came out and invited the hot weary travellers, strangers to her, to come into her cool parlor and rest. Early supper was being prepared for the hay-makers, and a cup of refreshing tea was brought in for my tired mother, and ginger cookies for the children. We were merely travellers on a day exceptionally hot, but the way in which her thoughtful kindness was tendered, made an unforgetable impression. Hospitality was an outstanding characteristic of our Bay communities, and "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers'

an injunction heeded by the first settlers, and followed by their descendants.

In the Diary of the Rev. James Murdoch (first Presbyterian minister in Canada) there is an early record of the hospitality of the settlers of the Shubenacadie country.

"December 19th, 1792 ..... Got down to J. Williamson's by dark. Stay all night. Kindly received."

"December 24th, 1792 ..... Sent for to Mr. Paul Woodworth's to a blythe meal or drinking of tea."

The descendants of the early settlers are still given to hospitality, and even in these years of tea-rooms and motoring, and chasing to and fro, that fine old spirit of hospitality is still to be found in the Province of Nova Scōtia.

We children had the thrill of our first run-away that afternoon. The time-schedule for our trip,had been planned so as to avoid being in the vicinity of Shubenacadie Station when a train was due. Our village horses moved sedately through the various tumults and roaring rackets of the shipyards, but they invariably "showed off" if they happened to encounter a train. We children mourned when we heard that there were to be no chances of seeing a train. A train was a very worth-while sight for children twenty miles from a railway. The careful avoidance-plan was apparently working out all right, for we heard the rumbling roar and the distant whistle of the passing train,long before we jogged serenely into the railway village. However, the "best laid plans" acted true to form, for we were

just at the overhead crossing, when a roaring, whistling special came tearing along. Our driver made frantic efforts to get under and past the crossing before the special. Vain effort, for we were on the roadway directly beneath when the snorting, screeching engine tore over our heads. Our terrified horse acted in a perfectly orthodox way. He extended his head, gathered up his feet, and showed sudden fierce speed in running away. Tired! We thought not. The most rampantly humane of sob-sisters could not have detected weariness, in that frantic exhibition of speed and strength. We tore through the village, everything sheering off to give us the right of way. Some well-meaning men, rushing to stop him, added to the excitement. We took the curve leading to the long covered bridge at a perilous angle, and thundered through its black tunnel-like enclosure in a smothering cloud of dust. We accomplished another sharp turn in safety, everything sheering out of our way, and our young driver's grip never wavering. He managed to keep us out of the drains, we met no menacing hay-loads, and the white horse finally stopped galloping, unfolded his feet and set all four on the solid earth once more.

Though badly frightened, we all had pride in our steed, and the driver gave his opinion "that if the white horse put forth all his speed, he might even beat the train", and we agreed.

A happy childhood in the country always includes pet animals, dogs especially. The stories of our dogs, from Rover, a great, white tail-less sheep-dog, to Mike, the last of the list, would fill a book. They all had pet idiosyncrasies. One was a church-goer, and an unfailing disturber of Sabbath peace. He was a mind-reader, too, and always disappeared when wanted for the Saturday night lock-up, consequently, on Sunday morning was not to be caught. Gay and fresh, he accompanied the carriage to church, dancing gaily at the threatening whip, chasing cats, geese and hens, and while in the yards usually staging a dog fight. His most annoying trick was that of sniffing at the heels of unoffending old ladies wending their way to church, and barking loudly. He would dance delightedly around them thoroughly enjoying their terror.

On one of the rare occasions when he had been outwitted and imprisoned, he was allowed his freedom on the return of the church-goers. He was sulky, and there was an ominous gleam in his eyes that meant business. Very shortly he was glimpsed speeding through the gate with the bonnet of a visitor, a gay, best bonnet with long floating strings. There was immediate pursuit, fast and furious. He was eventually cornered, and the remains of the bonnet brought back. During the afternoon he appeared alone at a church on the Maitland road where a service was being held. No member of our

household was present, but his eyes lit upon my Grandmother, a dignified old lady, sitting in the front seat of the side aisle near the pulpit. He trotted up the aisle and nimbly hopped up beside her. He was a big, tawny, mastiff and sat up straight, showing his teeth and casting baleful glances at the congregation. He was so big and bad-tempered, that no one cared to try conclusions with him, a situation that the youth of the congregation enjoyed immensely.

The service, conducted by a stranger, was long. Grandmother, afraid of the dog, sat "like patience on a monument", and the dog beside her invited trouble. When he decided that it was high time the service was over, he jumped from the seat, mounted the steps of the platform, sniffed at the preacher's heels and growled loudly. He then stationed himself on the sofa behind the worried leader, a divinity student, until the service closed.

There were trouble-strings to this incident.

Not long ago I chanced upon a pup-mark in an old book, Hugh Miller's "Testimony of the Rocks". There were tooth marks and torn pages, that brought back vivid memories of Rover's first lesson in training. I scanned the defaced pages with a full heart. What poignant memories they brought back of happy childhood, and dear ones who have all "over-passed me on the road", and the defaced old book bids fair to see the end of us all.

Through a never forgotten object lesson in that summer of 1870, I learned one of life's inestimable values. I had taken quite as a matter of course my priceless possessions of loving, upright parents, dear brothers, a happy home and sheltered love-filled days. My comrades had similar views, the good things of life ours by right, of course.

Outside this assured, joyous circle hovered Tryie. This was not her name but it will do. The girl of fourteen had been taken from an Institution in a far-away city, by a relative of my mother's, and was being trained as household help.

There were only two in the family, a retired clergyman, very old and in his dotage, and his wife very much younger. Tryie had a good home in beautiful surroundings, but it must have been a deadly lonely life for the city-bred child. Tryie's mistress had many friends and outside interests, and was often from home, leaving Tryie on guard with the childish old clergyman.

We children knew of Tryie's methods with him, especially when he missed his wife, and would announce that he was going at once to bring her home. Tryie never objected nor argued. He was a determined Englishman, and she knew better. She would always acquiesce, hurry to fetch his tall silk hat, his gloves, his gold-topped cane, and then would earnestly enquire:
"O, Mr. Blank, you surely are not going without a word of prayer?"

The devout old gentleman would instantly drop on his knees, and with eyes closed would pray long and fervently. Tryie, flitting noiselessly about her work, would interject frequent

responses, thus keeping up the illusion. Then a cup of tea must be partaken of before the start was made, and then a prolonged returning of thanks, and thus by prayer and feasting did Tryie prevent his wandering.

The Saxby tide had stranded an immense boat in the Douglas' garden. The boat made a delightful and romantic play-house for the neighbourhood children.

On a lovely summer afternoon a most engaging game of make-believe was going on in the old boat. Half a dozen small girls, all relatives, were having a glorious time. Activities were in full swing when we spied Tryie coming over the hill. She was laden with bundles and was carrying a half-bushel basket. Pretty Tryie, usually garbed in a skimpy cotton frock, and as slim as a bean-pole, looked like an animated puncheon draped in a beaded cloak.

She paused on the bridge to survey the lively company in the old boat, but no telepathic wave suggested to us that Tryie's face was set toward freedom. That joyous game of happy youth, was as the lure of the lost for lonely Tryie. We knew that her mistress and sister were spending the day in the Village, but Tryie assured us the the "Reverend" was asleep, that she had locked him in, and had time to join in our game.

One of the players whispered that the fine kid boots looked like Aunt's new ones, side-laced. Tryie's sharp ears

caught the whispered comment, and she sweetly announced: "O, yes, they are. They didn't fit her and she gave them to me".

Time flies in happy youth, and we were all surprised to see the carriage with Tryie's mistress and her sister, right at the bridge, and they were looking in our direction. We gasped at Tryie's profane expletive as she sped to hide. It was too late, for the carriage had stopped, and Tryie's stately mistress bore down upon us.

We watched in awed horror poor abject Tryie being drawn from her hiding place. No expert Customs-lady-detective has ever done more thorough work than our relative as she proceeded to examine Tryie's draperies.

Every best garment in her wardrobe was being worn by Tryie, tied to her, or packed in bundles and basket. Tryie had acted upon Old Mrs. Means' advice - "Get a-plenty while you're a-gettin'", jewellry too, as well as clothes.

Down the long years I can still year that soft rich voice, in a crescendo of "Oh, mys! Oh, dears!" and the reiterated question of "O, Tryie, how could you do such a wicked, wicked thing?"

It was an awe-stricken company that watched Tryie's exit. The zest had gone from our play, and we hurried to our homes to relate the terrible happening.

My mother did not condone the offence as she talked to me about it, but her wide charity in regard to the up-bringing of Tryie, a child that had never known a mother's love, a father's care or the discipline and training of a happy home, with its family ties, taught me a never-to-be-forgotten lesson.

Pretty Tryie was sent back to where she came from, and I have often wondered as to what life has held for her.

GOLDEN YEARS IN ACADIE.

Chapter Vll.

"The timber-camps, ship launches and superstitions. The Shorter Catechism."

Long before daylight on frosty winter mornings, we would hear the supply sleds creaking over the frozen snow, on their way back to the forest timber-camps; harness jingling, horses snorting, drivers shouting. The great logs were brought on bob-sleds from the camps to the shipyards, and were then fashioned into the various sticks used in the building of the ships.

Cobequid Bay ships could be launched only at new moon and full moon, and our special tides waited for no ship. The tremendous tide at Maitland, rising fifty-two feet and over, on occasions, had strange vagaries. Not even the most experienced "tide-marker", could predict with certainty as to our Cobequid tide behaviour. Sometimes a ship ready for launching would have to be held over for two weeks, because of a low lagging tide that did not reach safe launching height. Probably the next high tide period would show dykes bank-full, tide marks submerged, and the tide lapping far under the launchways.

Launching days were the great gala times, for the youth of a shipbuilding village. How eagerly we watched to see the launching signals go up--the Union Jack at the peak of the foremast, the name pennant on the mainmast, and the Red Ensign on the mizzen.

A crowd always gathered to watch a ship-launch, our specialty in Bay entertainments, and one of unfailing interest, for there was always involved that lure of attraction for British born--the element of danger and of a gamble, personal interest, too, of various sorts, for the new ship always carried away members of the community.

The percentage of launching accidents in Maitland was very small. The "Peerless", a large and beautiful ship, built by Sydney Smith, ran along the ways, but had not momentum to carry her fairly afloat. She stuck in the beach mud for two weeks, then money and the next high tide set her afloat. A few other ships were similarly "hung up" but for shorter periods. These troubles were mostly due to errors in judging the exact moment of high water.

There were also strange, freakish actions on the part of the ships. For instance, the sudden frantic plunge of the "Francis Herbert", in one of the Selma yards. This fine ship started in a furious hurry before the blocks had been all split out. Bilge shores came crashing down in every direction, or were carried along with the rushing ship. The

fierce friction set the ways smoking, and terrified onlookers stood fear-paralyzed, as they thought of the danger to those working under the ship.

Above the racket rose a loud booming voice calling to the workers; "Lie flat! Lie Flat! Get down, quick!"

There was instant obedience. No man attempted to struggle out. They lay motionless while the great ship tore, and rasped, and smoked, but a span above them. A good nerve test, that.

Among the onlookers women fainted, others prayed aloud for sons or husband, The first workman that I saw crawling out had face and hair drenched with blood. "Only a bit of a scalp wound", he protested,- but it certainly looked fearsome. The prompt obedience to that shouted order no doubt prevented a launching tragedy.

The fast-sailing "Salmon", of South Maitland, went off in a similar rush. There was no time to cast off a stay rope. It caught in crane and uprights, and the heavy masses of timber came crashing down among the onlookers. It was a marvel that no one was killed, but there were broken bones, bad bruises and hairbreadth escapes.

Owing to tide vagaries, there had to be occasional launches at night. Summer moonlight, immense bonfires in the yard, the great ship looming dominantly high, the black hull glistening in the firelight, the workers rushing to and fro with gleaming torches, the masts silhouetted against the

star-spangled background, like three long fingers pointing into the mysteries of the future. The incoming tide splashing on the beach, and reflecting the fires in ruddy broken patches, a never-to-be-forgotten picture.

No doubt each Nova Scotian shipbuilding community had its own pet superstitions, and "bad luck" signs.

There were few Friday launchings in our village. Personally, I remember but one, the "Earnscliffe", but there were others very likely, when builders found it convenient for tide reasons, to ignore the sailors' superstition of "bad luck Friday". The "Earnscliffe", acclaimed at home and abroad as the perfection of beauty in a sailing ship, was launched on a Friday. The unfortunate career of this great full-rigged ship seems to bear out the sailors' superstition. Another aversion of home builders was the naming of a ship for fish or amphibious animal. He was a bold owner who named his ship the "Otter" or the "Salmon".

Perhaps the pet aversion of Maitland builders was their objection to girls being launched on board, "just for the fun of it". There were exceptions, however, when relatives were going out in a ship, and occasional chances that came the girls' way. Boys, young and old, were always accorded launching privileges. There were nineteen barques launched from the McDougall yard in Selma, and the McDougall boys, my two brothers, and other boys of the community were launched on board many of them.

This pet aversion was looked upon as pure folly by the girls, who on one notable occasion managed to circumvent it.

One golden summer in the 'eighties', an Old Country firm had two vessels for the South American trade built in Maitland. The owners sent out one of their Captains, a Naval Reserve man, who spent a pleasant summer in Maitland, and before his ship was launched sent out invitations to a dozen or more Maitland girls to be launched on board. Each one accepted joyfully, and agreed to say nothing of the invitation nor of our intentions regarding it. Launching day was a glorious midsummer one, and the Captain met his guests and escorted us on board, and we were all safely there, before any interested person got busy. However, an irate builder followed the procession, and voiced his opinion of the innovation.

The launching was a most successful and delightful one, and the tide on its best behaviour.

What a thrill of excitement there was when the first quiver of launching movement was felt, and we reached out to grasp whatever stationary object that was nearest. How exhilarating that rush and roar of movement, and the smooth, swift, gliding down the ways, to be followed by the sharp jarring thud, and hissing splash when the ship struck the water. She ran far out into the Bay, where a waiting tug-boat towed her to the Dominion wharf, to await the night tide that was to carry her out of our ken forever.

There was a Church tea in progress when we came ashore, which we attended, buoyed by the consciousness of achievement. We, too, were of those who had been "launched on board".

Later the deep-water, its ships, and its glamorous adventures laid compelling hold upon many of the girls launched on board that ship. They too "went down to the sea in ships", and had adventures many and stirring. One of the company was the heroine of the thrilling story of "The Captain's Wife".

A Bay launch with its wider scope for movement was more beautiful than a creek one, but the latter had the added interest of watching the ship "being wared" along a narrow, tortuous, passage through the marsh to the sea.

To be present at a launching, was an inalienable right of the children of a ship-building village. I well remember one occasion when we three children missed a launch in the McDougall yard. In those golden years it was incumbent upon Presbyterian youth to be able to glibly repeat the answers to questions in the "Shorter Catechism". This compendium of the Westminster Divines was in pamphlet form with thick, light paper covers, and on the back of the cover was printed--another trial of youth--the multiplication table, strenuous contents backed by strenuous cover. As a child I often wondered why these sorrows of youth were bound together. One never-to-be-forgotten time the Ministerial catechising fell upon a launching day, a launch in the Selma shipyard; that

surely was for us "a Pentecost of Calamity".

It was the first pastoral visit of our new minister. He was not familiar with the idiosyncrasies of our shipbuilding community, and, serenely unconscious of our anxiety to get away. As launching time drew near, with one eye upon him, and the other upon the clock, we breathlessly hurried through our answers. The surprising thing about our performance was that there was no halting in our answers, no hesitation even in "What is effectual calling?" We were being "top-notchers" as we sat on the edges of our straight-backed Windsor chairs, and cast furtive, longing glances at the window, from which we could glimpse the tall masts and fluttering flags of the ship to be launched. The minister finished the catechising with commendations upon our performance.

We were all on our knees, and the minister engaged in earnest prayer, when the dear, younger brother, with head raised to the level of the window, gave a loud wailing gasp of "O, George, there she goes! There she goes!"

The prayer came to an abrupt end. We tendered shame-faced apologies, and the minister hurried the boys off. They were in time to see the ship being "wared" out of the creek, and to use the big wooden knives they had prepared for scraping grease from the launchways.

The boy who could reeve the signal halyards and scrape the greatest quantity of grease from the launchways, was considered by his contemporaries to be in a fair way for success in life's adventure.

The ship-yard day began at seven a.m. and lasted until 6 p.m. with an interval of an hour at noon; and there was no groaning about long hours. From the time work began in the long Spring days until the last of the season's great, beautiful ships sailed away never to return, the Bay villages were humming hives of industry; drafters, framers, plankers, sawyers, carpenters, dubbers, caulkers, fasteners, blacksmiths "who ironed the ships", block-makers, sail-makers, carvers, riggers all got in their special work, and when the grease expert and the launching gang finished theirs, then the crew was shipped, and down the Bay on the swift ebb tide went our beautiful ships, their snowy sails changing to gold as they dipped into the sunset path, and slipped through our "Golden Gate", the narrow sea-space between Noel Head and Economy (Okonoma) Point, never to return.

The sunsets in our Cobequid Bay country are wonderfully beautiful. Perhaps the abnormal tide disturbance may have something to do with the glorious cloud-effects, but the Cobequid Bay sunsets are incomparably lovely. The hazy blue of the Cobequid Mountains against a gorgeous background;

shading from orange to yellow, primrose and the palest gold to silvery white. The great stretches of pastel shades in the Spring sunsets, lemon and pale greens, and pinks and blues. The rich crimson, purple, and fiery rose of winter sunset over the frozen marshes, and the short season of the special sunset between the Capes (Noel Head and Economy Point) when the sun drops, a great golden ball, over the edge of the world, leaving a path of rippling gold on the water that, to the eyes of childhood, seemed the straight road to fairyland, and in these chastened years a foretoken of that far, fair haven in the Land that is now not so very far off.

One sunset rite connected with road-side shipyards, is a clear and ineffaceable memory. It is the procession of the chip-carriers, who went after work hours to gather the hewed chips, that burned so riotously in open fireplaces and in the "Liberty and Union" cooking-stoves.

That quaint procession, mostly women and children, with baskets and armloads, and chip-filled aprons, silhouetted against the gold of sunset, if it could have been transferred to canvas by the hand of a Master, would have made the artist's fortune.

We had one frantic scare of shipyard fire in Selma. It was an evening in late Autumn and three large ships, almost ready for launching, were on the stocks in adjoining yards, and but a short distance apart.

Fire broke out in the blacksmith's shop in the central yard. The building blazed with the sudden fierce intensity of spontaneous combustion. A short, fierce fire that reddened the evening sky, and showed the three ships with their tall masts and tangle of rigging silhouetted against the crimson background.

There was frantic haste in moving inflammable stores, pitch, tar, oil, oakum, cordage, and there was also the danger of sparks alighting on shavings, cordage, and pitch-pine. After a short, hard fight the fire was subdued. It had been confined to the one building, which burned to ashes; but no chances were taken and a large force patrolled the yards until daybreak.

The Maitland District was very fortunate in regard to shipyard fires, and no ship was burned nor injured while on the stocks. The fierce electric storms that come up with the tide are always a menace, but the one fatal ship accident due to lightning was before my remembrance. There were yard accidents, due to heavy falls, a fatal one in a South Maitland shipyard, and there were broad-axe cuts, adze accidents, and hair-breadth escapes.

Those ten-hour-day workmen were a happy lot. When any heavy lifting such as mast-stepping or taking in ballast, was going on and the aid of the windlass needed, they always sang as they worked. Strong, melodious voices raised in sea-chaunteys. A favourite one was:

"Sometimes we're bound for Liverpool,
Sometimes we're bound for Spain,
Hand away, my jolly boys, we're all bound to go."

There were many verses, all reiterating their intention to go, and go they did, for two generations.

"Rolling River" was another chauntey with an alluring air, which was also a favourite. My question as to why the Missouri and Shenandoah, inland rivers of the United States, should be lauded by our ocean-going seamen was answered thus by one of our sailors:

"Rolling River is a fine work-song, about the best to tramp around the capstan by. You hardly notice the heavy work of anchor lifting when you're tramping and bellowing Rolling River".

The version of "Rolling River" as sung by our sailor men, 'wot knew the salin' game', ran thus:-

"O, Shenny-dore, I love your daughter,
Hoo-ray you rolling river.
Ah-ha I'm bound away on the wide Missouri."

A melodious statement that seemed to lack common-sense. Years later I heard the American song, and quote one verse:-

"Oh, Shenandoah, I long to see you,
Ah-way, you rolling river!
Oh, Shenandoah, I long to see you,
Ah-way, we're bound to go,
'Cross the wide Missouri."

In the recent revival of interest in the songs of deep-water sailors, the following story was told to me.

Our Bay version, "O Shenny-dore I love your daughter" is not a mispronounciation of Shenandoah, but the sailors' version

of La Chien D'or (the golden dog) a famous Inn of old Quebec. The young daughter of the inn-keeper was a noted beauty. British warships were at Quebec and young Midshipman Nelson fell in love with the girl and intended to marry her. Fellow officers of his ship found out Midshipman Nelson's plans, came ashore and carried him off. Here, surely was material for a boat-song of the river St. Lawrence. The boatmen used the episode of La Chien D'or, and it finally found its way to Cobequid Bay as: "O Shenny-dore I love your daughter", a river-mixture from two nations, joyously sung by generations of deep-water sailors, their melodious echoes whisper softly down through these years of jazz and crooned yawpings.

GOLDEN YEARS IN ACADIE.

Chapter Vlll.

"The W.D. Lawrence of Maitland."

Our village of Maitland, Hants, Nova Scotia, has the honour of being the home port of the largest sailing ship built in Canada, and at the time of launching one of the five largest ships afloat.

This ship, the W.D. Lawrence, named for her designer, builder, and owner, typified the vision, skill, and business acumen of our shipbuilding village. Another Maitland ship, the tragic "Earnscliffe" built by Joseph Monteith, has been acclaimed one of the most beautiful of sailing ships.

We children, of the district, knew the exact length of the great keel laid in the Lawrence yard. We could also visualize what a monster-ship would be built on that very long keel, and our ears were alert for the doubt, dissent, and questionings in regard to this superlative ship.

Would that great bulk of tonnage be handled more easily in two ships of moderate size? What about docking and berthing space? How would she behave in a heavy gale? Was our Bay of Fundy spruce strong enough for so large a cargo-carrier?

Shouldn't the big ship be built of oak? Could a ship of that tonnage and weight, with three decks, and ballast in the hold, be launched safely? She would likely topple over when she began to move on the ways, and kill half the onlookers.

During the eighteen months that the big ship was being built, our calamity-mongers had an unfailing topic of conversation. My father was not of the doubters, and there were many others who held similar views.

They appreciated the risk being taken, but had firm faith in the keen business judgment, drafting ability and mechanical skill of W.D. Lawrence, and that of his brother, Lockhart Lawrence.

As to whether this monster ship, or any ship would launch easily and safely no builder could predict, but it was the builder's duty to see that his yard-foreman had every detail of launching work complete. There was always the fierce factor of the Cobequid tide to be considered as well as the launching-behaviour of the ship. No builder--not even a Hiram of Tyre--backed by the wisdom of Solomon himself--could foretell how any wooden ship would behave in the brief space while moving down the ways to the sea. This was a secret known only to the wooden lady herself, and one that never was told.

We children listened to the discussions and our eyes danced at the prospect of scrambling from launching debris, with "head bloody but unbowed". We listened to all the "Tall talk" and no phase of the predicted calamities escaped our

attention.

Maitland ships, ready for launching, represented from forty thousand to over one hundred thousand dollars of invested capital.

These big wooden ships, built, officered, manned and many of them owned in our district, were money-makers. I remember that in one golden summer over a million dollars came home from our Hants County ships. During the summer of 1874 our Bay village was widely advertized by the Lawrence "big-ship" enterprise.

The great wooden ship on the stocks was an imposing sight. The keel was two hundred and forty-four feet nine inches in length. The immense hull stood up fifty feet from the ground. The fine lines of the great ship suggested speed, and its bulk foretold carrier profits.

As the work progressed the giant ship leaped yard boundaries, and the long bowsprit projected over the Maitland-Selma highway.

Oh, what a thrill we children got when we walked under the bowsprit and threw back our heads to squint up at the activities going on in the air, between us and the sky. Village errands were a joy that summer, affording a chance to dawdle past the big ship and to watch the delightful doings of that busy yard. The figure-head, in itself, was legitimate reason for a long roadside scrutiny. An immense man, arrogant and upstanding, draped in a long cloak and holding a scroll with the words "God defend the Right".

Maitland ships were launched outfitted for sea, all ready to spread their white sails to the breeze, consequently the W.D. Lawrence, high, glistening, dominant, was a truly magnificent sight.

The great, shining, black hull, with its fine lines and carrying capacity of two thousand four hundred and fifty-nine tons register; the tall, glistening masts of well-oiled hard pine pointing skywards, the mainmast over two hundred feet high, the long yards, or cross-trees, of a "square-rigger" in exact proportion, the main yard ninety feet long, and the others in regular gradation up to the skysail cross-trees. The W.D. Lawrence with all sail set carried eight thousand yards of snowy canvas.

The Autumn of 1874 was a beautiful one, with fine sunny days and warm nights. Maitland, with its green-shuttered white houses, surrounded by the crimson and gold and russet of hardwood trees, was a humming hive of industry. Twice in twenty-four hours the raging Cobequid tide roared in, filled the Bay, and emptied it. The red cliffs of Salter's Head and the Shubenacadie river stood out boldly in the clear air. The marsh, dyked first by the Acadians, was still green, and along marsh creeks and Bay shore were the shipyards, Maitland, the Selmas, and Noel.

Across the Bay were other shipbuilding villages that shone like spots of silver in the Autumn sunshine, and behind

them rose the blue barrier of the Cobequid mountains. High up on the mountain side there was another humming industry which is now but a memory--that of the Londonderry iron mines. We children knew the significance of that soft pearl-grey cloud of smoke by day and of fire by night.

The weather in those late Autumn days of 1874 was a topic of keen village interest. We had many local weather-prophets, but they were chary of committing themselves as to the probabilities for October 27th., launching day for the big ship. The season was late, gales were imminent, and our tide-tormented Bay no safe place for the monster ship. However, the fair weather continued, and the many barometers of the village "set fair" for the twenty-seventh.

Never before, nor since, has there been such a gala day in Maitland. Tuesday was launching day, but visitors had been arriving steadily for a week, and on the Monday before launching day every boarding-house and hotel in the village and vicinity was full and over-flowing. Village homes had to be opened to place the ever-increasing company of visitors. They came from Halifax, Truro, Moncton, St. John; from Bath, Maine, from shipbuilding villages in Hants and adjoining counties, and from our surrounding farming districts.

Long before dawn on that clear Autumn morning carriages, express-waggons, buggies, hay-waggons, any sort of vehicle that a horse, or two horses, could draw, came clattering in

from the outlying districts. The provident country visitors brought with them great bundles of hay for their horses, and ample baskets of lunch for themselves. Every person that could possibly get there, from grey-haired grandparents to the infant in arms, was at that notable launch. If no conveyance was procurable the sightseers walked.

October 27th, 1874, was a rarely beautiful day, with bright sunshine and no wind. High water--the launching hour--was about 2 p.m., but long before that hour watchers had stationed themselves in the shipyard.

My brothers and I were there under the watchful eyes of our parents. We knew and heeded launching admonitions, in regard to stay-ropes, stages, gang-planks and uprights, and did not settle ourselves too near the water, in case of a heavy return-wave rushing in when the ship struck the Bay. The tips of the masts show the first tremulous movement in a ship launch, and as we were familiar with the orderly progression of launching work, we knew when to fasten our eyes upon the gay bunting. Every vantage spot in the yard and vicinity was crowded with spectators, four thousand of them.

The tide, a quiet one, was running in rapidly, its force and depth announced every few minutes by the "tide-marker", stationed in a boat off shore. This calm tide was a cheering factor in the launching, for the Cobequid tide with its inrush of fifty-two feet and over is not only one of the World's

highest, but also one of the swiftest, and occasionally a launch disturber.

The ship was outfitted for sea, and those who were going out with her, including the Captain's wife, a daughter of W.D. Lawrence, and their children, were on board. The Captain, James Ellis, was a fine, typical Maitland ship master, who well understood how to navigate a ship and handle a crew. Along with these requisites he had a keen sense of the money-making possibilities in the ocean carrying trade, and was always alert and ready to seize "fortune at its flood". For four years he had been Captain of the barque "Pegasus", a Lawrence ship, and during that time had sent home to the owner the handsome sum of $82,000.

Stagings were down, and at one p.m. launching work started. Gangs of bare-armed men carrying pin-malls came trooping from other yards to lend assistance. All work in the village was suspended for the time. No machine help, only strong arms wielding pin-malls and shores, to move that towering mass of four thousand tons.

We children knew just what was doing in that orderly progression of launching sounds. That first sharp fusillade of pin-malls, in "wedging up", set our nerves a-quiver in a way similar to the sudden skirl of bagpipes upon a Highlander.

Then came the splitting out of blocks that are under the keel, and the knocking out of bilge-shores that have borne the

great weight of the ship while on the stocks, even we children understood the danger in this part of the work. Should the ship happen to start with a sudden wild rush, there is no time for workers to scramble out from underneath, their only chance is to lie as flat as possible while the ship smashes and tears her way along just above them, dragging with her shores and other debris, a fierce nerve test for the workers, and a ghastly thing to witness.

In a normal launch, when the shores and blocks are out, the ship settles down upon well-greased launch-ways, and, moved by gravitation, slips down to the sea.

Building delays due to the tardy receipt of needed supplies, and the idiosyncrasies of the tide occasionally kept our Bay ships perilously late in launching. The nip of frost in the air made launch-way grease liable to cake and harden on the ways. The expert, who mixed the grease for launch ways in the Selma yards was no mean citizen of the shipbuilding community, and was always hostile over "late lanchins". I remember him in a raw wind that whined of snow, stirring fish oil into the great iron cauldron of bubbling tallow, grumbling loudly as he stirred, about "Them as took chances in lanchin' late! Fish ile and taller! Hey, I've come to this, hev I?" His very blue eyes glinted like points of steel as he stirred the unsavoury mess, and his tawny beard tucked into a red and black scarf might have belonged to one of King Alfred's body guard.

If the launchway lubricant became heated beyond a certain degree the tallow granulated, and I remember one frantic neighbourhood scramble in Selma at the eleventh hour for fresh tallow. A hunt of crying necessity that brought forth from farmhouse storerooms the great, white cakes of tallow stored for winter candle making, a real sacrifice offering from thrifty housewives of the tallow-candle and kerosene age.

The weather was warm, there were no grease troubles, and the launching racket went steadily on in the Lawrence yard. So slowly and methodically came the racket of sounds, that watchers unfamiliar with the orderly progression of the work, began to grow nervously impatient.

A loud-voiced onlooker standing near us gave his opinion that "The ship was there to stay. She was too big! She couldn't be got off! She --"

"Talk sense", advised a Maitland man standing near. "The blocks aren't half split out and the tide is still running in! No builder on this Bay plans to launch before high water!"

The chatter in our vicinity had received a check, but the uneasy waiting continued, for there was always the element of a gamble as to how a ship would behave in that short, swift journey down the ways to the sea.

The tide was in, blocks and shores were out, and on the tick of the minute the first fine, tremulous movement of the mast tips gave notice that there was "life along the keel", the big ship had begun her stately progress down the launchways to the sea.

"There she goes! There she goes! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

Everybody arose in breathless excitement to watch that slow, majestic march, for the ship, like a great sovereign, proud of her beauty, gave the vast crowd ample time to admire her fine lines and workmanship as she glided down the ways to the sea. With a mighty splash she struck the Bay, and when the bow rose sharply and the stern sank gracefully, showing that the ship was completely and safely afloat, the great concourse of onlookers gave vent to their feelings in long-continued cheers. The much discussed "big ship" had slipped to the aea as lightly and gracefully as a schooner could have done.

She was all ready for sea, and there was instant activity on board. The two tugs waiting to accompany her to St. John came up. Snowy canvas was unfurled, and the great ship, on the turn of the tide followed the many others of our village to far horizons, our "ships that never returned". There is a haunting memory of the strange depressing hush that fell upon that vast assembly as the great ship sailed away.

The sun went under a cloud, and the bright afternoon settled into quiet Autumnal greyness that brought foreboding of weather change, and the premonition of a greater change in the affairs of men. Our peak of prosperity had been reached in the launch of the great ship. Maitland's flood tide of fortune had turned, the ebb had set in, and within two decades our great shipbuilding industry was but a memory.

The W.D. Lawrence was a fine carrier, a fast sailer, and a money-maker, settling a bill of over one hundred thousand dollars in one voyage. In the opening chapter of "Wooden ships and Iron Men" by F. W. Wallace, there is a fine pen-picture of the big ship flashing by in the South Atlantic on her way to port. Her first Captain was James Ellis, her second the builder's son, also William Dawson Lawrence. During the years operated by these home Captains the great cargo-carrier paid the pleasing profit of twenty-two per cent upon the original investment, and in the fore-shadowing of the lean years was sold to Norwegians.

The opening of the Suez Canal, with its convenient coaling stations, the use of iron and steel in construction, improvements in marine engines, have in two generations completely changed the centuries-old-order of wind, sails, and wooden hulls.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth" is a condition far too slow and uncertain for this frantically speeding twentieth century, and the doomed sailing ships have slipped away to "Davy Jones' Locker".

GOLDEN YEARS IN ACADIE.

Chapter lX.

"The Shipyards"

During the busy summers when the building of wooden ships was at its height, Maitland, South Maitland, the Selmas, and Noel added many thousands of tons to Canadian shipping.

In the sixties eighty-three ships were launched in the district. In the seventies and eighties one hundred and sixteen large ships sailed out of the Bay, never to return. We lagged in the nineties, for steam and iron were ousting the wind-driven ships; the march of progress was side-stepping our golden industry. The steel-age has followed, and the great wooden sailing ships, with their white canvas spread to the breeze and their money-making adventures are now "but a tale that is told".

The first three years of the nineties saw the launchings of the last of the big ships of our Maitland district. In 1890 the Calburga, in 1891 the Savona, the E.A. O'Brien, the Norwood, and the Earnscliffe, and in the closing year of 1893 the Strathern, and Launberga. After that date naught but the "Days that memory dwells upon".

The shore line and creek-banks along Cobequid Bay from Maitland to Noel, a distance of ten miles, were dotted with shipyards. Behind the shipyards were the up-land farms, orchards and dyked marshes. In summer the marshes were wide green expanses of clover and timothy hay, teeming with insect and bird life. In winter lonely stretches of wind-swept snow, backed by the dyke, and the grinding jagged masses of the sea-wall, over which the west wind swept complainingly. A January rain and thaw would turn the marsh into an outdoor skating rink, two miles long, a winter boon to village youth.

The farms, the orchards and the marshes remain; but there is nothing at all now, not even the faintest trace, to indicate where the shipyards were located or to tell of that great industry that flourished along the Cobequid Bay.

At South Maitland were the shipyards of the Traheys, W.P. Cameron, "Squire" William McDougall and his son Adams McDougall. There were probably earlier builders, for at one time there had been a brisk gypsum carrying-trade from 'The Rock' at South Maitland to the United States, and a similar quarry beyond the Selma marsh, from which the gypsum was conveyed on rails to the Selma creek. The American Civil War put a stop to the gypsum trade, which at that time was largely with the South;- and "on to Richmond with plaster" is a remembered phrase of my youth.

The Monteith yard was near the mouth of the Shubenacadie river. Across the Shubenacadie, in Colchester County, were the

Frank T. Bullen, that delightful writer of the days of sailing ships, discourses upon the "Wanderer's" sailing qualities in his book "A Sack of Shakings". "The Wanderer", built by rule of thumb by an amphibious sailor-farmer on a little creek in Nova Scotia, he considered the perfection of beauty in a sailing ship of that type.

The "Wanderer" was aptly named, a sort of rolling-stone of the sea, and in spite of her fine model and superior sailing qualities was no money-maker, and the occasion of many "high days" of annoyance for her owners, of whom my father was one. A particularly large and beautiful conch-shell, brought home by one of the "Wanderer's" crew, was known in our household as "The piano", a derisive reminder of a piano that was promised from Wanderer's drafts--that never came.

David R. Smith and W.H. Hamilton were earlier builders in Selma, and Lorenzo O'Brien at Sterlings' Brook. At Lower Selma Captain Charles Cox and his son, Rupert, and the firm of Brown and Anthony, were busy builders. The Crowes, James Rose, Neal, Esdale, Creelman, McKeil, Densmore and Mackenzie are names associated with Lower Selma ship-interests, and the sea.

At the Acadian Noel, ten miles down the Cobequid Bay from Maitland, the O'Briens, Desnmores, Hunters, Faulkners, McLellan, Gould, Seabrook, Scott, Dalrymple, Brown, Campbell, provided ships and officers.

Many of Maitland's money-making Captains were relatives of the builders. McDougall heads the list with a dozen or more members

of the clan. There were Captains Lawrence, Densmore, Putnam, Douglas, Howe, Gould, Roy, Graham, McArthur, Norman, Whidden, Hall, Cox, Currie, Caddell, Dart, Allen, Allan, Nelson, McKeil, Pratt McNutt, Forbes, Blois, Walker, McCulloch, Macomber, Brown, Bradley, Mackenzie, Crowe, Sterling; back of these in many cases were fathers who had been Captains, and still farther back sea-faring grandfathers.

There was also a large contingent of land specialists in shipyard work, men who had to do with the building of our ocean-carriers. Framers who hewed and fashioned the logs into frames and placed them in position, work that was lined and measured and accurate. After frames were in place the plankers got busy, and the dubbers, who wielded that sharp and fearsome weapon, the adze. The calkers were special workers. Their business was to plug the seams with oakum to make the ship water-tight. The fasteners' work was to make sure that all the iron and copper bolts were properly secured. The carpenters, joiners, and carvers were special workers, so were the spar-makers, who fashioned the masts and yards. The riggers, who spliced wire and fitted rope for standing rigging and the running gear. Sail makers, block makers, plumbers, carvers and painters added to the number of householders in a shipbuilding village.

Looking back, and judging by present day standards, one readily recognizes that the Maitland shipbuilding community was, in many ways, a remarkable one. The enterprise, business acumen, integrity and morality of its citizens stood high.

They were of that mixed ancestry that has the world habit of doing things and of "getting there"--descendants of settlers from Scotland, from New England, the North of Ireland. Village names familiar in those busy years were Frieze, Cochran, Roy, Douglas, Dickie, Putnam, McCallum, Lawrence, Murphy, Eaton, Ross, Sydney Smith, Bowden Smith, Currie, Lynch, Howe, Stewart, Gould, Drillis, McArthur, McDougall, Barbrick, Monteith, Cameron, Nelson, Densmore, Macomber, Rines, Hays, Hetler, Scotney, Dart, Mackenzie, Forbes, Mackintosh, Woodworth, Weldon, Ellis, Macleod, Hamilton, Pratt, Faulkner, Cox, Stairs, Frame, the Smith connection of Selma, the Crowes, Coxes, Gates, Ogilvie, Faulkner, McKiel, ~~and~~ Sterlings of Lower Selma.

This list is but a partial one, and includes not only the shipbuilders, but those who in a general way contributed to the business life of the community. There are few, very few, of their descendants left in the beautiful country village. The heritage of restlessness, bred in those born beside that fierce ever-changing tide has borne them afar to new lands, fresh activities and great adventures.

The junior officers were usually natives of the Maitland district, many of them atarting their sea career as cabin-boys in home ships. They were fine, intrepid sailors and could also figure the value of a dollar in any country under the sun, and were wise to monetary exchange tricks, especially so in regard to the tael.

There was World business being transacted in our out-of-the-way corner of the Globe, and great was the satisfaction in 1872 when the Western Union Telegraph Company opened a branch line to Maitland.

Another forward movement followed in 1873 when a branch of the Merchants Bank of Halifax, now the Royal Bank of Canada, was established.

Before that date, drafts coming in to the village from every quarter of the globe had to be taken to Halifax or Truro to be cashed. Workmen had to be paid, and builders were often under the necessity of keeping large sums of money in their homes. One builder had the snug fortune of forty thousand dollars hidden for three weeks in an attic room of his home.

There were no robberies in those busy years, and the one bold attempt upon the Bank, the work of a professional crook, was no doubt frustrated by the patrolling night watchman, with a lantern, going his rounds in a nearby shipyard.

Isolated, rich, with a floating population of a thousand strangers in our busy summers, there was no deed of criminal violence that I can remember. We had no policeman, and among the hundreds who flocked in to work there were many who differed in religion, language and politics, any one of the three subjects affording an excellent chance for trouble. An acute difference of opinion was occasionally settled by "peelin' of coats", but such action was rare.

Builders were, in a way, responsible for the good behaviour of their workmen, and no doubt the peace and order were due to

the strong temperance sentiment in our village. Maitland shipbuilders stood firm on the Temperance question, and there was untiring vigilance exercised and a stern fight waged to keep liquor from being smuggled into boarding-houses.

"Things seen are mightier than things heard", and my memory harks back to the most impressive temperance demonstration in my experience.

Within twenty-four hours there were to be ship launches of importance. Hundreds of men would be paid off and plenty of money afloat. Into this apparently profitable field for operation two men from Truro brought a large supply of whiskey. It was conveyed secretly to a house on the Selma road. The Maitland shipbuilders and other peace-loving citizens learned of the hidden whiskey, and took prompt action.

They marched, two by two, in a long dignified procession to the house where the liquor was concealed, ordered the owners to load it upon a huge barrow, and wheel it to the ferry, a mile or more, while the long procession of builders and citizens, led by the Rev. L.G. Macneill, with W.D. Lawrence and Alfred Putnam, marched in funeral procession behind the perspiring, red-faced wheelers. To the crowd of boys following it was a gala episode, and they felt free to hoot, jeer and cat-call to their lung-limit. Down through the sticky red mud of low-water the liquor was trundled, loaded into the ferry-boat, and the owners sent off with a warning.

We happened to be driving home from the village and met the unusual procession. Our horse promptly shied into the road drain, and gave wheelers and walkers a snorting, plunging right-of-way.

There were other instances when would-be liquor sellers were summarily dealt with, but not so publicly nor so courteously.

There were various incidents that were sure to stir up excitement and wrath in Maitland shipbuilders' homes. Delay in the transportation of freight was an unfailing disturber of the peace. Some needed ship equipment or material, ordered long before and given ample time to be on hand when occasion required, and when the time arrived the wanted article not forthcoming.

Our disturbing tide-vagaries were omnipotent and had to be accepted as a matter of course, but railways, steamers, schooners, scows, ferry-boats, mail-coaches, city wholesale dealers, their "numb-skull" clerks,- the whole "seracalous", whatever that might be, came in for terse, fine, succinct abuse. This brand of builders' trouble was known to care-free youth as "Freight Tantrum". Such delays were maddening for builders, and frightfully expensive, but we in our out-of-the-way corner of the world had to endure them.

Our nearest all-the-year-round railway station, Shubenacadie, was twenty miles away. The roads in those golden years were not the hard-surfaced motor-roads of today. In

winter freight was sledded from Shubenacadie on the frozen snow, in summer the road was good, comparatively, but in Spring when frost was coming out, and in Autumn, the roads in that red-sandstone section of Nova Scotia were hub-deep in mud.

The great bulk of our household stores came from St. John in schooners. The merchants carried heavy stocks of staple goods and provisions. Supplies of provisions and coal were stocked before navigation closed in the Bay. At the uncanny hour of three in the morning the daily stage left Maitland for Shubenacadie Station to meet the early trains, known to the children as the Halifax train and the New York train. Our sea-going population was usually on the move for one or the other, and "Whitney's" shipping office, New York, was the source from which many items of the sea drifted to our isolated village.

In Spring, after the sea-wall went out, the ferry-boats (oars and sail) carried passengers across the Shubenacadie from Maitland to Black Rock, a mile away. From that point there was a daily stage to Truro, and contact with the railways. There was also a ferry across the Cobequid Bay from Maitland to DeBert, seven miles. These ferries were not available for winter journeys.

A commercial traveller described his business trip from Truro to Maitland as a "day with the Prophets", Job, Elias, Isaiah, Caleb, names also suggestive of New England ancestry. The traveller drove in the stage from Truro to Black Rock with Job (Nelson), was ferried across the Shubenacadie river by

Elias (Nelson), dined at Caleb's (White's Hotel), Isaiah (McDougall) drove him back to the ferry, to return with Elias, and Job, to Truro.

In those busy years great quantities of freight came to Maitland. There was so much of it that a siding was built from the Intercolonial station at Stewiacke to the river, where Watson's scow and other freight barges brought it down the Shubenacadie to Maitland. This spur was known as Maitland Siding.

The generation that remembers the bleak before-dawn drives from Maitland to Shubenacadie station is fast fading away. Very few now remember the careful, genial drivers, E. Lynch and Anthony Shaw Smith. The latter possessed a wealth of funny stories and an irresistible wit that helped to relieve the tedium of that long rough drive.

One shivers at the remembrance of those bitter winter trips, perched high in an open coach; the below-zero zephyrs whistling around one's ears, and stirring the straw underfoot.

Once I achieved notoriety by setting the coach on fire. My younger brother and I were passengers in the bitter blackness of a January morning. With "careful soul" proclivities, similar to those of Mrs. Gilpin, I had made preparations for the cold. I had baked potatoes to carry in muff and pockets, and had a large hardwood stick heated in the oven. When the coach stopped at the gate I caught up the stick and hastily wrapped it in newspapers, but failed to notice a bit of

smouldering hardwood-sliver

The driver sniffed at the warm package, but made no comment as he dropped it into the straw at our feet. Before we reached Maitland Post Office, where the first mail-sacks of the route were taken on, my over-shoes were beginning to be delightfully warm, and there was a smell of over-heated rubber; but it was not until the driver had carried out the great leather sacks of mail and had banged them hard into the rear rack, and then began stuffing canvas bags of wayside mail into the straw at our feet, that the trouble became active. The pushing and crowding of Her Majesty's Mail Sacks affected the smouldering stick and instantly paper and straw were ablaze. There was a grand scramble on the part of the passengers, out over the wheels, but fortunately no one was on fire.

When the driver had alighted to take on the mail sacks he had put the reins into the hands of a reliable passenger, who firmly held the snorting, frightened horses.

When it was ascertained that no one was injured, and H.M. Mail was undamaged, we were set to work clawing snow from the roadside banks to smother the burning straw, and after loss of time and a very considerable loss of temper we started off; leaving the smouldering stick and other debris on the roadside snow, tokens for early passers-by to scan and wonder at.

Through the winters we shivered and slued and bumped over the drifted highway. In Spring and Autumn there was mud to

flounder through, but the trip on a fine summer morning brought ample compensation. At that time there was a beautiful park-like stretch of maple woods between South Maitland and Urbania. This wood was the home of song birds, and their daybreak chorus once heard is never forgotten. Robins, song sparrows, linnets, bobolinks and other native songsters lifted up their clear sweet voices in melodious sun-greeting song. If it happened to be low tide in the river, flocks of crows silhouetted black against the golden curtain of sunrise would be winging their way to the river beach in search of breakfast.

The trains might fail to be on time, but the Maitland coach did not fail. The mail-contractors were efficient, careful drivers. They covered forty miles a day, six days a week, carried the mails and hundreds of tons of valuable freight and many passengers without any serious accident.

The stage-drivers were helpers in many ways, and were hailed to do errands, carry messages and give information. If their horses were not too heavily laden they were ready and willing to give a pedestrian a friendly "lift over the road", but disliked being imposed upon. There were many true stories told of the quick wit of one of the drivers in regard to imposition of this sort.

It was a hot summer, and August a broiling month. For a week or more two husky young men from the United States, who were visiting at a wayside farm, had been hailing the driver, climbing into the coach, and riding the uphill mile to the next post-office. They were dawdling in the usual spot one

very hot noon, and regardless of full seats, they requested a "chance to squeeze in." No one moved, and the driver had begun to mumble something about "a heavy load, hard on the horses", when his face suddenly changed, his very blue eyes twinkled and he called back affably: "No seats here, but you may climb onto that box lashed on behind, if you wish to".

They scrambled over the wheels onto the long narrow box lashed on behind the seats, and were contentedly drumming their heels on its sides, when the driver turned and casually inquired of a passenger in a rear seat: "Do you know if there are many new cases of small-pox in Boston?"

The driver's voice, high and clear, was always arresting. Moreover, the man to whom the question was put caught the driver's sly nod, and noted the accompanying wink. He immediately launched into a horrible story of disease and death, and the ravages of the blackest kind of small-pox.

"Dreadful, dreadful", mourned the driver in the melancholy tones that always presaged something doing. "Yes, I know that it must be very bad--that poor young fellow in the box lashed on behind there--such a fine young man, they're sendin' him home to be buried, and---"

"Is this a rough coffin?" shouted one of the box-riders, beginning to scramble down. "Small-pox, black small-pox?" gasped the other as he took a flying leap to the road.

The driver looked back, assured himself that he was rid of the box-riders, and then cheerily addressed his uneasy-looking passengers: "Well,"he chuckled, "we're rid of them!

You needn't worry, folks, that box isn't a rough coffin, though it looks like one. The figure-head for one of the new ships is in that box, and I took a chance on those two not knowing quarantine laws. It worked all right, too. We'll not be having them to pull uphill tomorrow, eh?"

The distance from Shubenacadie to Maitland is now covered by motor-stage in an hour, and the Truro trip in half the time, with an up-to-date motor-ferry crossing the river's mouth at high water. Maitland is on the Government motor-highway No.13, Truro to Windsor, along the Cobequid Bay, one of the most beautiful drives in Acadie, or perhaps in all of Canada.

Ships' outfits, oakum, cordage and other bulky stores usually came from St. John in schooners, or the small steamer "Hiram Perry" that plied between Bay ports and St. John.

One incident in connection with Old Country freight was a poignant happening for two Selma school girls. Among the ship's outfit forwarded from Scotland were several bales of Scotch carpets and of gingham. One web of dark-blue and white checked gingham was not saleable on account of the large size of the checks. A young friend and I were selected as mannikins to popularize the large checked gingham. We started to school one Monday morning arrayed in the new gingham frocks, flounces, bias bands, every detail of the period up-to-date. A shrill and derisive hoot greeted us from the boys' playground, and loud shouts of "Checker-boards! Checker-boards!" followed us

into the school-house, or wherever we appeared. That blue and white Scotch gingham was the best-wearing, unfading, untearable, serviceable, long-enduring outfit that I have ever possessed, and also the most fervently hated. No other small girls did penance in regard to it, but we successfully advertized its enduring qualities, and the web sold as counterpane covers for boys' beds.

On a glorious summer morning the Maitland stage-coach, passenger-filled, was preparing to leave Shubenacadie for the home trip. An American lady, her small son, and I were of the number. A Maitland shipbuilder, slightly lame from rheumatism, was limping around the platform in full tide of a "delayed freight tantrum". His trouble was the non-arrival of iron-knees. It was a fine display of good, honest wrath, couched in succinct language.

The small boy was deeply impressed as he watched the gentleman limp away, and inquired of me if all shipbuilders had to have iron-knees. I casually answered "Yes".

The boy had evidently puzzled over my statement, for a day or two later he announced: "I don't believe what you told me about shipbuilders' iron-knees. I've seen lots of shipbuilders now, and they can walk all right. Only the scolding one at the station was lame, and he wasn't very bad". He eyed me sternly. "I didn't think you'd do it, but I believe that was a lie you told me."

The first fore-shadowings of the great changes beginning in our centuries'-old methods of locomotion are connected with

that small boy, and with Dorinda's Sunday afternoon and evening out.

Dorinda, arrayed in a new frilled white frock, new sash, hat, shoes and gloves, started off for her home, where her "mash" (her term for sweetheart) was to meet her, have supper with the family, escort her to evening service, and walk back to Selma with her.

It was a warm, misty, moonless night, a dense blackness over marshes and highroad, bay, sky and village. The highway crosses Maitland marsh between the McCallum and Lawrence properties. This portion of the marsh road was at that time raised high on a causeway. The causeway was protected on the Bay side by a heavy stone embankment-wall, a strong hand-rail, and a plank sidewalk. When the tide was in, salt water to the depth of several feet lapped against the embankment wall. When the tide was out this wall faced a shining chocolate-coloured expanse of sticky marsh mud.

Dorinda's plans went agley. She was walking back alone in the enveloping blackness and picking careful steps along the causeway sidewalk in the misty silence. Suddenly her sharp ears caught a strange swishing sound. Something was rushing through the air to meet her. She stopped to listen, but could hear no familiar thud-thud of an approaching horse's feet. This thing was coming through the air!

It was then that Dorinda remembered the old Shubenacadie river legend of a Sabbath-desecrating dance, and the appearance

of Satan himself at the merry-making. Her fears were increased by the sharp rattle of chains, the accompanying fiery mist, and the flapping of black wings. The awful thing was coming straight for her!

"O, my soul" gasped Dorinda, as she glimpsed a curled tail with a red eye dragging behind, "I'm a goner! Save me! Save me!" Frantic with terror she clutched the rail and leaped into the sticky mud. Had the tide been in Dorinda would have been literally "between the Devil and the deep sea", and there were chances for a tragedy.

I was the only member of the family to greet Dorinda when she came limping in at eleven o'clock, and I was certainly aghast at her appearance. She had left shoes and stockings outside, her white dress was mud-plastered from neck to hem, her face smeared with tears and mud, even the cherished new hat showed the imprint of muddy hands, suggesting the frantic clutch of fear.

"O, Dorinda, whatever has happened to you?" I cried.

"Oh, oh," sobbed Dorinda, "It's orful to meet the devil! O, my soul, but he didn't get me! He was acomin' straight for me, clankin' chains and flappin' his wings, and breathin' fire! I was that scared I jumped off the causeway rail into the mud, and if the tide hed abeen in I'd abeen drownded. The sticky mud was up to my knees, and everything was pitch black, and I wallered around with the mud gettin' deeper and deeper, and

I dassent yell, and the tide would be comin' in and drownd me. I was that scared that I began threshing my arms around every way and the tip of a finger touched a stone sticking out in the wall. Then I knew where I was, and Oh, wasn't I thankful. I got nearer and felt along the wall, and wallered through the mud, until I got to land and then I climbed out. O, my soul, to think I've seen the Devil! What do you 'spose it's a forerunner for, Miss?"

In the face of such calamity for Dorinda, one forebore to question lightly or to laugh. Bay mud stains cannot be effaced, they are fixed to remain while the garment lasts.

Next morning we were animatedly discussing the affair at the breakfast table, when the visiting boy's voice piped up: "There's a bicycle coming down the hill! The first one I've seen here! Say," he whooped, "there's going to be a run-away!"

A neighbour's horse was shying violently against our gate and we were all at windows or doors, for it was the first high-wheel, trailing little wheel bicycle to arrive in Maitland.

The boy was in the yard shouting at Dorinda "There's your devil! Nothin' but a bicycle! We've lots of them at home!"

"A busticle", sniffed Dorinda, "is that what you call him? Lots of them at your home? Well, you'd better keep them there!"

So antiquated and so far superseded by new inventions of locomotion and speed have those nerve-wrecking old high-wheel little wheel bicycles become, that I doubt if the scrap heaps of all Canada could produce the parts to re-construct one.