



Herman naturally doted on the boy. To him he was an incarnation of all he had loved in Hulda.

JOHANN LIND

By Laura Goodman Salverson

Illustrated by J. F. Clymer

SECOND INSTALMENT

him. Thus counselled, Ole had to be content with viewing the elegant things from afar and forced to seek amusement round about the docks.

When the immigration officers were finally satisfied as to the health and desirability of the would-be citizens, the little party found itself once again on its unknown way. That Canada was a vast and varied country they had often enough heard, but, as they whirled along over endless stretches of constantly changing landscape they admitted that the half had not been told.

Winnipeg, the gateway to the new West, was their final destination, but as yet the Canadian Pacific Railway had not laid its magic spur into the little city. At Fisher's Landing, where the rails terminated, a water route once more confronted the tired travellers and, together with several other west bound immigrants, they finally took passage on a grimy trader plying up and down the muddy reaches of the Red River.

This ramshackle river boat was something of a floating store and as such was eagerly welcomed at every trading port and tiny hamlet skirting the miry flats of the great prairie river. Its captain and proud owner, a bewhiskered individual of rolling gait and alcoholic breath, never attempted to cut short these gay encounters. Far from it!

THOUGH the voyage had been pleasant on the whole, everyone was wild with eagerness when the steamer docked at Quebec. Helga, now quite recovered of her indisposition, and delighted to find little Johann none the worse for his precarious feeding, took the deepest interest in the quaint Canadian city. Everything pleased her, whether a frocked priest flitting by on a mission of mercy, or the meanest scow chugging about the harbor, it was all alike interesting, all part of her new country, and she was prepared to love it unreservedly. But most beautiful of all were the twinkling lights strung like gems on the brow of the city. And in the distance the purple haze of the Laurentians reminded her of the lesser hills at home. Yes, she was quite prepared to love this new country and said so to her Ole in a voice barely hinting of tears. "Ja, look, Ole," she pointed, "how pretty they are—like the hills of Saetter Dal—just a flock of sheep and you'd think it was back home!"

But Ole was more taken with the queer vehicles that rumbled through the cobble streets; jolly contraptions, with the driver perched on a dizzying seat whence he viewed the world with lordly indifference. That, to Ole, represented high adventure and he wanted at once to rush out and ride in the marvelous things but Helga's prudence forbade. No, it was sure to lead him into temptation; besides, for all he knew, these might be the King's own carriages and not for common folk like

At each entry good Captain Bunt ordered his cabin boy to precede him to town with "the keg" and there—usually in the general store—he pompously toasted Her Majesty the Queen! after her, the Great Territories, her pretty demoiselles and brave gallants and, finally, every merchant near and far whose business was worth a shot of good Jamaica rum! Owing to this playful gallantry on the part of the worthy captain, the comparatively short journey consumed the greater part of a fortnight. (It must be clear that such an appreciative visitor was not permitted to leave without becoming entertainment.) Consequently, poor Helga began to wonder if she would ever see the golden city of their dreams.

And then, all of a sudden, as it were, the old boat purred around a bend in the muddy river and straight ahead, stencilled against a blaze of sunset glory, they saw the little city. A grey city against a golden sky, curiously friendly and agreeably restful. Squat, lime-washed houses lined the lower flats, the curling smoke of home fires aspiring lazily to the incomparable sky and, higher up, in uneven broken outline, rose the walls of warehouses and shops. That was Winnipeg!

Though as yet insignificant, the young city was growing rapidly and to the immigrants it seemed quite a metropolis. At the immigration sheds squatting on the river front, they were met by several Scandinavians, kindly men who made a practice of meeting the river boats and searching

out their countrymen from amongst the new arrivals. One of these, Simon Berg by name, insisted on taking the Boen party home with him.

Days of excitement and uncertainty followed. There was so much to see, so much to hear, so much to learn! Winnipeg was in the throes of its first boom; it was bursting with optimism and hilarious pride. Opportunity, the fickle jade, was to come to them at last but not to be won without wooing. She was always flitting past the corner, the hounds of chance crying at her heels; only the bold and fleet partook of her favors. It was all very mystifying to Ole and very dreadful to Herman. Helga alone was content and immensely happy. Dame Berg had such a wonderful house that to help in the care of it was an infinite pleasure. To think of it, there were lace curtains at the windows and a special room to eat in and the Bergs were just common folk like themselves; and would you believe it, Dame Berg had a chair set high on two curved sticks that performed for all the world like a cradle! A rocking-chair they called it—well, every chance she got Helga sat in it and sang to little Johann, planning in her heart to buy such a chair at the very first opportunity!

Yes, Helga was blithely happy and in her happiness never doubted but Ole felt the same. Of course he saw things differently at times—that was as it should be—a man could not see eye to eye with a woman, God having given them more strength than perception. But he must be glad to be here and busy about his duty. Unfortunately, Ole shared none of her enthusiasm and at length admitted gracelessly to Simon that farming had never appealed to him. To save his face he couldn't admire the courageous endurance of the Argyle settlers his host spoke of so admiringly. Not he; to endure so much was idiotic, he contended, and then proceeded to further disgrace himself by saying that to his way of thinking rats showed exemplary wisdom in deserting a sinking ship.

Mr. Berg waxed somewhat vehement at such times and hot under the collar, and nothing but his wife's diplomatic reminder that Ole was only an immigrant kept him from washing his hands of the whole affair. And then Helga agreed so charmingly to all he said. Yes, indeed, she saw quite clearly the great future in the land and the glory attached to being a free-holding farmer.

But throughout Ole turned a deaf ear to their persuasion; he had no intention of settling down in a peaceful agricultural district like Gimli where everything was running humdrum and smooth. Not he! What was the use of coming to a great unknown land like Canada if one settled down at once in a small corner to raise pigs and potatoes? No, no! he'd never do it. He had met a young trapper in his jaunts about town who had told him of the Great Lone Land to the north; a land of mystery interlaced with silver lakes and clear rivers and abounding in big game, wild fowl and fish. That was more to his liking. Neither the city nor the Argyle colony appealed to him, he was bound to venture further. And so, finally, it was agreed that Helga should remain with the hospitable Bergs while Ole and Herman pressed on into the unknown wilderness of the North.

ONCE again fortune favored Ole. A trader who was freighting to Fort Ellice only too gladly hired the two Norwegians for the overland portage and for the first time since leaving his native hills, Herman was thoroughly happy. The New Canadian West opening up before them was a veritable wonderland. After the tiny sterile farms at home

these limitless plains, running on into the sunset, seemed an optical illusion—there couldn't be so much land in the whole wide world! And, when they reached the shores of Shoal Lake, that crystal gem adorning the breast of a park-like country, even Ole succumbed to its primeval charms. Now here was a port to lay to! Herre Gud, it was as lovely as a dream! With boyish delight he pointed to the fat partridge whirring away before the rumbling Red River carts and in his mind visualized the appetizing fish in which the water must abound. Yes, here was a goodly place, in such a one he would build himself a cabin! But old Herman dashed his dream. The prairie would be better for sheep, said he. Ja, much better, he hadn't a doubt but these woods were full of ravenous wolves. Ole swore an honest seaman's oath. Sheep? And what had he to do with the bleating nuisances?? Did Herman think he had come to this land of adventure to sell his soul for sheep? Not he! And as for wolves—well, weren't the pelts of value? And wasn't a hunt on land almost as

However, all in good time Ole's party got by the police and, happy once more, jogged on toward Fort Ellice. Once there Ole was entranced, his heart forever won by the magic of this far-flung wilderness. The old fort was certainly picturesque in its setting. Built at the confluence of Beaver Creek, the Qu'Appelle and the Assiniboine rivers, it commanded a magnificent view of the fertile valley of the latter, through which, like a silver ribbon, the river wound at a level of two hundred feet below the fort.

Amongst other things Ole learned that twelve miles thence the trail crossed Bird Tail Creek, bordering which, a little to the North, the Hamilton Colonization Company had the monopoly of two entire townships. On his way back to Winnipeg Ole kept wondering whether he would apply for land to this company or settle somewhere near Shoal Lake. Both places pleased him but at length the lure of the lake won and, to the entire approval of Herman, he finally located on a quarter section touching the Great Prairie Highway.

That winter they cut the logs for their future home and in the spring the family left Winnipeg and the good friends they had made. Helga very wisely had kept a tight hand on their joint purse, hence they were able to set out in high fashion. In fact, as Lena Berg said, they were setting out like nobility. Helga never doubted it, for had she not by now a black chair that served equally well as a cradle or a seat of honor for visitors? And hadn't she two cows with udders to draw praise from any dairy man, and six healthy ewes and a half-dozen hens? These were great treasures seconded only by a spinning-wheel and a bolt of red flannel. Ole took an equal pride in his oxen, his second-hand plow and scythe, and the queer double stove he had bought for Helga from Neils Kalleen whose wife had died that winter. Yes, and he was

proud, too, of the various tools that rattled and bumped in noisy unison in the bottom of the lumbering cart though he might never care to use them. A wise man lays in a store of tools; the saying was a good one. Ole believed it, and went one better; he had a good gun, a field rifle and a roll of shaganappe (the soul and marrow of Red River carts) and, thus provided, let come what may.

Such was their happiness that the discomforts of the journey seemed as nothing. If Helga cried out when the clumsy wheels lurched in and out of some dreadful rut it was only because she feared for little Johann and the precious spinning-wheel. Ole drove as carefully as might be—duly impressed with the importance of that fragile article and Helga hunched in the bottom of the vehicle between boxes and bundles of supplies, hugged the baby close and sang to beguile the weary hours. Sang of the hills at home and the gleaming fjords to forget the ache in

her poor cramped body and put hope into the hearts of her men!

A T NIGHTFALL of the third day Ole gave way to a great whoop and pointed with his whip to a tiny ragged clearing where a lonely little cabin loomed up out of the thick-

ening shadows. His wife looked about her with a sinking heart. Why, she wondered, had he chosen this heavily timbered quarter, and passed up so much of level prairie land? She said nothing, however, being just then so glad to quit the terrible cart and the cruel roads.

In marvellously quick time the men had the stove set up in the tiny house and, with the welcome fire casting its cheerful glow upon the fresh log walls, she felt a little less despondent. Took heart, in fact, to examine with curious interest the two bunks fastened to the wall. They looked both roomy and strong and had a spring of sorts made from rope and small poles the like of which she



"Sh-h—" cautioned Andre, "Someone might hear you. You oughtn't to talk in a place like this."

good as a dash after a whale? A hunter, that's what he'd be, and nothing else—God spare him!

At Shoal Lake the caravan was halted. For here, owing to its situation on the main prairie trail, was an official post of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. And here, consequently, every settler, trader or footloose adventurer must submit to thorough inspection before gaining permission to proceed into the North West Territories. A purely precautionary measure intended to prevent the smuggling of spirituous liquors into Her Majesty's Territories, but more often than not unavailing and at best a tedious and time-devouring process.

had never seen. It was a smart arrangement, and proved, she said, how little she appreciated her husband's cleverness. Ole strutted with pride. He didn't mind admitting that no finer could be found in any homesteader's shack. Other furniture there was none, but he hastened to say that it would be no trouble at all to knock together a table and shelves and benches from logs and their several packing-boxes. Besides, there was the rocking-chair.

It all sounded simple and easy of attainment, but Helga was just tired enough to be pessimistic.

"Ja, there's the rocking-chair, Ole, but what to rock on — that's the question." Ole laughed at her. An earthen floor? What was that to overcome? You could tread it down hard as a brick or if you preferred lay a floor of split peeled logs. In either case it was a mere trifle — Ja, logs would do.

The days following were very full for all of them and Ole kept at least some of his promises. He made a table and knocked together a set of rude shelves before his enthusiasm anent household affairs dwindled. Nevertheless in the end it was Helga who sawed and levelled logs for seats with which makeshifts she had to be content until Herman, much later, delighted her by making a couple of rustic benches. These benches became her especial pride, for she fitted them with straw cushions and draped the whole in cheerful woolen shawls. But all this was much later.

In those first hurried days Herman was engrossed with the problem of housing his sheep. The problem was undeniably vital for the howls of prowling coyotes re-echoed through the night and their skulking yellow bodies made havoc in his dreams. Ole enjoyed many a laugh at the old man's expense. Herman was so determined to beat the coyotes at their own game. "Nu, da, the yellow devils; they'll not get me napping!" was his constant slogan. And such was his zeal for the well-being of his particular charges that Ole felt in duty bound to throw together some sort of shelter for the cattle. Not that the need seemed specially urgent, but Helga intimated that the sooner one started to build the barns the better. Barns—that was what she said, as if they had a dozen head to care for! Ole was beginning to fear that his sweet Helga had a determination deep down in that gentle heart of hers he'd never suspected—and he was beginning to fear her efficiency just a little. Herre Gud? Such a body for working—she'd keep them all going on the least provocation! Yes, all told it seemed better to get the barn built . . . But, once that tedious business was ended he betook himself to the bush.

After that Helga's diplomatic urging was of no avail; the lure of the open had him and his vagabond soul roared in lazy freedom. Yet for all that he never returned home empty-handed; he proved as good a hunter as a fisherman. Indeed, the time came when Helga hated the very sight of wild fowl and had her thrifty conscience permitted would undoubtedly have flung them to the crows. Big game they had over and above their need. A circumstance which, whilst rendering her grateful for so much favor, troubled her frugal spirit—it was so sinful, thought she, that some should have enough and to spare whilst others lacked. That she knew none of these "others," nor could have reached them if she did, did not alter the case nor excuse the extravagance. But there were other more trying things to endure. Being at heart a most sociable being, it was increasingly difficult to suffer the endless silence of her lonely house. She tried desperately hard to keep a smiling demeanor but her heart was sick with longing for the sight of other human beings and the cheerful sound of friendly laughter.

Herman was apparently quite content. Each day he drove his sheep to one or another of the several small pastures, and there, in pleasant idleness, watched them at their leisurely nibbling. Silence and solitude was his once again and here, quite as

readily as at home, his dreams took shape to comfort him. The silence of this mighty wilderness was as potent as the silence of the sea. And, when the winds wakened, sweeping like a cavalcade of mad Valkyries through the primeval forest the old man be思ought himself of the wild voices of the Palm and it seemed to him that this mighty wind came from a far country and that the surge of the sea sounded in its awful voice.

At such a time poor Helga crossed herself and prayed, fearful that each gust would tear away the walls that sheltered her; but the logs were strong with the strength of the land that had nourished them and the little house was safe as love could make it.

In spite of all that had to be done,

Helga insisted upon keeping the Sabbath. Every Sunday morning she hustled her men into fresh shirts, eyed their homespun coats critically and brushed first one and then the other. For herself she had a white apron, heavily fringed with crocheted and stiffened with flour—starch being out of the question—and thus effectively

hiding the deficiencies of her homespun skirt she felt quite dressed up and ready for any occasion. "Ja, it makes a difference, does a bit of lace or silk," she admitted to her menfolk. "It's like a smile—and seemly for the Sabbath." Little Johann alone was exempt from the Sunday renovations. Being what his fond foster mother called a "beautifully dirty child," the effort seemed too futile. The Sunday glamor was not for him yet awhile. But for all her preparations the programme of the day was very simple.

After the mid-day meal, always as good as her skill and a limited cuisine permitted, Helga brought out her Bible for the daily reading. According to her sense of propriety it was the master's duty to read to his household. Ole proved a bit recalcitrant at first, not being well versed in the duties and signal honors of a house-father. But as usual what Hedga had determined came to pass. What is more, in time he became very proud of the privilege, jealous of the honor and decidedly strict that due attention be paid him.

To further mellow their hearts on the Lord's Day, coffee was served with a formality not indulged on other days. A white cloth draped the rough table and Helga's flat-bread was always hot and of the best. Over the steaming cups the talk turned mostly to the future and ended with a good many instructions from the prudent housewife.

"You really should make land, Ole," she'd tell him for the hundredth time, "you really should; it's no sense at all letting the oxen eat their heads off for nothing. And I should have a cellar—you know how it is with milk and butter—you can't be forever hanging it in the well. And you know how the water makes a mildew on everything. Nu, da, Ole, you needn't look so glum! It's not so much work with Herman to help you. The cellar finished it's a wee smoke-house I'll want next. With smoked meat and fish and next year a garden think how smart we'll be! Ja, and a little root-house."

"Ja, ja," grumbled Ole, "it's a whole town next you'll be wanting. A garden, a root-house, a cellar—Herre Gud! Woman, it's killing me you'll be, that's what!"

"Killing you, is it? You that followed the sea! Tist, Ole, it's a lazy man's talk, the like of that—"

"Nu, nu," interpolated Herman, "a smoke house isn't so much, Ole, and women, you'd best remember, is always wilful."

Helga set down her coffee-cup with a smart little bang. "Nu, da, it's wilfulness, is it? Ja, well,

hear me then, both of you. A cellar and a smoke-house, that's fine—but, while you're at it you'd just as lief take the oxen and drag home wood. The cold's nigh upon us and not enough fuel for a week!"

"Ja, ja, have it your own way, woman," growled Ole hopelessly. "Have it your own way! Here, give me another cup . . . Oh, but Helga, you should see how fat the partridge are . . . tomorrow now—"

"Tish, you and your partridge!" she mimicked him, her amiable self once more. "Ja, you and your partridge—'Tomorrow, now.' Well, tomorrow I wash—the wood can wait till Tuesday."

Impatient though she often was with her husband Helga realized that his wanderings were not fruitless. He became thoroughly familiar with the country and known to every trader of the trails. Because of that intimate knowledge he was often hired to haul supplies with his team, through which labors—much more agreeable to him than farming—he supplied his family with the necessities of life. As time went on he earned the reputation of being one of the most dependable guides and as such was eagerly sought after by the ever-increasing flood of land hunters. Oh, yes, though caring nothing for farming himself, Ole knew good land and helped many an ignorant settler stake a profitable claim.

AND just as Ole stumbled into a happy vocation, so Helga, quite by chance, discovered where her own future lay. One fine evening shortly after Ole had begun hauling firewood she was startled by the sound of galloping hoofs, and hurrying to the doorway, saw to her inexpressible joy a man come cantering into the ragged clearing before her house. "Oh, Gud!" gasped poor Helga, her heart a hammer in her breast, "Herre Gud! if it isn't a visitor at last!" A criminal would have been welcome just then, so precious was the sight of another human being. She fairly flew to the door.

Encouraged by her beaming face the stranger quickly dismounted and burst into a tale of woe. She gathered it was a tale of woe by the anxiety of his face, though all she understood of his flood of words was the delightful fact that he had left a party down on the trail and wanted to bring them along.

"Ja, ja," she cried, her head already bursting with plans for their pleasure.

"Ja, sure — come — come all quick."

JOHANN LIND

The March instalment dealt with Hulda in her Norse home, the protege and grand-daughter of Herman, an eccentric silent man who has some of the good qualities of his race but more of the dour, mystical and superstitious. Carefree, she developed into young womanhood in the hills and valleys of her native land and always within hearing of the restless, moaning sea. Her life was close to nature and she gloried in the adventures that belonged to her somewhat primitive environment. But there came a time in her young life when Hulda, with her keen vision and active imagination and a remarkable capacity for the full enjoyment of life, found living with the exacting old Herman, irksome. So with the freedom and innocence of those hills she loves so dearly she departs to meet the world in the service of Fru Lind. Once more Hulda is back to the hills of her childhood—this time with the responsibility of motherhood.

Here begins the fascinating career of Johann Lind. While yet but an infant we find him in Winnipeg surrounded by that strong and intensive devotion that is characteristic of his people. Afterward we follow him to Regina and Saskatoon, and from then on a wonderful story develops, which is dealt with in this issue and will be in the five succeeding numbers.

Don't miss Johann Lind. It is an outstanding serial by a strong writer, Laura G. Salverson, a Western Canadian who has already brought credit to the Dominion.

Perhaps the stranger was a little disappointed to find her so ignorant of his mother tongue, but if so, the feeling soon passed. Helga's face was so illuminated with natural kindness and her voice and smile so unaffected and sincere. He thanked her gratefully, making her understand by nods and gestures that very shortly he'd be back with the other members of his family.

Helga was so excited she scarcely knew where to begin—she wanted to cook her finest cut of game, to make flat-bread and cream pudding, and she'd have to get Ole and Herman home in time to wash up. Yes, that after all was more important. Ole would have to come home to talk to the stranger. So thinking, she hastily caught up a little horn Herman had made for her to use in times of

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But then, what could you expect of Johann Lind!

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possible danger, and, running outside, proved to be his name—was all for going on the morrow, but Helga put her foot down promptly and emphatically. Mrs. Edwards needed a rest, and a rest she should have. Also Helga let it be known that her opinion was that the children had never had enough milk. Give her a week or two and she'd soon fatten them! Yes, and if it was payment worried the mister he could make everything right by helping her Ole build a smoke-house. Thus cornered Ole couldn't squirm out of it and Helga gave thanks to the wise providence for making her dream come true. Now she'd have smoked fish and meat for Christmas!

When the Edwards could no longer postpone their departure Helga's grief was genuine. The little English woman had proved a delightful companion once her weariness wore away. How they had managed to arrive at an understanding was certainly remarkable, but it seemed where words failed, affection and a smile filled in. At any rate they hated to part, clinging each to the other as if in all the world there was nowhere such a friend to be found and that the one babbled Norwegian and the other English affected them not at all. Heart spoke to heart in that poignant moment and the memory of it lingered through the years.

When the rattle of the cart died away Helga permitted herself one long, aggrieved sigh, and then, wiping her eyes resolutely, she turned to Ole. "Nu, da, you see how 'tis," she began. "The good God has a way of working miracles—take a look, will you, at that nice smoke-house. Ja, Mr. Edwards is the man with a hammer for you! And now it's fish we'll have, just like back home. Ole shifted from one foot to the other like a nervous duck. Something told him that the completion of the smoke-house was only the beginning of sorrows.

"Ja, fish!" said he. Fish ain't always so much—'specially smoked! But sure—have it your way, Helga . . . Tomorrow, now, I'm off to the bush."

There were other results from that visit. The grateful Englishman spread the tale of his friendly reception by the Scandinavian family just off the trail. And in the queer way of this world the story took wing. Soon other travellers began drifting up to Ole's place, always gladly received and generously entertained. As the tide of settlers steadily increased and chance visitors became a daily occurrence, Helga began to see she might just as well start a regular stopping place as to hold open house in this fashion.

True to form, Ole protested at first. A stopping place? Herre Gud! he'd have to kill himself building bedrooms and the like. "Sure," agreed the adamanine Helga, "just you kill yourself making a good big wing to the side of the house and a sixteen by twelve kitchen, then you can run to the bush. Ja, sure, don't you see, Ole, that with a stopping-place we can eat all your everlasting game."

But first, before launching into business, Helga decided to present her proud husband with a son of his own. And quite in accord with her capable self she made no fuss about it. At ten o'clock one frightfully cold morning, just an hour after setting her house to rights the welcome baby made his entrance into the wintry world.

"Nu, ja," the new mother sighed gratefully a little later, "it's glad I am that's over! Thank God, yes." When the business of bathing the squawking arrival was finished the family's interest was perceptibly quickened.

"Take a look, will you," urged Helga,

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"now isn't that a fat one for you—ten pounds, I'll bet!" Herman agreed that the baby weighed about as much as a good-sized cod—a good-sized baby cod you understand. And yes, he looked just like his papa.

"M-m-m," Ole had his doubts. "Sure, he's kind of red—but still . . ."

"Nu, da, his eyes are blue like his mamma's, that's clear anyway," declared Herman stoutly.

"Ja, the pretty," Helga agreed shamelessly, "and so long in the leg like his papa . . . What do you say we call him Andre—he's so beautiful, my little son!"

Little Johann alone seemed critical. Browns drawn in a frown he studied the squirming bundle dubiously and then, quick as thought, out flew a pudgy finger straight for the baby's face.

"Tish! did you ever," laughed the happy mother, catching the little one to the safety of her breast. "Straight for those bright eyes! Ja, sure, my little Johann knows what's pretty. Sure—" Smiling still she reached out a hand to pat Johann's shiny black head. "Sure, he knows what's pretty, the little crow . . . But then, what could you expect of Johann Lind?"

THIS standard of comfort is variable at best, changing with the temper of the times and the progress of a people. There is no fixed level for happiness and well-being—unless it be freedom from hunger. The pioneers considered themselves fortunate if they had food of some kind in the larder and shelter from the terrible cold. Life was primitive and oft times starkly cruel. Death still lurked in the forests and the blizzard was still monarch of the plains. When a man died on the trek or was lost on the snow-bound prairie, it caused scarcely more than a momentary wailing. Such things were a part of the price one paid for a country.

The call of the land was a siren note that none could resist; a song both haunting and persistent. "Here are fields for the sowing, waters for the wheel, wood for the mill. Wealth! Wealth! everywhere! All for the asking. All for the taking!" Thus sang the siren in a dozen different tongues. And a dozen hearts responded; for white men are born to conquer. Deeper and deeper grew the westward trails; louder and louder the rumble of the conquering carts. Fortune, shod like a hunter, and swift-footed as a deer, sped on ahead and Life, the poor blind colossus, stumbled after her.

Simple Helga, always knitting, always baking in the seclusion of her little cabin caught the sounds of that vital traffic. Nu, ja, thought she, another cart going west—a family maybe. And she wondered if by any chance they would stop. To buy bread, if nothing more.

Judged by the standard of pioneers the lot of the Boens was certainly a happy one. Helga often remarked on it herself. Especially when the wind howled and hammered at her little house and the hard-beaten snow stretched away in an interminable wilderness. At such times she thanked her God for the blessing of shelter, and the rude iron stove assumed a gracious aspect. What discomfort came her way she endured patiently as part of the day's work; and the one thing which eventually effected a change in her smiling good humor was Ole's incorrigible distaste for farming.

In an amazingly short time the land all round about their homestead was taken up and the ringing sound of the settler's axe made music all the day. No music was ever sweeter or more welcome to Helga for it sang of homes in the building and neighbors for the loving. In the twinkling of an eye, so it seemed when the thing was accom-

plished, the whole topography of the country was changed. Where poplars and willows had held undisputed sway fields of barley and oats now sunned themselves beneath the prairie sky and from the arid trails a hundred little threads spread to as many budding settlements. The land hummed like a busy hive and bristled with changes. And the habits of men changed with the changing times.

To Ole all this spelled unhappiness and, clinging desperately to the old life, he was driven farther and farther afield with his gun and his game bag. Nu, he did not like it at all this terrible progress. Very seldom now did he meet a congenial spirit, an old hunter of the vanishing plains or a grizzled trapper. And when he did it ended mostly in melancholy musings. The good old days were gone, adventure was dead, the Great Plains conquered.

Once even Helga had a momentary glimpse of that illusive something which her husband coveted. That was on the day Henri, the halfbreed, tumbled off his horse at her door. Henri had crushed his foot in a nasty fall hours earlier and by the look of his old parchment face the spill had been a nasty one. But Henri grinned while she cut away the ragged skin from the ugly wound, dressing the foot as best she could. It was nothing, said Henri—a mere scratch, the wrench he had got was the worst of it. And to fall like that . . . *Mon Dieu*, he must be getting old! Finding Helga so sympathetic, the old halfbreed couldn't refrain from displaying certain scars and ugly ridges, honeycombing his anatomy. There, conspicuous on the leg was a knotted tendon once severed by a "bad Indian"—here on the breast, just where the brown shirt opened, lay a livid scar as big as your hand . . . Close shave, that one, said Henri. Helga shivered as she thought of it; but the old hunter assured her that *le Bon Dieu* knew he had seen much worse and often. For instance, if modesty permitted, he could show madam the marks of a burn—but no, it was best to forget—just the same it was something to be alive to show such a mark. *Mon Dieu*, yes! And then poor Henri lapsed into gloom. Ah, those were the glorious days! Life was worth the living then and every day a golden opportunity. Glorious days, the days now gone forever! What, he demanded to know, was the good of living with adventure dead, and the spice of dread extracted from existence? Oh, if she had only known the thrill of the chase she'd catch his meaning, but that, too, was ended.

Who now hunted the buffalo? No one! And good reason . . . they were vanishing fast, dying out with the charms of the country. Yes, most of all he mourned the passing of the great beasts that no longer roamed the blistering plains in thousands upon thousands.

Only memory remained and there Henri was rich indeed. With graphic clarity he painted for Helga scene after scene. He made her understand as she had never understood before the thrill and the excitement of the chase. She caught the feverish excitement of whole villages turning out; men, women and children—to join in the big hunt. All with allotted tasks to do and all with courage to do it. "Ah, Madam," sighed Henri, "if you could have seen, could have feel with me that first glimpse of the herd! Like fire in the blood, that grand excitement. Yes, Madam, you should have seen him, the great bulls, hundreds thousands; the dust in clouds; the noise like cannon—hundreds thousands little twinkling hoof flashing down the wind! *Mon Dieu*, it is one awful pity to kill him off—the grand buffalo!"

Continued on page 56

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Johann Lind

Continued from page 55

"Yes," Helga agreed, being just then under the spell of his fervent voice. "Ja, it's just the same," she told him later, "it's no good to farm in a buffalo herd—"

Henri rolled his eyes, spread wide his hands and, with accurate skill spat into the woodbox. "Mon Dieu," said he. "Farm! Madam, it is not for me, that farm — Henri, he go with the buffalo!"

DESPITE her husband's dilatoriness, Helga was as a rule happy and contented. Her ambition was realized, Ole had finally built the necessary additions to the house, and by the time her little boys were more or less independent of her vigilance, she had a fully established stopping place.

As yet most of the trading of the settlement was done in Winnipeg, and travellers got in the habit of dividing the trip—so many miles to Shoal Lake, so many miles to Ole's place. "Ole's Place" it remained to the end of the story though Ole played little part in its fame. No matter, Helga rejoiced in moderate success and if the burden of it for the most part rested on her shoulders she rarely complained. Sometimes, it is true, she looked at the two little boys and hoped in her heart that they would not have the vagabond streak in them. It was so hard to get Ole to do anything about the little farm and she would not always be so strong and vigorous.

Herman changed very little. When his chores were done he betook himself away; in summer to the meadow with his sheep; in winter to a sort of workshop in the hayloft. By now his flock was quite considerable and, besides, he owned a wolfhound as fierce as he was faithful. A great shaggy creature who snarled at everyone except his master. Yes, Herman was contented once again and resigned to his new country. But, taken all in all, perhaps the happiest times in that humble household were the quiet winter evenings when Helga sang at her spinning-wheel and the big stove bursting with wood roared its accompaniment. There was an artless grace about the peasant woman as she fed the white wool to the spindle and sang in her happy fashion the old songs of the North.

Herman loved these quiet evenings; they carried him back to the land he loved and the young years on the hills. While she sang he carded the matted wool into silky smoothness and the nip of the carding combs tearing away at their task seemed a most comforting sound. Nu, da, why not? the wool was so fine, thanks to his care! White and soft like spun cloud; warm as love to cover tired feet and chilled hands—ah, it was a good business, this raising sheep. Whirr, whirr, whirr, crooned the busy wheel, whirr, whirr, whirr, in hearty approval. And then, happy, too, Helga dipped deeper into memory and sang of a Saetter girl's Sunday. Close by, tucked in warm and close, the little boys slept in their home-made crib and over all the flickering light of the lowly grease burner fell like a benediction.

Such was the scene confronting Ole one chilly night when he returned from a hunting trip. Helga paused in her spinning; Herman laid down the combs. Had he eaten?—had he bagged his game?—they demanded in a breath. Yes, Ole had eaten at the Beck's, two miles north, Helga might just as well sit—he'd make the coffee himself and tell them of the trip. Game was certainly going fast, still he'd got a little.

A bit later Helga beamed on her husband, proud and pleased. "Ja, it's good coffee my Ole makes, none better!"

"Sure," said he, "a fool should know — living with you, Helga. Ja, sure! And how's the wool, Herman?"

"Nu, da, nokke so gott — Pretty good, the old man answered modestly. Helga would have none of it. "Tish! Hear him, the sly one. Why, it's elegant, that's what. Never such wool did I see ;no, not even in Norway! It's lucky we are, Ole—thank God! And take a look at the boys, now I ask you, ain't it a sight? My Andre so golden like a little Viking and Johann black as the storm . . . Ja, there's a boy for you to break hearts, the little crow!"

"Ho! ho!" Ole roared in his seaman's bass, "it's a way you have, you women, making matches in the cradle. No wonder a man has no chance in the world!"

"Hear him!" cried Helga, pretending to be gravely put out. "And what good would you be without us, I'd like to know? Ja, tell me that? To eat even, a woman must teach you—and beginning in the cradle not so much even then we can make of you. But Ole, comes a question now more sensible; tell me, do you think we'll have a school here when my Andre is old enough to go?"

Ole wriggled in his chair. "Sure, why not," he growled, "everything we'll have, never doubt it, except a little peace and quiet—"

"You and your quiet! Well, maybe its somewhere else you'd like to be, but for me now it's a grand country this Canada." Swift and strong she stepped to the tiny window and looked out into the starlit night. "Look, Ole," she pointed, "isn't that a sky for you—quiet there, my Ole, spread for a tired body's beating—Ja, it's sound I'll sleep this lovely night."

Ole yawned, stretched his long legs and muttered: "Sleep? Sure—but . . . I wonder how the whaling goes back home."

HELGA was a good woman blessed with an amiable disposition and not too much intellect. Practical always, she had no particular use for abstract virtues. Theories did not interest her. But, contrary to many whose conceptions of right and wrong are limited to black and white, she inclined to mercy. If someone disappointed her, she excused the offender on account of man's natural depravity and weakness. So, too, although theories vexed her, she accepted certain extracts from the Bible very literally, and used them for the admonishment of her growing young mischiefs.

The Proverbs especially were very helpful on occasion. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper," she'd repeat with awful solemnity when little Andre or Johann proved reluctant at confession. And again, if their little friends displeased her she would remind them seriously that: "Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son; but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father." But to quote her own words to Ole; it wasn't that she loved the habit, but something had to be done to put the fear of the Lord into two such lively rascals. And, as a rule, the sting of judgment was generally mitigated by a doughnut or a cookie, administered later.

Johann was almost as precious to her as little Andre, though he tried her patience the more. Mischief sprang to his hand like buds to the rod of Aaron. He simply could not behave himself.

Something within bubbled like a well of living waters and always drove him to fresh experiments.

One day when Herman had been recounting a certain swimming feat of Olaf Tryggvasson's, young Johann exerted all his talents to bribe little Andre to a similar miracle. "I'll give you all my flat-bread for a week," the tempter offered generously, "every least little bit, if you'll just let me see how long you can live under water."

Andre wasn't very enthusiastic about it, but a decided weakness for nice hot flat-bread had to be reckoned with. Little and young, he, none-the-less, leaned towards logic. "Well," said he, his blue eyes full of perplexity, "What's the good? Maybe I do and maybe I don't—and if I don't live long enough how'll I eat it anyway?"

Johann snorted impatiently. "Silly! Of course I'll let you up before you're altogether dead! Besides, think how handy it'll be to know how long it would take to drown you. I'll bet there ain't many knows that hereabouts."

That enticing viewpoint won the day. But after all, little Andre neither attained to the coveted hero-worship nor won his flat-bread, for Herman happened to arrive at the slough just as Johann, knee-deep in weedy water, was struggling to keep poor Andre submerged, and promptly spanked them both.

Johann refused to explain this alarming behavior and, when poor Helga, exasperated beyond common, reminded him that the Good Book promised a whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back, he only laughed at her. Herre Gud! that was bad enough, but to make matters worse, something in his laughter made the little mud-caked Andre giggle also. Yes, that was what really worried her; always the little rascal laughed and made others laugh with him. "Now what," she demanded of Herman, "can you do with the likes of that? A young Troll, so he is! No meekness in him and never a glimpse can you get of what's going on in his head. Ja—but what can you expect of Johann Lind?"

Despite these gloomy predictions Helga loved her foster son sincerely and her periodic harangues were as much an attempt to excuse him to her own orthodox conscience as to bend him to her way.

Herman, naturally, doted on the boy. To him he was an incarnation of all he had loved in Hulda. Her saucy ways, her sweet remorse and temperamental gladness, all these had life again in her black-eyed laughing son. Indeed, he was very like her, this Johann, proud, self-willed and courageous to a fault. Like her, he resented discipline and longed for freedom to follow the impulse of the moment. Like her, too, he loved the little birds and flowers and the dance of sunlight on water and field. At times something he could not express drove him to the depths of the forest and, hour after hour he would lie there watching its tiny denizens, so still himself that these timid ones accepted him into their world.

Here too, whilst watching bird and squirrel wakened the desire to capture what he saw and, encouraged by old Herman, the boy began to fashion from wood whatever most pleased him. For a boy so young he showed marked ability and whatever left his dexterous fingers had about it a life-like quality and lightness that approached genius.

Helga was very proud of this talent of Johann's and never failed to display his handicraft to her transient guests. Sometimes, to further justify her faith, a traveller would buy a little bird or squirrel or cluster of field flowers to carry away as a souvenir. Those were red-letter days for Helga. Her Johann, the little crow, was coming on to make money! Nor was Ole

less fond of the boy. In his heart he often wished that Andre were more like him. To his rough-hewn father Andre seemed something of a nonentity, a pretty little boy with no initiative, and a tendency to cry! Herre Gud! What kind of a makeup was that for a man? He should have been a girl, that Andre, to wear a finger-ring and sing in the choir on Sunday! Johann, now, had a spice of the devil in him, and, say what you like, a man was no good without it—those were Ole's honest sentiments.

In this kindly atmosphere Johann had flourished, tasting none of the bitter experiences often the lot of foster children.

But one summer's day this fine irresponsible existence came to an end, brought to a finish by a ridiculous episode all the fault of that tireless mischief in Johann's busy mind. The boy had hit upon the lively scheme of playing blindman's buff with an especially nervous calf and the shouts and laughter of little Andre testified to the success of the prank. Never had there been such a show; mad with fear the animal dashed hither and thither, knocking over everything that impeded its way, the young umps hard on its heels. And then came tragedy. With a wild bound the terrified calf shot round the house and, as luck would have it, not only collided with poor, tired Helga, but landed head-on in her tub of newly-rinsed clothes. Johann froze on the spot; paralyzed with mortification he could only stand and stare helplessly while Helga struggled with the crazed animal.

Andre would have blubbered and begged forgiveness. Johann's strange pride permitted no such release. Shamed and sorry, his hot young heart could not give up its secret. The black eyes of the Linds never could look meek.

Helga was hot and tired after the heavy wash, so tired, in fact, she could have wept to contemplate the mess at her feet—all her white clothes dragged in the mud; the boys' heavy overalls—everything to do over again. Herre Gud! and the baking tomorrow! At the breaking point of endurance poor Helga flung round at the contrite boy and with scorn never before his portion snapped out harshly: "It's what I should expect, I suppose—of a Lind! But after all I have done for you—a thorn in my flesh, Ja, so you are, wicked boy . . . but then, what can you expect of Johann Lind!"

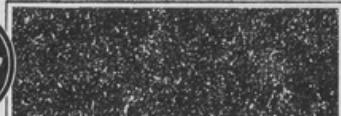
Until now he had never attached much importance to that phrase of hers. It was just her way—like flinging Bible quotations at one. Now it seemed suddenly an ominous challenge. Something must be wrong with him. In some way he must be different from other people. What you should expect of a Lind . . . What did she mean by that. What was wrong with being called Lind?—Johann Lind? Johann Lind. It sounded innocent enough—or had until just now. Round and round in his young head flew the question. What was it? What was it? What was it? And all the while he stood rooted in his misery watching with blurred vision the angry woman gathering up her scattered clothes. To increase his agony little Andre came racing up, all sympathy and eagerness to help.

"Poor Mamma, now you'll have to wash them all again! Poor Mamma . . . Oh, lookit—lookit quick, Mamma, here's your apron fast on a stump!"

It seemed to Johann that Andre's voice had a ring of pleasure in it—Little Andre, too, must hate him and delighted in his humiliation. Ah, there must be something terribly wrong with him. Johann Lind! Johann Lind! Johann Lind! What can you expect of Johann Lind? Like an ugly chorus it dinned in his ears until the overwrought child could bear no more and,

Continued on page 58

(A) White-gloved finger tips rubbed over Liquid Veneer are not discolored. Liquid Veneer leaves no greasy film; dust does not stick to it.



Prevents dust sticking

(B) White-gloved finger tips rubbed over old-fashioned furniture polishes reveal their greasy film and tell why they attract dust.



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Johann Lind

Continued from page 57

breaking into hysterical laughter, he fled into the open fields.

Everything was changed; the face of Nature hidden in a cloud; the meadow larks piping turned to discord and the heart in his breast a hard and rebellious stone. His whole world was changed and he with it, and all he understood clearly was the sore conviction that never, never would he say he was sorry . . . yet he was—ah, yes, ah yes! But that something that made him set his shoulders for a blow, bite his lips to keep back tears and to look the world in the eye, would not let him say so.

On and on he ran, past the willows at the back of the home pasture, through Ole's patch of barley, over the marsh where the berries were thick in midsummer. On and on, not knowing whither; wanting to get away from the angry look of Helga's eyes and the hateful sound of Andre's sympathy. But all at once he caught sight of Herman, a calm, bearded Druid, seated on a fallen log in the poplar bluffs that rose like a green temple to the left of the sheep pasture.

Ole Herman was studying the knotted clouds gathering on the far horizon wondering if a storm were brewing, but he forgot the weather when Johann flung himself at his feet. Only once before had he seen such a look of puzzled misery in a young face . . . poor lad, what could have wrought this change, he wondered. But, being wise indeed, he kept his own counsel. While the boy struggled to regain control of himself the old man pretended an all-absorbing interest in the landscape and the heavens. "Good spot that, my boy, for a cornfield, if Ole would only do a little grubbing. Ha! I thought as much—it's coming on to storm. Ja, I never knew it to fail with the clouds heading that way. Nu, da, and would you look at that dog! Now, ain't he a wise one? Already rounding up the stragglers . . ."

But Johann had not been fighting for breath to eulogize even the wisest of hounds. In a queer, high-pitched voice he plunged into the vexatious business. "Grandfather . . . Why does she say: 'What can you expect of Johann Lind'?"

Herman assumed a stupid expression. "Nu, what else? Isn't it your name, maybe?"

"Sure, yes, but she don't say: 'What can you expect of Andre Simon.' And it's his name, isn't it?"

"Ja, so 'tis, but kind of awkward to snap out . . . Lind, now—"

"No, no, Grandfather, you're hedging—you know it's something," Johann interrupted angrily. You know it's something. You can't fool me . . . Grandfather, what is it?"

Herman understood that this was no time for diplomatic evasion, the dark eyes watching him were not to be easily blinded. The time was come for Johann to know the truth. "Nu, ja," the old man began heavily, "it's like this, my Johann, our Helga is a good woman—none better, God bless her! But—she's not your mother."

"My mother, not my mother"? The query was scarcely more than a whisper.

Herman shook his head. "No, child—not your mother . . . Listen, my Johann, you've seen the red-winged blackbird flashing through the golden fields and leaving the world conscious of its dullness when he passes? Ja? Well, such a one was your little mother . . ."

Nu, da, my boy, it was the better way. She could not have borne the sadness to be old and dull like others."

"Is she . . . is she . . . ?" the child began brokenly . . .

Herman was busy tying a sailor's knot in his red bandana. It took time . . . "I said it was the better way—she died when you were born . . ."

Then, in his slow, kind voice, Herman spoke of other things; of the Valley of Shining Eyes with its intriguing coves and curious knolls, and the love Hulda had had of song and dancing. Yes, and of the sea and the ships, and the restless gulls that spoke to her of the souls of poor, dead sailors. And as the old man talked the child listened wide-eyed and receptive, the bitter rebellion of heart melting into the sweet vision of that gladsome mother dancing down the Norland glades like a lithe-some fairy.

Herman told him, too, of the Great Fjord and the Bird Isles and how the tender Hulda had wept at the thought of the fowler's snare. And, at last, when they were both lifted up into the realm of happy memory he spoke of the Devil's Palm and a certain ship riding to destruction—a French schooner commanded by Captain Erick Baard, a modern Viking if ever there was one, and with as colorful a reputation . . . Some day he would tell the boy more; sufficient now to say that his little Hulda had come to him out of that wreck. Ah, it had cost a pang, that memory! So little she was, so like a human violet nestling in her mother's bosom . . . And that mother, Herre Gud! would he never forget her? Nay, not though he lived on through a thousand lives! A lady of France—but this would never do; he'd say no more till later.

Johann had by now completely forgotten his grief. More, saw himself as somewhat distinguished. He was different! His mother had survived a wreck in infancy and his grandmother was a lady of France. He didn't in the least know what or where this France was, but it had a lovely sound in his ears. Poor Andre had no such history—the thought of meek little Andre reminded Johann of a neglected duty.

"Shuck! Grandfather, I clean forgot the kindling, and Pa's out in the bush. And with this charitable recollection Johann dashed back across the fields that once more had a friendly glow about them. And the meadow larks singing to the setting sun had never sounded sweeter.

Herman, watching the boy's flying figure, thought how good it was to be young and that, he fancied, was the message of the birds' carol . . . Ja, it was good to be young with the promise of eternal sunrise enthroned in the heart.

THE one outstanding event in the childhood of Johann and Andre was a journey to the Qu'Appelle with their father. Ole had contracted to haul a load of household effects for an erstwhile neighbor, and since the weather was fine and nothing in particular hindered, Helga permitted the boys to go along. Travel was by now not the lonely thing it had been formerly, though it still had its difficulties. But what did it matter if the roads were impassable and the weather abominable when one was almost certain to meet another wayfarer similarly placed. Sympathy and helpfulness and many a hearty laugh at disasters just escaped robbed the whole thing of its former terrors. And besides, now there were so many little cabins, proud in their plumes of hearth-fires dotting the plains.

The boys rehearsed many things, as the team jogged on and Ole nodded on the driver's seat. They discovered wonderful places of ambush whence

Continued on page 60

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Do You Know of Better Value or Anything More
Distinctly Canadian Than The Western Home Monthly?

Johann Lind

Continued from page 58

Indians might pounce out upon the pursues its capricious way. Like no traveller unawares and Andre, at least, was very certain that many a stream they crossed had run red with blood in the Reil rebellion. Oh, he was very certain of it!

"Don't you think so, Papa?" he reiterated in round-eyed insistence.

Ole had no fancy for such speculation. "Tist! Andre, such a foolishness! Do you want to raise a ghost, maybe, and scare the horses and kill us all? Ja, didn't I tell you such talk ain't ever any good?"

Andre giggled and nudged his brother slyly. "Tain't the horses he's worrying about, I'll bet," he whispered wickedly, and then in afterthought: "But Mamma says there ain't any ghosts and things."

"I don't know," came Johann's disquieting answer, "if there is—somehow seems to me there should be. Look now, how those trees are shaking—how do you know it ain't a spirit—?"

Andre changed the subject hastily. "Let's sing," said he. "Let's sing the elf-song." And without waiting for encouragement out welled the pretty verses:

*Gazing on the moonlight I lingered in the glade,
Hosts of fairies gathered around me, where I stayed,
Sounding elfin bugles they burst upon my sight;
Chiming their bells in the clear starry night.*

*Spurring snowy chargers, and dashing o'er the ground,
Twinkling golden hoofs, though they made not a sound,
Like unto the swans from our northern heaths among,
Wafting splendid feathers, and notes of tuneful song.*

Clear and true the young voices echoed through the silent wood as pretty a sound as ever the Saskatchewan had entertained. Even Ole succumbed to the temptation, joining in the last verse with his hoarse bellow! A terrific noise, enough, one would think, to break any fairy spell:

*Laughing as she greeted me the fairy queen rode by;
Laughing as she spurred her horse of mettle high.
Did she mock the love I have brooded o'er of late?
Or is it a warning of treacherous fate?*

When the last words died away they fell silent. Whether in tribute to the sweetness of the song, or the magic of the smiling land, it is hard to say. Around them the quiet Canadian prairie spread like a Kingdom of Dreams. Here, a golden meadow, shot through with flaming lilies and yellow daisies; there, a clump of willows, in varying shades of russet and green; and, over against the peerless blue of the wide horizon, rows of silver birch and graceful poplar draped their plume-like heads.

At last the happy travellers came to the Qu'Appelle. The Scandinavian is a lover of Nature, never forgetting the charm of mountain, fjord and fields of his native land and sensitive to the like wherever he may be. Ole drew in his breath sharply as they topped a rise in the land and saw below, like a verdant paradise, the beautiful valley. Nu, da, if only Helga were here, he mused, as he checked the team and gazed spellbound at the scene before him.

A great cleft in the face of the plain is this valley; a sunken garden through which the somewhat insignificant river

pursues its capricious way. Like no other is the hidden valley and after miles of flat prairie its peculiar sand-hills, showing the action of ancient waters upon them and flaunting a host of colors, is a joy forever.

Trees there are as well, poplars and pines, and willows that stand like happy Naiads along the ridges of the hills. Upon all this Ole fed his hungry eyes and a sort of fever took possession of his soul. These hills and that murmuring river, how poignantly they reminded him of home . . . And he had thought that Canada could never do that—Foolish Ole, how little he knew the wealth and wide appeal of his chosen country. How little he knew that Canada had somewhere in her mighty bosom an exact replica of almost every land and welcomes to her fruitful breast the exile of every nation!

The boys were not insensible to the gracious scene. Little Andre squealed with delight, pointing here and there at what most impressed him. Johann sat silent, his dark eyes dilated, his throat all of a sudden hot with queer new pain. Something never felt before tugged at his young heart, an indefinable longing, half joy, half pain. And then, somewhere in a distant copse a bird poured out an ecstasy of song. Johann caught his breath sharply; oh, that was it—only a song like that could express the spirit of the Qu'Appelle.

Ole puffed out his red cheeks in a stormy sigh and shaking himself like a Great Dane returned to the commonplace. Echo House was still a considerable distance off, and there his old neighbor, Andy Thomas, would be waiting impatiently.

The descent into the valley was not without excitement. The horses snorted and whisked their tails; the wagon wheels groaned and growled and the boys hung on for dear life while the clumsy contrivance lurched downward to the pleasant levels below. The settlement itself was only a jumble of ugly log houses and innumerable tents but an amazing array of teams, wagons, carts and saddle ponies gave the place an air of busy importance. But what eclipsed everything else for the boys was the Indian population. Indians, painted and be-feathered, of every age and degree of villainy sat about the trading post or stalked along the roads in dour silence. Little Andre was sure it meant another mutiny and Johann wickedly hoped so. But, to their utter disgust, Ole failed to react to their dread prediction and rattled on in a cloud of dust past a coterie of carmine braves to whom a lordly fellow in high hat and eagle feather was delivering some sort of oration. Quite obviously a living Indian had less terror for their father than a dead one.

At Echo House Mr. Thomas was eagerly awaiting them, and, while he and Ole watered and fed the tired team, the boys ventured to investigate the one street of the town. Later they all had supper in the dingy dining-room of the hotel boarding house.

This once-famous hostelry was something like forty feet by twenty-one in size, boasting five upstairs chambers and a total of twelve beds. To accommodate the overflow the proprietor had erected a huge tent adjacent to the building and here were twelve more cots in various stages of dilapidation and, as was usual, both tent and building were crowded to capacity. Owing as much to diplomacy as to the state of his purse Mr. Thomas had procured a bed on the night previous, which he now generously offered to

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The BABY



No mother in this enlightened age would give her baby something she did not know was perfectly harmless, especially when a few drops of plain Castoria will right a baby's stomach and end almost any little ill. Fretfulness and fever, too; it seems no time until everything is serene.

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"GETS-IT" World's
Fastest Way

Johann Lind

Continued from page 60

share with Ole. The boys were put to bed in the wagon box, but owing to their lively fancies, abetted by the incessant tom-toms of the Indians, they scarcely closed an eyelid the whole night through. A circumstance which, none the less did not diminish their appetite for breakfast or quench their thirst for adventure. While the men were apportioning the load between their teams and completing the thousand and one preparations for a rough haul over a new trail, Johann and Andre decided to explore the neighborhood.

They had learned that the tribes, assembled on the plains just over the top of a tantalizing hill, were about to hold a celebration for the admittance of braves. After some little hesitation the boys decided to breast the hill and see for themselves just what was going on. Once at the top they wished themselves away, for never had such a scene confronted them. At least a hundred wagons, each with its peering, painted faces flanked the many wigwams, and the noise in the encampment resembled nothing so much as the roaring of a giant hive. Perhaps the greatest din proceeded from the chief's tent, a huge affair slung on light cross poles that looked altogether inadequate and proved a marvel of invention. The smoke curling up from this imposing dwelling and the peculiar odor issuing from the circular doorway proclaimed to the initiated that the sacred dish of dog-stew was in preparation.

There was no end of marvels for the young Scandinavians. Spellbound, squatting native fashion on the very edge of the steep decline, they sat and stared. That the festivities were well under way was quite apparent; noise and smells and bizarre array, all proclaimed it. Two Indians especially captured their fancy, for even to their unenlightened minds it was plain they were a power recognized and honored. The elder of the two, a grim, hawk-nosed, battle-scarred brave was robed in a dirty white blanket, blanket trousers and gaudy moccasins. Above his waist he compromised with the old and the new by wearing a yellow neckerchief and broad bands of blue and scarlet paint. His friend, whom the boys later learned was none other than Pasqua, chief of the Qu'Appelle Indians, outshone him in more ways than one. Handsome as the other was ugly, Pasqua wore on his proud black head a Jim Crow hat set at a rakish angle. His jacket was richly beaded, his trousers bright with braid and from his shapely shoulders hung a black drapery tipped with bells that tinkled musically as he stepped along. From his waist was suspended a fire-bag for matches and tobacco and on his bare bronze chest sparkled a pair of scissors and a looking-glass.

This was too much for Johann's sense of humor. "Andre, Andre," he giggled hilariously, "It's a good thing that looking-glass hangs where it is—that red and yellow face would sure crack it."

"Oh, gosh!" groaned poor little Andre, "now you've done it! See, they are looking at us—Sure, now they'll scalp us!"

Simultaneously with Andre's terrified wail came such a crashing and howling from the central tent that the young interlopers waited for no more but dashed pell-mell down the precipitous hillside, never stopping till they reached the welcome stoop of Echo House.

Disappointment waited them. That excursion had consumed more time than they had anticipated and the men, jealous of daylight, had gone on

without them. If all went well Ole expected to be back the next night, until which time the boys were to abide by the hotelkeeper's commands and counsel. Nothing remained but to make the best of it.

"If we could only go swimming it wouldn't be so bad," began the philosophic Andre, "somewhere away from these Indians, I mean," he added hastily.

"Well, if the stream here don't suit you," spoke up the perspiring waiter who had been consoling them, "why don't you trot to the Mission. Tain't so far at that."

"The very thing!" the boys agreed in a single breath. Yes, indeed, they'd love to see the Mission with its lovely gardens and little church so they'd have something nice to tell their mother when they got home. The Mission was a most welcome suggestion. So much of their difficulty settled they further succeeded in getting a lunch of thick sandwiches and black tea from their new advisor. With that, and the promise of cooling waters before them, they set off joyfully despite the boiling sun and the long dusty miles.

THE first glimpse of the Mission and its humble church was singularly pleasant. The buildings were of wood and stucco, neatly thatched with straw. The porch of the Mission House was overrun with hops, and a gay little garden spread to the very edge of the shining lake. The little garden was justly famous and represented a labor of love. Flowers of every sort and color rioted side by side with hardy vegetables; food for the spirit and food for the body, going hand in hand. The small white chapel with, at its west entry, a simple framework supporting the two church bells stood nearby. To the east lay the graveyard.

"Funny place, isn't it?" whispered Johann, referring, as one might expect, to the little plot of dead souls.

"Sh-h—" cautioned Andre, "some-one might hear you. You oughtn't to talk in a place like this." That might be, but Johann proceeded to satisfy his healthy curiosity, and Andre followed. Many of the graves had queer ornamental boxes over them, a sort of miniature house, and each had its white crosses at head and foot.

"See that space 'tween the top and bottom of the graves?" Johann pointed, "that's where the spirit passes. That red-haired teacher from Winnipeg told us all about it," he explained proudly. "And those little baskets and tins are to hold the gifts for the Spirit."

"What's in 'em, do you suppose?" interrupted Andre, true to his practical strain.

"Let's find out," said Johann.

"Oh, no! Something'd sure get us. Tain't right to monkey round a graveyard." Johann hooted in uncharitable glee. What would get them? a dead Indian or a live one? Oh, Andre was a ghost believer and a silly booby! Then, mischief possessing him, Johann remembered that tobacco was the gift most often bequeathed to the departed friend. What sport it would be to appropriate some of that tobacco for his superstitious father. The thought of poor Ole's consternation on being told whence the gift had come, made the young rascal laugh aloud with sheer delight. Andre thrilled at the prospect of witnessing the fun, but more than doubted the safety of such procedure.

"But, Johann," he counselled sagely, "you know there ain't no proofs there ain't no ghosts—there might be."

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Johann Lind

Continued from page 62

"Sure not!" giggled Johann, "but rate this one may have been for he you needn't do it. I'll go myself as soon as we've had our swim."

Andre resented that pointed insinuation, and avenged himself by still deeper philosophy: "Maybe, Johann Lind, you know so much! But it's my pa the ghosts will get — if there is any—"

"Ja, if there is any!" echoed Johann gleefully, and tore off to the inviting lake.

They played about in the water longer than they knew, so that when they were dressed again and had eaten their sandwiches, the sun was already midway down the western sky. Johann, who was fleet as a deer, ran back to the lonely graveyard, and in no time at all he had found what he wanted and was on the point of slipping away again, when his attention was drawn to a black-clad figure just leaving the Mission House doorway. Johann had never seen a priest but he knew that this venerable old man descending the path of his little garden was such a one. Yes, he now plainly saw the silver cross that hung suspended down the front of his rusty black habit.

The setting sun flung its mellow benediction over the little garden, the quiet lake, and the gentle old figure pacing there, making a picture not soon to be forgotten. Beauty and peace and patient charity, all these were in that lonely garden, and though he did not think of it just that way, Johann stood rebuked and very much ashamed. He looked at the musty package of tobacco in his hands and for the first time he realized that, strange as it might seem, that queer gift had been made for love's sake. And he, Johann Lind, had stolen it!

Very much disturbed, Johann's thoughts flew back to the priest. He was closer now, almost at the end of the path; soon he would turn and go back to the Mission—he seemed very kind—perhaps he'd understand. Without more thought Johann darted from his covert and, very much to the startled amazement of the old priest, thrust into his hands the damp little package.

"Bless us, what have we here?" said the good Father.

"Tobacco," panted Johann, "from the graves . . . I stole it."

The long years of patient striving with a half-savage people had not robbed that reverend gentleman of his sense of humor. His first impulse was to laugh; but something deep down in the shamed black eyes meeting his so bravely touched a deeper chord.

"So. Tell me why," was what he said instead.

Johann gulped. Now he was in for it as usual. Oh, how he loathed these everlasting explanations! What was the good of it? Now that he had returned the stuff, admitted his guilt, wasn't that enough? He just couldn't say any more—wouldn't say any more—why, there was nothing more to say . . . and just then he happened to meet the grey eyes bent upon him so kindly, and he could have sworn there was a wicked twinkle in them. Oh, gee, he understood! He wasn't going to rage nor expound the Proverbs. Why, he was almost laughing! The relief was so unexpected that Johann laughed himself.

"Oh, sir," he burst out, contrary to habit, "I only wanted to scare my papa. He's terribly frightened of ghosts. We'er—that is, I thought he'd be sure the Indian would haunt him if he smoked his tobacco."

Even a priest has once been a little boy, perhaps a bad little boy. At any

saw the joke so readily, and joined in Johann's laughter without the least scruple. Johann's face was beautiful in its glad surprise. Ah, there was a man to love, that priest, and to bare your heart to!

The old man smiled. "And why did you return it?" he wanted to know.

"Well, I don't know," he stammered helplessly. "I saw you walking here in the garden . . . I wasn't scared."

Again that understanding smile lighted the grave face of the good Father and, very gently he laid a fine old hand on the boy's shoulder. "So? Well, you're a brave lad, never doubt it. The rest we will forget. As I've often said, a garden is good for the soul."

"Oh, sir!" burst from Johann's passionate little heart, "I'll never forget you—never!" And away he bounded like the wild thing he was.

At the edge of the wood Andre met him, impatient and not a little troubled. "Whillikers! I thought you'd got lost or something," was his first reproach. "It'll be as dark as pitch before we reach the fort—say, did you get it?"

"No!" snapped Johann shortly.

"Huh?"

"I said 'no.' Come on, let's run."

Like many another timid soul Andre swelled with importance, now that he thought he had detected weakness in Johann. "Oh, ho!" he shrieked, tearing after the racing figure of his brother. "Oh ho! you got scared, that's what!"

Johann ran on, apparently paying no heed, and thus emboldened little Andre kept up his chorus—"Scared, that's what! Oh, ho! whose afraid of ghosts? Who's afraid of ghosts—not Johann Lind—"

All of a sudden Johann wheeled in his tracks, his face chalk-white, his black eyes narrowed. "Will—you shut-up?" said he.

Foolish Andre was too startled to change his tactics. "Scared . . . scared . . ." he babbled.

Johann's hard young fist shot out fiercely, and poor Andre concluded his taunt in the dust.

The rest of the journey was finished in gloomy silence and, to make matters worse, when the boys finally stumbled into the smoky dining-room of Echo House they were greeted by a chorus of amused derision.

"Well, by cricky!" roared a red-faced giant, "take a squint at the fighting cocks, will ye! He-he-he! Lookit that eye. How come, kid?"

Andre clapped a protecting palm against the offending member, and his girlish mouth trembled suspiciously. Ole pressed forward to inspect his son. "By jimmie! Been fighting — who smashed you?"

Andre was dangerously close to tears. "He . . . Johann . . . he hit me — for nothing."

"Nu, da!" Ole glanced sharply at Johann, who, seemingly indifferent, leaned against the wall, but the light Ole saw in the bold black eyes told another story. Ole grunted and, very much to Andre's amazement, gave his son a rough shove forward. "Ja, by dam," was his disgusted summary, "you didn't hit him back, you little petticoat!"

Later that night when the boys had crept under the same blanket, keeping, however, as good a distance between them as the wagon-box permitted, Andre gave voice to his bitter resentment. "You wait, Johann Lind, some day I'll get even—some day you'll be good and sorry!"

But Johann, restored to his usual humor, giggled into his pillow.

(Continued next month)



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