



JOHANN LIND

By Laura Goodman Salverson

Illustrated by J. F. Clymer

THIRD INSTALMENT

THE life of the prairie pioneer was uneventful at best. The failure of the Riel Rebellion had marked the last period of romantic unrest. After that life moved on in its humdrum channels; the white man claiming more and more of the great Dominion, the red man adjusting himself to a strange and pathetic existence.

Lawlessness, it is true, still existed in the border towns where whisky peddlers plying their illicit trade took advantage of the simple breeds and Indians to debauch and despoil them. But even this boozing of the teapot was effectively checked by the installation of the Royal North West Mounted Police throughout the territory.

Strip by strip the virgin prairie retreated before the plow, and just as surely, the forest fell before the woodman's axe. A network of roads spread over the countryside, binding together the once isolated homesteads. Little log cabins flying the Union Jack sprang up like toadstools proclaiming that even here Britain would teach her children. Missionaries, full of zeal and selfless purpose, spurred their tired nags over the cruel trails that this hunger for learning might be fostered and sustained in the Christian principles.

By the time Johann and Andre were grown to husky young manhood the rush into the Saskatchewan was just beginning. The Canadian Northern had opened up a new territory; a vast prairie, level as a bowling green, requiring but the minimum of labor to be converted to golden grain fields.

Ole was by now little more than a figurehead in his household. The boys and Helga were the real power. Both Johann and Andre worked out the

greater part of the year, entering the harvest fields of men who had proved wiser than their father, and in winter going to Winnipeg or Regina to seek employment. Andre hated the harvesting, but found the city much to his liking. He was something of a dandy and always managed to find a job where that weakness proved an asset. Winnipeg was more to his fancy; it had a certain air, and such pretty young ladies!

Regina was just emerging from its frontier squalor. Johann, however, true to his queer complexes, had a tender regard for the uninspiring little town. It was struggling so hard to justify its existence. He loved to remind Andre of its actual progress. Ten years ago there had been only one street, the trading post, a bad hotel, some two or three houses and a pump. Now it was beginning to justify the erection of the Government buildings and the Police Barracks, at the instigation of a certain land-holding gentleman. Oh, yes, Regina would one day be a city, said Johann, and a pretty one at that.

But though the Boens contrived to make ends meet they were not satisfied, there was no future in staying where they were. Wheat, wheat, wheat! That was the cry re-echoing all about them. "No money in farming on a small scale; wheat and more wheat, *there's the way to fortune.*" So said one neighbor to another. But for wheat one must have wide and level lands.

At last Johann caught the fever and, as Helga put it, when he caught anything, he caught it *bad*. In his heart Johann suspected it wasn't so much the lure of the wheat that tempted him as the chance to get away from his old surroundings.

He had a reputation for being "queer." He was moody and difficult to understand, having little to say and saying that little in a cryptic way that puzzled and sometimes offended. It was whispered that he drank with the harvest hands, swung the girls too energetically at village dances, and laughed at sober reformers. Then again, in contrast he was known to shun all society for weeks on end, burying himself in a pile of books or tramping the woods in search of copy for his endless "whittling." Herman alone understood him, or thought he did. Even Helga rued the mysterious quirks in his nature; mystery might be well enough in the Hereafter, thought she, but provocative and suspicious in everyday life. She wished he were different but, if a neighbor hinted at some raw indiscretion she invariably had recourse to her old excuse: "Oh, well, what can you expect of Johann Lind?" which explanation, though not very lucid, gave to the busy gossips delightful hours of speculation. Thus constituted, it was not surprising that once having caught the migratory fever, Johann could not be stopped.

Andre wasn't so keen about it. To him the old life seemed well enough. What was more, just as soon as he could make his mother see reason he intended to leave the farm forever. And, good opportunist that he was, Andre decided to lend his persuasive powers to Johann's venture. Once uprooted from the old home Helga might be easier to manage. She was too content in her little corner

of the world and expected her family to be happy with her.

They had a hard time to win her over. She was getting old; the weight of years and ceaseless toil was beginning to tell on her. But in the end their young enthusiasm triumphed. Besides, they told her, there would be nothing approximating the hardships of her former homesteading; nothing in fact, for her to do but watch them work.

IT WAS early in the following spring that Johann and Ole left the crowded train at Saskatoon, a shanty town bordering on the Saskatchewan river. A not particularly charming place, this ambitious town, bristling with sharp-eyed traders of the gold brick variety.

In front of the evil smelling hotel one of these good Samaritans was extolling the virtues of a team of oxen which charity induced him to offer for sale to a mild-looking foreigner. Something in the foreigner's face attracted Johann and he edged his way through the crowd of amused loafers waiting to see the "greenhorn" stung. "Yes, indeed," went on the gay deceiver, "that team was a marvel of endurance, and as young and handsome as any that ever crossed the plains." Not only that, but they were prairie-broke, said he, would gee and haw, be driven by line, or lead; could, in fact, do anything an intelligent animal was expected to do. They were a gift at two hundred and fifty dollars but, owing to a burning zeal to help future settlers, he was willing to sacrifice the team to the lucky stranger.

A wicked light leaped to Johann's eyes. "What's their trotting record, partner?" he drawled, his slow voice curiously arresting and magnetic. The eloquent salesman whirled round sharply, but his retort was drowned in a roar of laughter.

"Ja, answer that, you Prairie Shark," roared Ole in high glee.

The man accepted this with the rough good-nature of the times. It wouldn't do to lose his temper and a sale at the same time. He had the grace to grin. "Well, now," said he, "if it's racers you think he's after, partner, by the black Judas I've got them too! Look you at those horses vander. Now there's a team worth the having! None of your imported stock, tough as nails, those ponies, and inured to any weather. Yes, sir, feed 'em wild hay, give 'em slough water and they'd still defy the worst bogey of swamp fever!"

Here followed an enticing description of the various attributes of that particular species of Western horse, but the magic failed. Johann's laughter had broken the spell.

After some little hesitation the relieved foreigner and intended victim walked up to the friendly Scandinavians. "You come here new, too, maybe?" was his mild query.

"Nu, yes and no," Ole replied cheerfully. "New here, but not so new in Canada. Is it you just come over?"

The stranger nodded, gloom overspreading his honest Dutch countenance. "Just! A farm I would like me to get, with good water, but not too much. In Holland, now, it's always too much. Water, water, and not so much land! *Allemacher!* it's a muddle I'm in . . . this so terrible bigness—" He flung wide his stubby arms to indicate the breadth of the noble prairies. "Such a bigness! and these people—"

"We're going to locate tomorrow, if possible," Johann interrupted. "Perhaps you'd like to join us; it'll be cheaper and we know the ways of the country."

"Ja, sure!" roared Ole, clapping his red paw in honest encouragement on the Dutchman's shoulder. Sure thing! you just come along. Johann, he's a smart guy, and me—well, I know what's foolishness all right, and on this prairie business I'm like a sea-horse on water. That's a good idea, you bet . . . What's your name?"

"Van Meiris, Peter Van Meiris. *Allemacher!* but a luck it was you came. Almost I buy them oxen yet; and how fast they go maybe I don't know."

"Ja, da, well, you follow us, Peter, and you'll land somewhere, all right. Ain't it so, Johann?"

Johann nodded, his black eyes gently mocking. "Quite right, Father, if he follows you he'll sure

land somewhere. But now, suppose we eat and hunt a place to sleep."

The following morning the men made their way to the Land Office. A less inviting place can scarcely be imagined; at best a bad make-shift consisting of a single dirty little room on the top floor of an implement building. After scaling the rickety ladder to this ill-smelling den of golden opportunities they found themselves in the midst of an exasperated crowd of home-seekers.

There was so much those home - hungry, anxious - hearted, prospective settlers wanted to know and the sole representative of the Great Domain at hand to serve them was a pimply youth barely out of his 'teens! His service was limited to pointing out of certain grubby maps and the repetition of tedious bulletin statistics. One intelligent statement, though a discouraging one, Johann managed to get out of him. Every scrap of land within a radius of twenty miles had been filed on! "However," the bored young diplomat further informed them, many settlers are going south-west." Whether this was a wise course or not he could not say, but, all they had to do was to go out there and see for themselves. Asked if maps were available the stripling assumed a wounded air. No! What did they expect? The Department had boasted a good supply but with such a rush—well, what did they expect? After all it was very simple; their land located, back they'd come to file entry, and there was an end of it!

Johann's temper almost got the better of him, but he laughed instead. Indeed, why be angry with a numbskull? There were other sources of information.

Over a dinner of greasy pork and soggy potatoes an old prospector told them that by far the happiest course was to hire a rig and just drive off haphazard till they found someone willing to help them locate. "You'll always hit a squatter somewhere about itchin' to earn a dollar," said he. "But don't ye be played for no suckers; they'll ask ye ten for the rig, but hold out fer eight—that's a-plenty."

Poor Van Meiris thought it much more than plenty and Ole fumed in true Norse fashion until Johann reminded them that at least they were lucky in not bearing the expense alone. "Nu, ja, that's so," the lackadaisical Ole saw the point at

which the plot thickened.

The Story Thus Far

The Western Home Monthly commenced the publication of this wonderful, thrilling, gripping story by Laura Goodman Salveson with its March issue, creating an interest as it developed that has seldom been equalled by any Canadian story. The fact that the author is in all respects except origin a Dane adds to the story a very pronounced additional zest. To the spirit of romance, adventure, and mysticism that is her Norse heritage, she combines a knowledge of Western Canadian life, conditions and ambitions that are intimate and accurate.

In the two previous installments the plot, which is laid in the Norse country is that of a young girl raised in the remote hills by an old shepherd, and many of his habits and antiquated in ideas, immersed in the traditions of centuries, and surcharged with superstitions. With the dawning of womanhood the young girl seeks freedom, and in her encounter with a wider civilization in the service of Fru Lind she becomes the mother of Johann Lind. It is arranged that the tiny infant should be transplanted to the fair Dominion of Canada under the affectionate care of Helga and Ole Boen, servants of the Lind family. From the point of landing in Quebec, we find him in Winnipeg, and eventually in Saskatchewan, near Qu'Appelle, where he grows up to manhood with his foster brother Andre as his companion. He meets the trials, tribulations and temptations incidental to a new country, all of which helped in the creation of a remarkable, imaginative young mind, flooded with dreams of great ambition.

We know of no literature better calculated to give the correct idea of the enriching contribution made by the Norse people to the national life of Canada.

once. "Ja, that's so, Peter, it ain't so bad. Six for Johann and me, two for you." That's settled.

They very gladly turned their backs on the shanty town, following its sandy main street till it merged into a seemingly endless trail, which they followed until by night the sight of a homesteader's shack struck them as the most welcome of visions. A small indefinite sort of man opened the door to their eager knocking. He was not exactly enthusiastic but, nevertheless, assured the travellers that both he and his "missus" were accustomed to

putting up strangers. His house was small, but such as it was stood open to the traveller. It was, indeed, a small, comfortless place, but not altogether cheerless. The main body of the house, a single fairly large chamber, divided in two by a bright red cotton curtain, had on the one side an iron bedstead badly in need of paint, and on the other a obsolete stove, irreproachably clean and in a subtle way the keynote of the household. The bareness of wood and wall was bravely combated by scripture mottoes, and highly colored calendars depicting the charms and virtues of rosy dairy maids and cream separators. Moreover, the little house boasted a folding-couch, several reed-bottom chairs, a stout oak table and a home-made chinacupboard.

Johann suggested that he and his companions should sleep in the hayloft rather than crowd the family but the friendly housewife would not hear of it. She was delighted to have them; life was so dull on the Prairie.

While she busied herself getting up a meal, Johann went out to attend to the horses. Alone for the first time in the beautiful Prairie night he seemed indeed to have entered a new world. The steel-grey sky, deepened in places to purple, and studded with points of flame, was of an incomparable beauty. The young moon, very pale and white, smiled down upon the virgin fields.

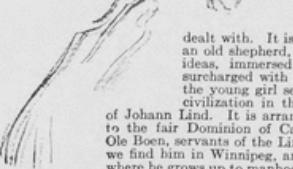
While the horses munched their oats in grateful contentment Johann gazed over the quiet land. Every blade of last year's grass stood tipped in globules of glittering ice and the wind rocking these made a delicate music that captured the fancy and stimulated imagination. Spring had come too soon; these were her tears glistening on the grass; this her soft reproach for the cold reception. But even in its melancholy the wide Prairie had a grace and majesty about it that Johann knew he must always love.

At the same time he was conscious of rekindling discontent. What was the good of sensibility in a limited existence? In the life of brute activity its only gift was pain. God, how he hated monotony! How he hated the wheel of life! Drudging to eat; eating to drudge again! In a world of boundless resources and infinite beauty that it should be so was a libel against progress. It was wrong; it was wicked; it was unnatural! The concept was badly distorted somewhere; the show a farce; Johann was sick to death of it.

It was not the first time. These periodic revolts were an inescapable inheritance. At such times Johann felt himself a trapped animal caught in a cage of circumstance over which he had no control. There was the irony of it! Resentment gave no release; battle no freedom. Ah, he knew—he had seen a captive fox fighting the steel trap . . . Poor little devil, he was glad now he had shot it, despite the ruin of its glossy pelt. When these moods obsessed him Johann's temper was not of the best nor his actions self-explanatory. He might do one thing, he might do another—but only the saints knew what. So now he lingered out in the cold night long after supper was called. And, when exasperated beyond measure, Ole roared at him in his violent way he laughed recklessly and walked off towards a gleaming slough that shone like a giant shield in the distance. It comforted his temperamental nature to muse upon that frozen pond couched into inaction by unfriendly circumstance.

When he returned his companions reproached him curtly whilst his hostess poured out tea in chilly silence. But, restored to excellent humor he laughed lightly and, catching at the offended lady's hand drawled in his soft fashion: "Madame forgives—the night here is so lovely." Poor Prairie drudge, the blood rushed to her face in a painful tide. Of course she forgave him, flew about on willing feet to serve him, for had he not thought her capable of knowing beauty? Her, the wilderness slave!

Johann's belated meal over, the talk reverted to land, homesteaders, and wheat. Wheat! wheat! The glowing gold of the Prairies! In her corner by the stove the faded housewife washed her



dishes and listened patiently. It was like the plague, this talk of new possibilities. It invaded the home, struck at its basic peace, and left it shattered. But she was hardened to it. She had heard it so often, this engaging tale of gold for the asking. In Ontario, in Manitoba, and now in the Saskatchewan. And she wasn't so old—

First there was silence, then Johann burst into sudden laughter.

"Well," said he, "I call this a dead crowd. Supposing we liven up a little? Tomorrow is time enough to return to the land. Why not tell one of your yarns, Ole? A little fun; a song or two, and a gale of laughter, that's what we want—don't you think so, Mrs. Potter?"

Ah, didn't she think so! Her answer came like a passionate prayer. "Yes! Yes! Something to make us laugh; something to make us happy—to make us forget. Land, land, land—all the day we live it, hear it, breathe it. Anything else will be a blessing!"

"Nu, da," Ole shrugged uncomfortably in his chair, "that Johann is a smart one to make a fool of his papa. But, well—the sea, now, it has a way with it you never forget . . .

"Ja, it's a sad business, that coastguard duty—what with dead people you drag up bloated from the sea . . . but it's back I'd like to be. Ja, back—so safe in a nice little boat!"

Then must the homesick Hollander burst into passionate rhapsody. Ah, his Holland! His beloved Holland, sitting like a queen 'mid her silver wastes. Ach, that was a country for you, laced and interlaced with silver channels that fed the patient fields. *Alemacher*, what a foolishness ever to leave it!

In her corner Mrs. Potter smiled bitterly. That was the first cry—the old familiar cry of every exile . . . but wait, Canada has an opiate for that growing pain—a bitter medicine but most effective. Yet her heart went out in sympathy despite herself. Not to him, it is true, but to the wife he had mentioned—the little woman who even now was dreaming the foolish rosy dreams all women dreamed of the homes they would build in the good Canadian West. In her bitterness she saw again the neat village where she had grown to maturity; where she now imagined everyone dwelt in unalloyed bliss and happiness . . . why had she left?

Then they sang, each in a different key, but with the best intentions. Sang, and sang again, until the soreness melted out of their hearts and a glow of contentment replaced unrest, and doubt, and dull despair. Later, Mrs. Potter did her best to make comfortable beds on the floor for her guests.

But, when she lay down to sleep she tried to reason away her foolishness. It was all part of the rough-and-tumble life of the Prairie, and these men were one with that life. Then, disconcerting denial, she seemed to hear Johann's soft laughter . . . queer young man that; not a bit like a Scandinavian—not a bit like anyone she had ever met . . . what irony that his lot should be cast in such thorny ways!

Shortly before noon, the following day, the little party reached a

fairly well settled farm, beautifully situated on a slight rise, where one could view an uninterrupted sea of prairie rolling for miles. The farmer was an up-and-coming American, kindly, curious and shrewd. This thrifty optimist offered to locate the strangers for twenty-five dollars apiece; what was more, stood ready to leave at once—unless, of course, they care to stay for dinner. Ole, recalling his own wanderings on behalf of many a prospective settler, opened his round eyes till they popped like balls from their sockets.

"Ja, by dam!" was all he found to say. Johann laughed his silky laughter.

"Now, that would be too much," said he. "We would never expect such a sacrifice of time and intelligence from anyone!" What he proposed to do was just wander round a bit; and if luck failed there was always the alternative of going back—

As before noted, the American was shrewd, and at heart a good fellow. Shifting his corn cob pipe from one groove of yellow teeth to another he hastened to amend matters. "Reckon you misunderstood me, partner. Twenty-five is all right but, 'live and let live,' says I, that's the best gospel. Yes, sir, no one's going to say Tim Patrick tried to squeeze blood from a stone — what do you say, friends, to a cup of Ma's excellent tea?"

So, despite a bad beginning, things turned out pleasantly, and Tim Patrick proved a valuable guide. His enthusiasm alone was worth a good deal. In his eyes this part of the Saskatchewan was already on the highroad to success. It was sure to become one of the finest wheat districts in the world. And as for hardships—"Why, man, there ain't none such!" said he.

Under such shining optimism even homesick Van Meiris began to brighten, and when the time came for parting with his new friends he spoke with assurance of the future.

"Ja, sure thing," Ole wrung Peter's hand in hearty Nordland fashion. "Sure, Peter, we'll work like a thousand devils and all will be fine, you bet!" Yet when he himself neared home the light

went out of his soul. Sensing his depression, Johann tried to be encouraging. Ole just shook his shaggy old head and sighed like a walrus. "You can say what you please, Johann, but you can't fool me. Them Prairies, now—by golly! Dull—dull like a dead calm, that's what they are. Herre Gud! Such a place to die in . . . Poor Ole looked so utterly forlorn that Johann had difficulty in restraining his amusement.

HELGA did not see her new home until the next year, by which time her men had already completed the house and barn, besides plowing sixty acres of virgin prairie. When she caught sight of those acres—great welts of sod softened by winter snows—waiting the plow, the harrow and the seeder, she experienced the strangest exaltation. She felt like a conqueror entering newly subjugated territory. These wide stretches of fertile lands were hers—her men had claimed them for her! Oh, it was fine, it was wonderful! It gave one a sense of power and limitless freedom. What bespoke monotony to Ole whispered mystery to her. Then, too, the new house was an object of pride. To be sure, it was only a three-room shack, but it was *timber*. This she felt was a tremendous stride upward—logs were so commonplace.

On the whole, the Boen household was a contented one. The sole exception was Andre, who found life dull and labor uncongenial. But Helga met all his fretful moods with sunny promises. Just one good crop and her boy should no longer work in the fields like a common peasant. No, her Andre should go to the city to study, to be a gentleman. There were schools there to teach one business; how to make money easily without ugly labor. To such a school he should go.

Fortunately for Helga, Andre was her only problem just then, since Ole was momentarily held captive by the lure of wheat. Once into the business of conquering the soil the thing took hold of him. Moreover, he came to love his horses as he had loved his life-boat at home. He loved them for their wise persistence; for the way they dug their feet into the soil, straining till the muscles bunched out like knots of steel on their huge haunches. Ah, that was the way to fight the tough glabel! Plunging, gripping, tearing through! The rich black earth took on a vast enchantment, became a realm of boundless possibilities to be won by persistent toil. A fight, that's what it was. That's what bent Ole's back to the plow as it once had bent to the oar. Ja, and never a sunlit sea seemed more lovely than that hard-won field of his, when at last it lay cowed and smooth, awaiting the seeder.

But, with the crop in, Ole's spirit drooped again. The battle was over; the struggle at an end. Andre showed a like disposition. He hated self-imposed responsibility and began to wish he hadn't lent his moral support to this Saskatchewan adventure. He began to suspect that freedom would be as dearly bought here as elsewhere. However, he had wisdom enough to realize that this was no time to admit regrets. Things would work out somehow. How, he did not propose to make his business. Consequently the burden of constructive planning and

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Andre was such a boy for compliments, it made her dizzy

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Johann Lind

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essential labor fell largely upon Johann and Helga. It was Johann who ordered Ole to the west quarter when his irritation became too marked. A fertile spot, that quarter, ideal for flax, but in its native state overrun with willows and small poplars.

"There's a chance for battle," Johann told him. "Make war on that wilderness. You'll find it'll stand up to you like a Viking. Better still, imagine you're 'laying ghosts,' in the good Nordland fashion. Out you go, Ole Boen, to conquer that meadow, for the plow."

But Ole did not take kindly to grubbing. Only now and again, when a particularly stubborn root roused the sleeping Berserk in him, did he rise in rage to heights of fancy. Then: "By dam!" he roared to the high heavens and the devils under the earth: "no bunch of scrub willow'll get the best of Ole Boen!" Nor did they.

Helga, it will be seen, had her hands full, not only in the management of the farm, but in sailing a clear course amidst the idiosyncrasies of her men-folk. Sometimes she lost patience utterly, let them feel the edge of her tongue with a vengeance. It was then that things really moved—as she doubtless intended they should. To appease Mama, Ole tinkered round the hen-coop! Johann demonstrated on paper how well they were getting on; and Andre promised solemnly to assume the care of her pigs. Oh, it might not be a godly practice, but a domestic storm now and again had its salutary effects.

Of a sudden, as it were, they wakened to see smoke up-circling from the low roofs of a dozen shacks in the grey distance that so short a while ago had marked the wide horizon. The Hollander was to the south of them; his box-like, tar-papered shack could be seen from their pasture. A little to the north on a wooded, semi-sandy tract was a Russian whom everyone regarded with bigoted hostility. A foreigner, if you please! A damn foreigner, said the Irishman to the right of him. A dirty Russian, agreed his friend, a cockney from nowhere in particular.

But what enheartened Helga above all else was the amazing discovery that the Bergs had actually taken land two miles east of Van Meiris. She just couldn't get over that amazing fact for weeks. The Bergs, of all people! The dear, good Bergs, who had welcomed her to their Winnipeg home when first she came, a stranger, from the Old Country!

"Nu, da," Herman smiled at her excitement, "it's best we make a road for you cross-lots to Lena Berg's," he teased her.

"Ya, well, never you mind a road, Grandpa," she came back at him joyously. "With a heart light as wings in my breast, I'd just as lief fly to my dear Lena's door."

HELGA made no secret of the delight she took in driving to the new creamery at Hawthorne every Friday with her shining cream-cans like armored knights behind her. Monotony and weariness, disillusionment and pain, faded into kind oblivion on these wonderful occasions.

Not infrequently a stubborn cow refused to give her leave of the highway, but what cared she for that. The cow, well favored or not, was worth a moment's study. Lands and cattle, these were the true wealth of men, thought Helga, and thinking so, found the one as interesting as the other. When, as happened often, she caught sight of a man bent double at his grubbing, she never failed to wish him well. "Ter-

rible work that, making land," she'd tell her old horse seriously. "Poor man—God bless him!"

But best of all, to Helga's thinking, were the cross-cuts through the farmers' fields, for then she was sure to enjoy a moment's gossip, and to see for herself how the crops were coming on. Something unexpected was sure to happen whenever one left the section line!

Such she accounted her first meeting with Vrow Van Mieris. It was on a peerless Friday, under a flawless sky, just as she turned into the trail running diagonally through Andre's quarter, that she got her first glimpse of the Dutch woman. A more distracted person Helga had rarely seen, thanks to the two fat red calves cavorting before her. Helga beamed all over her kind round face and reined in sharply. "Nice, nice calves," said she by way of beginning.

"Neen, neen"! the other disagreed breathlessly. "Neen, huisvrow, not nice, crazy; all day, maybe run like wild! *Allemacher*—such a business!" So much confessed the little woman melted into friendly smiles, her direct grey eyes pathetically apologetic and appealing.

Helga nodded sagely. "Sure, don't I know. Calves is just like men, never no telling how they run—well, you got good cows, anyway."

A luckless remark. Gloom descended the Dutch woman's brow: "Neen, huisvrow, neen cows yet. Some day maybe yes," and she pointed significantly to the red calves now placidly nibbling by the roadside.

Helga was incredulous, her blue eyes wide as saucers. "No cow? No milk? Nothing for the coffee? On being assured that such was indeed the truth she burst out afresh: "Nu, ja, can you believe it—and my pigs turning up their noses at the good milk I throw out! Sure, that's no way to do at all. Now I tell you, you get milk with me, all you want—if it's not too far . . . You have a little boy to send——?"

Again Helga had blundered unwittingly. Her new acquaintance shook her head sadly. Neen, she had no boy, worse luck! Only a girl—a nice girl just the same.

Helga beamed relief. "Nu, that's good. A girl won't spill, like a boy, half out of the pail. Ja, that's very good, and now we're friends maybe you drink coffee with me some day"?

"Yes, yes"! The woman was all eager gratitude. "Yes—what name, huisvrow"?

"Boen—Helga Boen. And you"?

"Ach, yes, Van Meiris," Helga's new friend smiled broadly. "Gretchen Van Meiris, huisvrow." And each went on her way puzzling over the absurdity of foreign names, but happy in the kinship of hearts the world over.

ONE early morning Helga was not a little surprised to see her friend Lena Berg hurrying up the path that angled across the hay-field. It struck her as a peculiar time for a diligent housewife to be paying a visit, especially in hay-time! All a-tremor, she rushed to the door, eager as a child to fathom the mystery; hoping in her heart that nothing serious was wrong. After all it might only be Papa Berg in one of his tempers. Poor man, he was very difficult to live with.

But much to Helga's relief, her friend was far from sorrow-laden. So far, in fact, that her pale anaemic face glowed with happiness, and when she read Helga's trouble of curiosity she burst into merry laughter.

"Nu, Helga, are you seeing things? A ghost, maybe, or a follower"? Lena

Berg, be it known, had a streak of Finn in her (some went so far as to call it Lappic) that accounted for her tendency to romance. Today hers was surely a playful mood. She kissed her friend on either cheek; pinched her chin as one does a pouting child. "Don't look so lost, Fru Helga. Tish! can't a body be happy without rousing suspicion?" she giggled, her small head tipped to the side. "Oh, ho! Helga, I know what you're thinking: Simon Berg has been at it again. But no! You're wrong. Simon Berg's in the hay-field, happy as a gopher."

Helga shrugged. "Nu, then, you're smart, Lena Berg, and all that, but just the same you can't fool me. A visit this time of day, in hay-time, whoever thought of such a thing, unless for good reason?"

Lena wiped her perspiring countenance and looked about her contentedly. "How you keep the house so nice and cool is a wonder, and you with four men to cook for, now I—"

Helga banged the kettle on the stove peevishly, curiosity tormenting her: "Nu, I've told you, Lena Berg, many times, don't bake in the daytime. Come hot weather these prairies are like an oven. Now I, I always bake at night."

"Ja, you said it," smiled Lena, enjoying her friend's chagrin. "But my Simon, he holds to it night was made for sleeping. God made it light and darkness, you understand, says he, and it's all foolishness this trying to upset the Divine Order."

Helga thought a great deal of Simon in some ways. He was a good farmer, knew cattle as well as any man, but—there the admiration ended. Now she sniffed: "Simon should have lived before candles! Poof! What a man says and means is generally different!"

Lena realized things had gone far enough. "Ja, you are right, Helga—but this visit . . . Now, can you believe it, my little Eli is coming home again—and sound as a Troll!"

Helga was just a little disappointed. So much excitement for nothing! Then her motherly heart rebuked her. Eli was an only child, her mother's darling and Eli had been very delicate; so delicate it had been thought best to leave her in Winnipeg with an aunt until the new home was fairly settled. Poor Lena, no wonder she was happy!

"Lena Berg, you don't mean it? Nu, da, I see where my boys will never be at home of an evening any more. And when is the dear child coming?"

Lena bounced up in her chair like a rubber Jack-in-the-box. "Ah, that's it, Helga—that's why I'm here. She's coming Monday . . . my foolish one, she never thought to give more time and Papa so hating a rush!"

Helga understood. Simon was not the man to rush to the aid of his women-folk. Master in his house, that was Simon and, as the master, must be duly, and respectfully, consulted in all matters. Lena would not admit it, of course, but Helga knew that since Eli hadn't written to Papa, Papa would have nothing to do with bringing her home from Hawthorne.

"Ja, you're smart, Lena, with your secrets, trying to turn me grey with curiosity! But I'm smart, too; ja, a Troll was my godmother, so I'll tell you the trouble—Simon's busy with the haying and all alone, while I—ja, have a houseful of men. Sure, Lena Berg, I'll send one of the boys to Hawthorne for your Eli."

They laughed gaily enough, yet neither was deceived. While they chattered Helga set out a lunch of brown bread and doughnuts in the kitchen table, telling her visitor that of course these preparations were not on her account. Oh, no! the men would soon be in for morning coffee and in hay-time were always hungry as wolves.

True to prophecy, Ole was seen driving up to the well a few moments later and, the horses watered, he made his way to the house in slow, deliberate fashion. Catching sight of the visitor through the open window he bellowed a hearty greeting that preceded him like a royal trumpet call. Yet, in the doorway he must show welcome again: "Well, well, Lena, you're early like the birds! And it's good brings you, I hope missus, not a trouble?"

Lena smiled. "Nay, Ole Boen, it's not trouble this time—leastwise not to me," she hastened to amend, lest gratitude for service be doubted.

Helga paused in her journeying from stove to pantry. "Nu, that's a good one. Trouble? I should say not! Would you believe it, Ole, Eli is coming home and Simon too busy, poor man, to get her."

Ole opened his mouth, words of astonishment ready to his lips but, catching his wife's warning glance, shut it again and hastily busied himself at the wash-stand. His ablutions over, he found conversation easier. "Ja, so that's it? Well, it'll be no trouble for the boys to go for her, eh, Mama? Especially Andre; he never finds it amiss to get a holiday, that boy."

Now came Herman meandering from the meadow, his old face calm and grave. He, too, was pleased to see the visitor. "Nu, da, Lena Berg, you're looking well this morning. And how is the black ewe coming?"

Lena Berg lifted her hands high to indicate surprise and admiration. "Now would you!" she cried. "Such an old man to remember! And will you believe it, Herman, it's twins she dropped, that ewe!"

Herman nodded, lit his pipe, and settled himself comfortably in a corner particularly to his liking. "Ja, I told you that was a fine ewe — Ja, what else."

"But that's not all the good news," Helga hurried to advise him. "Eli is coming home on Monday, all well and strong again."

Herman drew on his pipe thoughtfully: "Little Eli—Ja, I remember . . . yellow curls, blue eyes and such a tiny mouth—like a big berry. So little Eli is coming here into the wilderness—"

Just at this moment Johann loomed up in the doorway. "What's this?" he laughed, "a pic-nic so early in the day! Well, and it's really Mrs. Berg?"

Lena Berg never got over her wonder at Johann. With ample cause to dislike the masterful in man, her heart skipped a beat none-the-less at sight of him. Such a beautiful young man—that, if you please, was her opinion—Such a beautiful young man, and so hard to understand! So now she looked at him all in a flutter, seeing with a woman's quick appraising eye the fine head on its bold brown column of throat, the broad shoulders, lean hips and splendid length of limb. Ah, he was good to look upon, that Johann, with his dark inscrutable face, flashing eyes and wonderful hands. Quick, expressive, undeniably fine, were those clever hands of his and no amount of labor seemed able to wreck their grace.

"What news?" he demanded bluntly, never being much for words.

Helga smiled and passed her foster-son the plate of sugared doughnuts. "You said it, Johann. Such news! Would you believe it, little Eli is coming home Monday, but poor Simon is too busy to go to town. You know how it is—"

Johann laughed again that curious laugh of his: "Yes, I know how it is," said he. "That being the case, of course Andre will go—I'll see that the buggy is washed to fit the grand occasion."

Ole roared with appreciative mirth. "What'd I tell you, Mama—it's Andre's holiday again. Friday it's baseball, Sunday it's church, and now

Continued on page 102



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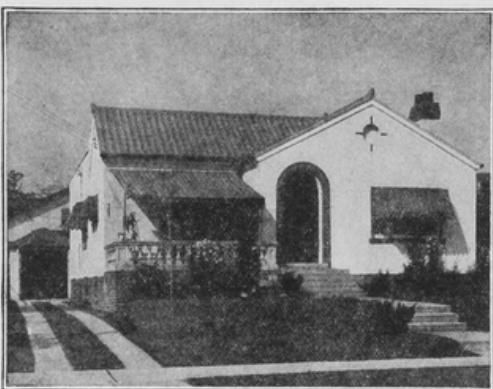
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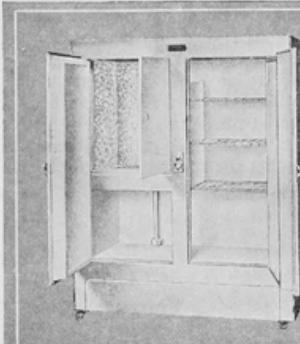
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Johann Lind

Continued from page 101

here's another fine chance to get out of the hay-field. Oh, ho! ho! He's a lucky devil that Andre, eh, Mama?"

"Nu, Ole, that's a nice way to talk of a son and him this minute slaving on his quarter. Such good land my Andre has. Lena, you should see the new flax—pretty as pretty! And such good hay, too, in the marsh."

To tell the truth, both women were greatly relieved when the men returned to the field, for then they could enjoy a last drop by themselves and gossip to their hearts' content. Later, while Helga worked a tub of butter Mrs. Berg helpfully peeled potatoes for dinner.

"You didn't meet the Dutch lady yet, did you, Lena," asked Helga suddenly. "No? Well, now, there's a nice little woman for you. Round in the face and such a good smile—like a 'saetter jente' at home. Just last week I met her myself—on the way to the creamery—and would you believe it, they haven't a single cow!"

Mrs. Berg shook her head in sympathetic dismay and Helga, delighted to have such interesting news, continued her story: "Not a drop of milk even for coffee; think of that, Lena Berg! So I said to her: 'You get milk from me, Mrs. Van Meiris, if you have a little boy to send.' No, they haven't a boy either, only a little girl—but such a dear little girl, pink and white, and with hair like buttercups. You should see her, Lena. And would you believe it, when Ole went over there to bring a little veal we 'killed' he saw they left their shoes on the doorstep—so clean they are!"

"Well, I never! And this girl, does she speak English?" Mrs. Berg wanted to know, having in mind a possible friendship for Eli.

"Ja, I should say. Such pretty English, too, that she learned in Holland. I was telling Mrs. Van Meiris that she should go to the concerts once in a while. Not always, maybe, but sometimes. The new teacher runs things so nice, I'm told."

Lena Berg sat up very straight and, for one so mild, assumed a belligerent air. "That smart miss! I saw her in the store two weeks ago, and you'd think she was the queen the way she carried on."

"Well, they say she's very high up in learning," Helga ventured to excuse her. "Plays the organ, too, on Sundays and leads the choir."

"Leads the young men by the nose, you mean," interrupted Lena testily, "and fools she thinks them, with her airs and fine opinions!"

With a son dear to her heart Helga resented this. "And is she so much maybe? Her with an uncle such a miser and only a farmer like the rest. You can take it or leave it, Lena Berg, but it was Mr. Patrick himself tried to fool twenty-five dollars out of my Ole to locate us up here. A fine thing to get so proud of—and Ole locating as low as three dollars in the old days!"

Lena rocked backward and forward, in a way she had had irritated. "Well, I told you she was a smart Miss, didn't I? And all of us just roughnecks to her thinking. Not a word she had to say to me—not a word."

"She can keep her smartness," said Helga, "and much good it'll do her."

Like an inspiration a thought flashed across Lena's simple mind. Now was her opportunity to get nearer the mystery that had so long intrigued her. Assuming a guileless expression she smiled and said: "That's right, Helga, folks is mostly what blood made them—some queer, some simple—some proud as Lucifer . . . now, take Johann for example—" She got no further

for courage failed her. Even his name had power to baffle; so she admitted peevishly.

Helga was in a garrulous mood. Moreover, a very human vanity was aroused by this mention of Mr. Patrick's high-and-mighty daughter. The impulse was to prove that she, Helga Boen, could go him one better. She sniffed. "You said it, Lena Berg. Blood always tells. Now Johann, there's a boy could turn his nose up if he'd a mind to. Sure, why not, with a gentleman for a father, and a mother—God rest her soul—as sweet as birds in springtime!"

And that, to Lena's added chagrin, was all she learned from Helga.

ANDRE was more than willing to go for Eli on Monday. So willing, he even disdained Johann's offer to wash the buggy. Poor Prince was getting on in years but, being the first "driver" the Boen's had owned, no amount of erratic behavior dimmed his favor. So long as he didn't actually fall asleep between the shafts Helga preferred him to any other horse.

Andre, now preening before the mirror, asked: "Ma, what's this kid's name, anyway?"

Helga smiled. So! He thought to fool her, did he? As if she didn't understand what all this preening was about. "Now, Andre, that's no way to speak of a nice young lady," she reprimanded him, at the same time catching up the whisk to brush his coat properly, performing the humble service with glad heart. Satisfied at last she stepped back to feast her fond eyes upon him. "Nu, da, Andre, I tell you that little Eli will be surprised to see you."

"M-hmm — I suppose so," he answered absently, his mind elsewhere. He was thinking of the new teacher; whether he had time to drive past the schoolhouse.

Andre took a final look at himself in the cracked mirror over the washstand and, with a cheery good-bye, departed. Helga watched him from the doorway until the old buggy was lost behind the poplar bluffs that lined their bit of government road. No small thing, that, to have one's farm connect with the main highway! Then, satisfied that all was well, she returned to the problem of holiday fare.

Yes, she would make waffles; what's more, she would serve them with cream to boot! Poor Lena should enjoy herself for once. Even if Simon did his best to be cantankerous to his women when they got home, they'd have had their nice hour in her house.

Johann understood that this was no time for a mere man to clutter up the kitchen. The trace mended, he decided to do a little work on the new fence that separated his pasture from the Van Meiris land. But once outside he discovered the weather had turned terrifically hot. Too hot for strenuous labor, and since this was a time of respite—a lull twixt seasonable rushes—he flung himself down beside a coil of barb-wire, letting his beauty-loving eyes wander over the brilliant sky.

The little scudding clouds dotting the blue reminded him of Herman's sheep. He ought, perhaps, to see how the old man was faring in this burning heat.

Lord! how the sun burned into one's flesh! It was easy to drift into dreams like a child in its mother's arms. Dreams—Johann shook off the mood, leaned on an elbow and surveyed the field before him critically. Yes, it was a good crop for a first harvest; fairly high and even—not bad, he'd say!

ALL at once this lazy calm was shattered by a high, piping, child-like voice lilting away in happy song. Johann turned round in surprise and, pleased with what he saw, hoped the little singer would not discover him and cut short her carefree frolic. He supposed the young girl skipping along so gaily was the Dutch child Helga had mentioned from time to time. Indeed, as she wound her erratic course over the green field, now bursting into song, now bobbing down to pluck a stray flower or peer at something of sudden delight, she was as natural, and graceful, as the happiest kitten.

However, she was not so young as he had thought. A girl in her 'teens, little, it is true, and with hair as yellow as a canary's wing. "Little Buttercup," Helga had aptly called her. She was singing again, face uplifted, yellow braids bobbing up and down as she skipped along. Her old-fashioned dress, ridiculously full in the skirt and green as grass, billowed about her like tropical leaves around a golden flower. Johann smiled to himself thinking how pretty the suggestion would be, carried out in wood—pretty child—but what was she singing? Something vivacious, yet as Dutch as herself—

He thought she must have caught sight of him, she stopped so abruptly short distance from the fence. But no. It was a tiger lily, gorgeously orange and black, that commanded her admiration. Ach! it was so beautiful! Should she leave it, she wondered, or pick it for her own? Head on side, she debated the question. It seemed such a pity to cut short its little life—Ach! now she saw clearer—the lily was already old; it wouldn't mind, then, to go to sleep on her bosom. Johann was equally sure of it when he saw her press the flower to her little face in sudden passionate devotion before tucking it away in the folds of her queer old dress. But, it would never do to let her stumble upon him and fly away in a fright. Johann coughed loudly, and rose to his feet. The eyes she turned on him were very wide, curiously golden and a-brim with lively interest.

"Oh, Min Heer!" she cried, breaking into radiant smiles. "Such a longness up-jumping! Ach! almost it makes me a-scare."

Funny child, how her soft hair shone in the sunlight, like amber shot with gold. Something warned him that for all her childishness this little Dutch miss had her sense of dignity.

"I was afraid of that—but you see I'm a lazy fellow and hated to get up. You seem very happy—"

"Ach! why not?" Her amazement was real. "What for you should be sad on a day like this"? Quite unabashed, she climbed up the gate and perched herself on top. "What for to think sadness with such a gayness all around?" she reiterated, indicating field and sky with a wide gesture. "Ach! you should hear the grass: Swish, swish, swish, it goes round the feet and in the wet, oh, so funny. Like this, Min Heer . . ." she made a smacking sound with her pretty red lips, "and I say to myself: 'Ach, Haasji, the little grasses kiss each other dry'!"

Johann's soft laughter was surely complimentary. "Haasji?" he repeated, "what's that"?

"Ach! What is it? You shouldn't know what is it? Haasji? Me!—just me," she told him gaily. Now you—"she hurried on, mischief in her face—"Haasji knows. Ach, yes, Min Heer Johann! By the bigness, and a bad eye, I know it. Sure, yes, my papa said it."

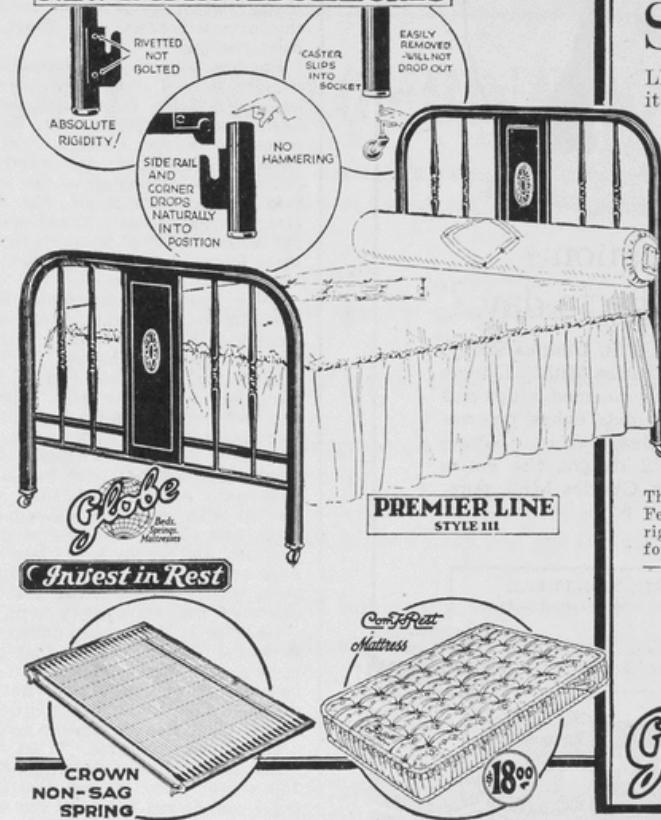
Of course they laughed at that; Haasji not a little pleased to appear so entertaining, Johann amused with her quaint mannerisms.

More often than not Johann found

Continued on page 104

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Johann Lind

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little to admire in the common run of folk. Young or old, it was always the same: their hearts were fleshy, their eyes blinded, and their ears unhearing. But this child was different; she was, somehow, the personified spirit of Nature; all gaiety and warmth on the surface; sincere as the hills at heart. Young though she was, she radiated this natural honesty as a flower exhalates perfume.

She was Nature's own little Haasji, if only she were a bit older—it would be so gratifying to unburden one's heart to a Haasji grown older. But of course she was just a child . . . yet the smile he gave her was singularly charming; a lighting-up of his whole face working such magic that little Haasji's romantic heart turned over in her bosom. Ach! but he was beautiful, that Johann Lind! Oh, what she wouldn't tell her papa—

"Now Haasji," he interrupted these complimentary thoughts, "you don't mean to tell me just walking through the grass made you happy?"

"Sure not! You should know, Min Heer, how everything sings. Birds—yes, best, maybe, but the leaves, they sing too, such pretty little singing, and the bees—ach, the noisy fellows! You should hear him — buzz bum-m-m, buzz-buzz. Ah, he sings that little bee, all right, almost he makes me a scare. And a little snake he slips away, fast, fast; and the sky he is a lake with ships on it, sailing and sailing, to the place nobody knows. Ach! I should like to get me such a pretty ship."

He nodded. He, too, had dreamed of ships and far-flung shores that only fancy knew. "Birds and bees, and sailing ships, that is fine, Haasji. But the snake — weren't you just a little bit afraid and glad to see him slip away?"

Haasji looked amazed. "That little fellow he should scare me? Neen, neen. Just a little ribbon he was, that Heer snake, and he run fast I tell you when Haasji skip by his place. Ach, you bet, a mountain he thinks is after him that little fellow."

Johann's laughter was sheer delight. "Well, I'll be darned! Believe it or not, Haasji, Van Meiris, never had I thought to hear of anyone liking a poor old snake."

"Ach, Min Heer! You're all a-muddle—Neen, I don't like him. But you should know if he's a snake he can't help it. Besides, my papa says a snake eats much rats. That's good, ain't it? For that maybe you should not hate such a poor little fellow."

Haasji assumed a very sober expression while struggling to make clear her meaning, which eager solemnity was most becoming. But Johann was not thinking of her looks; to him she was just a quaint old-world child, and if admiration colored his opinion at all it was thanks to the fearless amber-colored eyes fastened upon him so earnestly. As she talked Johann saw the shadow of troubled thought creep into them and, quick as light, give way to sparkling mischief. Her opinion stated, Haasji returned to earth.

"Ach, Min Heer!" she exclaimed, jumping down hastily, "I must run, my Mama she will be so mad. Always she says: 'Now Haasji, be quick'—ah, Min Heer Johann, you should tell me how it is always my feet start off so good and then forget'?"

There was something else troubling her. For a moment she hesitated nervously, her amber eyes dark with sudden resolve: "Min Heer!" the voice was very small. Surprised he swung around from unwinding the coil of wire—"what, still here?"

She wrinkled her nose in saucy impudence. "Sure, yes—why not? Ach,

Min Heer, you should know better, to say 'still here' to the visitor; it is very rude. But me, I shall tell my papa he is very foolish . . . The bigness, that is true, but the bad eye—neen, neen! A very nice eye you got, Min Heer Johann. Queer, maybe yes . . . like the crow, but not bad. Ach, you find it funny? Well, you should take a look at him, that Heer Crow. A deep eye he's got, I tell you. Sure, yes! Goodbye, Min Heer Lind, Haasji knows the crow—he is her friend!"

Some while later Johann caught the sound of carriage wheels, and knew that Andre was bringing Eli home.

HELGA was pleased with Eli and Eli was pleased with everything and everybody. But mixed with Helga's pleasure was a tinge of pity. Little Eli—(she who always was little Eli)—was so frail and soft-looking that to think of her toiling on a farm seemed out of the question. And Simon was no man to sanction idleness. She looked at Eli's hands, so tiny and white and blue-veined, and marvelled at the tricks of Nature. Now, how could a child like that be born to a man like Simon? Herre Gud! it was all wrong—aye, though she sinned in the saying!

But today Eli was happy, and being happy, blossomed forth in a dozen pretty graces. Naturally shy, she forgot self in the kindly atmosphere of Helga's house, and found herself talking as she had never talked before. Nay, more; in all innocence she flattened Andre; hung upon his words as if they contained all wisdom, and discovered to her own amazement she could hold his attention as she had seen other girls do on similar occasions. It was very delightful, giving her strange new courage, and strange new hope as well. She had always thought of herself as slow and stupid, but it couldn't be so, for Andre was both handsome and witty . . . A stupid girl would bore him and she didn't bore him . . .

Obedient to Helga's call, Johann entered to join the feast, and little Eli leaped into frightened silence. Johann Lind! The boy Helga had raised . . . she remembered him from childhood. She remembered how he had teased her one winter when the Boens had visited Winnipeg, and how she had crept off in a corner to cry out the hurt of it. Then, next day, when those awful alley boys had caught up her tabby, it was Johann who leaped at them like an avenging fury—that day she had made him her hero. And now they were face to face once again and all she could do was blush and stammer like a stupid goose!

Johann remembered her too, but not the cat episode—a pale little thing always on the point of tears. But there was about her a sweet pliability that must forever appeal to man since it awakens a deeper consciousness of strength. So now, he felt himself wishing he could do something to make life pleasanter for this ethereal daughter of Simon. Like Helga, his first thought was pity; she had better have stayed with her aunt, this little Eli. But if Eli's shyness made her tongue-tied, Johann's equally unmanageable pride made it impossible to voice the kindness of his nature. Instead he laughed, and Eli imagined her stupidity vexed him. In a kind of desperation she forced herself to speak.

"Do you remember my cat,—Johann?" No sooner put than she could have wept at such childish stupidity. Oh, how foolish he'd think her now!

Johann certainly had no recollection

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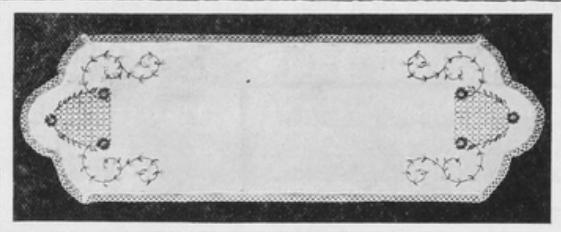
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Johann Lind

Continued on page 107

of any cat, but the painful flood of red to her delicate little face was clear enough. He shrugged. "Perhaps," he smiled. "But there are so many cats—have been so many cats—you won't expect me to go into detail."

Ah, thought Eli, she was wrong again, he was not making fun of her; he was kind and comprehending and, yes—the most handsome young man she had ever seen. Relief broke in her like a great wave, and, happy once again, she retorted gaily: "Oh, of course not. In fact I don't expect you to remember it at all, but one must say something, and you saved its life, you know."

Herman, of course, was in his usual corner enjoying what went on in his philosophic way. For the first time he entered the conversation: "Nu, da, what was it you said this morning about a picnic, Helga?"

"Ja, Da, old Herman don't forget! And such luck; little Eli can meet everybody at once." Helga smiled all over her full round face at thought of it. "It's like this: just after Papa and the boys went to the field, up rides Gunner Olsen from over Hawthorne way to say there's to be a picnic Saturday. Races and refreshments and a speech by the teacher, and afterwards a dance. Sure, Lena, we should go, and go early."

"I remember how the young things went berying at home," Herman filled in like a chorus; "that, too, was a picnic. We should go—Ja, that is well, but I was thinking of that little Dutch child. Such a bright young girl; time and again I see her working in the fields with her papa, and always singing like a lark—"

Helga's exclamation cut short his sentence. "Ja, da! You're right, Herman, she should go, that little one. Shame on me to forget her! Johann, what do you think? Ain't it best we take the wagon, then the Van Meiris can go too? I'll run over and ask them myself."

Johann had no particular leaning towards picnics; he hadn't thought of going. But he recalled the enraptured gladness of Haasji's spirited face, and decided it would be well worth while to watch her reaction at a genuine social. "There's no reason why we shouldn't go, all of us," he agreed.

"None whatever," seconded Andre, "and the wagon is a happy thought. It leaves the buggy to me. You see, Miss Eli, how the fates favor you?"

"Me?" echoed Eli in rosy confusion.

Smiling fondly, Lena laid a red knotted hand on his arm. "Sure, Andre, you come for us, and I—ja, I'll roast me a hen for the lunch, with onion stuffing. My little Eli ain't had many picnics!"

THE Van Meiris' were delighted to be invited to the picnic. Vrouw Van Meiris was very grateful to Helga for taking the trouble to give the invitation in person, and when she was gone, told Peter that even in Holland a neighbor couldn't have it done better, while Helga recounted for Herman their many excellent qualities. So bright and cheerful she'd found everything; not a speck of dust to be seen no matter how hard you tried.

When the eagerly-awaited day dawned at last Helga was further impressed with the desirability of her neighbors when she found them waiting by the section line to save the half-mile drive to their farm.

"To make the horses run for nothing is not so good, maybe," explained quiet Peter as he uncovered to greet Vrouw Boen.

Helga smiled approval as she mopped the perspiration from her tortured

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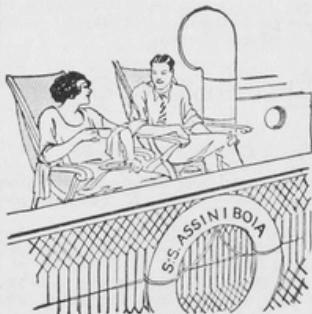
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Johann Lind

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forehead. She was miserably screwed but this wheat it's a bad business. In a close-cut bodice and heavy plaid skirt. But what was comfort in the face of fashion?

"Nu, ja, Mr. Van Meiris," she nodded commendingly, "that's a good thought; such a hot day will be hard enough on the horses." Then, catching sight of a huge basket half-hidden by Vrouw Van Meiris' voluminous skirts, Helga flung up her hands in feigned dismay. "Mrs. Van Meiris! Whatever could you put in such a big basket?"

For answer Vrouw Van Meiris handed it up, smiling broadly. "Take a smell, Huisvrouw. You should know him, maybe? Broodjes and wafels?"

Aglow with excitement and enthusiasm, Haasji hastened to explain that broodjes were buns; nice hot buns with currants in them like the bakers made in Holland and Mama had made them just as good. Sure, yes, Haasji knew; she had eaten many. In Holland, mind you, nobody baked at home. Neen, neen, never! So Mama was smart, you see.

Olle caught the sweet fragrance of those mysterious wares as he put the precious basket under the wagon seat. Sure, Vrouw Van Meiris was a smart cook—you couldn't fool him. "Now, that's fine, Missus," said he. "Already I'm hungry just to look at your basket. Here, Peter, you come with me; the missus can sit in the hay with Helga."

While these bustling preparations were going on Johann sat in moody silence, staring out over the ripening fields. Haasji watched him, curiosity and childish appeal commingled in her eyes. He was very rude, she thought, to say nothing; to notice no one. Her eyes followed his over the fields to the far horizon; gold and blue, blue and gold everywhere. Ach, he was not rude, that Heer Johann, he was just dreaming.

Quick as a kitten she jumped to the hub of the wheel. "Min Heer," her voice was like a bird's warble. "Ach, Min Heer, you should be drowned maybe in a dream? Sure, yes, it is pretty—Haasji likes to see it—what you think?"

Johann would have preferred to be alone in the driver's seat withdrawn from the chatter behind him, but to dash her eager friendliness was something he hadn't the heart to do. "I don't think," he told her, smiling through half-closed eyes, "it's too troublesome. But come along, hop up."

Vrouw Van Meiris regained her sense of propriety. "Haasji," she called, "much room here, Haasji." But Haasji was deaf.

"Min Heer," she whispered, "make a big noise with the whip, the horses should jump, maybe. Ach, yes." She sighed contentedly as the greys broke into a brisk trot. "Haasji, she likes to see. In the hay, now, it's all backward you get it."

That was a trip they recalled with delight for many a day. While the women exchanged housewifely counsel and confidences in their broken English, and Haasji and Johann dreamed their dreams, Ole and Peter pulled on their pipes, watching with keenest interest the lands on either side.

"It's too bad, Peter, you haven't put in a little crop. If it's horses you want the boys can plow a stretch come fall."

Peter Van Meiris shook his head slowly. "Oats is all right, yes; but a garden I get me first. You should see him, my garden in Holland."

"No, no, Peter. Wheat, that's what you should plant. A garden and oats—nobody gets rich like that."

Peter smiled his mild, apologetic smile, but there was stubbornness in the smile, no less. "Neen? well maybe,

Risk, risk, all the time I hear it. You get rich on wheat, maybe, or you get broke. Neen, that's no good. Better to have a little every year on the oats than one year much on wheat and another year nothing."

The picnic grounds, just north of Hawthorne depot, was seething with holiday makers when the Boen party arrived. Everything was stir and laughter and the shouts of happy children; with the delightful aroma of steaming coffee and fried chicken permeating the air and tormenting the appetite.

Boys and girls ran about chattering like monkeys, their eyes bright as buttons and their voices shrill as reed whistles. It was all so very wonderful to these backwoods children, grown old in toil while still in their early teens. Tomorrow they might be up at dawn to work beyond their strength but today was a glorious adventure. Yes, today they might fold away despotic responsibility, slipping into the happy thing childhood ought to be. How well they succeeded, shouts and shrieks of carefree laughter testified.

The poor work-ridden mothers fared less bravely. They, too, did their best to don a holiday smile, but even here they were not free. Babies in arms or toddlers, more troublesome still, absorbed the most of them. And, as one red-faced mother would complain to another, at home they were not so bad, but a-visiting—well, it just beat patience how little Mary and Johnny could cut up!

It was not very long until the Boens and the Van Meiris' were the centre of a friendly group of Scandinavians. And that was as it should be. "A picnic, now, what good is it unless you make it a party?" Helga demanded of a short, very blond Swedish lady who, out of shyness, hesitated to join the group.

Vrouw Van Meiris was an instantaneous success. So nice and friendly said the ladies, one might have thought she were a Scandinavian. More could not be said. Vrouw Van Meiris was sublimely happy for the first time since coming to Canada. She felt at home. These smiling women round her were simple housewives like herself; full of human goodness, yet not immune to sundry petty cares—honest huisvrouws like the old friends back in Holland. Ach, yes, Vrouw Van Meiris thought, how very much they were alike, these new friends and the old.

Haasji sat beside her mother, all at once fearfully shy and ill-at-ease. She wanted to join the girls of her age in the strange games they were playing, but how to go about it was the trouble. Then, too, she saw how they eyed her from time to time as if she were a curiosity and not a girl like themselves, eager for fun and lonely for companionship. The women were taken up with preparing dinner; the men deep in agricultural speculations. Haasji might hug her misery unobserved for all of them. Then it was that Andre drove up with Eli and her mother.

To Haasji, Eli was a vision from paradise. Truth to tell, she looked for all the world like the innocent angels one sees on Christmas cards. Her pale, fragile prettiness, was brought out to best advantage by the blue silk frock Aunt Sara had given her. It matched the blue of her eyes and met like a rim of sky, the cloud whiteness of her soft young throat. Ach, such a sweet girl Haasja had never seen, or ever expected to see again. But alas for her worship! Hard on the heels of her warm admiration came the cruel suspicion that her own clothes were

Continued on page 108



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Johann Lind

Continued from page 107

dreadfully deficient. And the more she hated her own little dress the less she felt inclined to thaw to Eli's friendly overtures.

But Eli had a sweet smile, and in the end Haasji succumbed. "Let's go and join the girls," she suggested, "they're going to form an Ellin ring."

In the general excitement no one seemed to notice what became of Johann. But with the all-important meal ready, Helga suddenly thought of him. Nu, da, there was a brew for you! Where had he gone, the sly one? She grew quite agitated about it. Banqueting folks was a delight to her; the mere thought of Johann's missing her spiced cream-cake sent chills up her back. But Johann arrived at the tail end of time, as was his habit. Just as the company was sitting down round the groaning table Helga saw him coming from the poplars near the town. She pretended to be furious. What had he meant by keeping them waiting? Didn't he know that coffee spoiled standing around?

"That being so, suppose you give me the pot and let me pour it at once," was his laughing rejoinder.

"Ja, quick! bring the coffee," Ole roared hospitably. "Sure, Mama, make him work for punishment; and look, would you, how dry everyone is."

While they were eating a smart gig drove past, gleaming paint and glittered in shiny harness.

"Nu, ja," Ole growled, "that old Patrick gets smarter every day. You bet! and see what it got him, Mama, a new buggy and a fine driver."

Helga's kind face darkened. "Sure! But how did he get it, I ask you?"

"My, what a pale-looking girl!" one of the ladies hastened to exclaim, suspecting that unpleasantries hovered near. "Is it his daughter, Mrs. Boen?"

Helga sniffed. "Sure not. Would he have a daughter, that skinflint? No, Mrs. Ness, four sons he has, all working the land for nothing. That fine young lady—" Helga's voice was as scornful as she could make it "—is his niece and the new teacher. Her pa's the doctor at Hawthorne."

"They say his wife ran away," another lady added to the general information, "but, of course, no one dares ask him."

"Well, she may be all right to teach kids, but she don't look much for fettle." Mr. Ness spoke up, voicing the general male opinion.

But young Haasji saw Johann's eyes following the smart vehicle and, child though she was, surmised that neither paint nor fancy harness nor prancing driver had inspired the sudden glow in his dark eyes. No, Haasji knew it was the pale, slender girl, sitting so stiff and straight beside her uncle was the cause of it. And for the second time this day Haasji grew most miserable. Ach, yes, she saw now what was wrong with her. She was like a little pig—allamachter, yes, she was fat!

THE town hall was an animated human beehive by eight o'clock. Children of all ages scurried up and down the aisles, taking advantage of the last moments of freedom to express that exuberance which every mother secretly considers her especial cross in life. Herre Gud! one would think the little scamps had had enough of mischief; had worn themselves out by now. But no, to all appearances the children were just nicely started. Very much frayed in spirit and worn in bodies the good ladies resigned themselves to the inevitable. Let the young imps do what they would.

Continued on page 109



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Johann Lind

Continued from page 108

The menfolk had less difficulty in ignoring the whole thing. The more roisterous his particular progeny, the more set the father's stare; the more determined his grip upon the briar, that was all.

Eli sat beside Andre, her flower face wreathed in smiles, her blue eyes sparkling with innocent pleasure. Andre was such a boy for compliments. It made her quite dizzy, the pretty things he said. She had never heard such praise before. That, perhaps, was the reason its effect sank deeper; lingered longer. Sober little Eli didn't know that laughter has a beneficent way of dispelling sentimentality and seriousness.

From across the hall Helga and Lena watched their two children, a sweet new hope in their hearts; happiness in their eyes. "A pretty little thing, my Eli," Lena offered, nodding knowingly. "A good wife she'll make, too."

Helga smiled. "Now Andre, he's a fine boy, Lena—never doubt it."

A few benches away Vrouw Van Meiris sat with Haasji, happy and deeply grateful for a generous day. Ach, yes, she had discovered so many surprising things. People were everywhere much alike; what pleased one pleased another; what one hoped for the other dreamed to possess. Yes, all, all, alike and all so very nice—even in Canada!

At last, when a startling hush had fallen upon the stuffy hall, the chairman of the evening announced the first item on the programme: a speech on the last Chinese insurrection. He apologized profusely for having forgotten just when it had taken place but the speaker, a visiting clergyman from Winnipeg, would soon put that right.

The visiting cleric, an anemic looking gentleman, proved himself the possessor of an amazingly deep and forceful voice. Helga was certain, and Lena agreed with her, that had the Reverend gentleman been in China no insurrection could have come to pass.

During this lengthy speech Johann stood near the doorway, his dark face inscrutable, unsmiling. But when the orator retired amidst ringing applause and admiring glances, he came and sat down by Vrouw Van Meiris. Young Haasji wished she dared change places with her. There was so much she'd like to ask Min Heer. So much she didn't understand he could interpret truthfully. But of course she must sit still. Followed now a musical number, "Bells of Dawn," played by the druggist's daughter, and a solo by Alex Wangen, the young man who worked in the general store.

Then came the much-talked-of address by Sheila Patrick. Tall and slender, straight as a sapling, she faced her audience confidently; so much dust had affected her no less. Her voice was clear and cold, and her orderly sentences dropped from her shapely lips with the steady determined drip of a leaking faucet. Between her and the curious, friendly people gathered to hear her lay a great gulf fixed; to Sheila the sea of their ignorance and inferiority; to them the pardonable arrogance of youth. But she was there to teach them, and they were there to hear.

This cold, self-possessed young lady chose for her subject the immortal Joan of Arc. In her hands the impassioned peasant maid became an intellectual monstrosity, reading too surely the evils of her age and rectifying these by aid of heavenly voices. But Sheila's audience happily was more concerned with the abilities of the new teacher

Continued on page 110

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MUSIC

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Johann Lind

Continued from page 109

than the interpretation of Joan's acts and character. Joan was beyond their comprehension (as a saint should be to merit worship) but Sheila was a common mortal like themselves. Well, she was smart, that they admitted; smart enough to teach their children. That verdict reached, a mellowing wave of cheerful tolerance passed over the whole assembly. They were ready to doze through all she said, their perky young teacher, and ready to uphold her authority.

But, truth to tell, only one listener followed Sheila's clear, crisp utterance as though it were sheer music. Throughout her speech Johann's eyes never left her and everything about her satisfied him. From her sleek brown hair to her slippers feet she symbolized everything he secretly desired: poise, beauty, charm. All those things that were an hereditary due and which an ironical destiny had denied him.

When she finished, the loud applause shocked him. He wanted to cry aloud that this was no time to stamp clumsy feet and pound raw-boned fists together. It was a solemn occasion. But Sheila showed no offence at their boisterous approval. She smiled most amiably instead and, quite satisfied with herself, passed down the aisle, leaving behind a delicate odor of wood-violets. To Johann this seemed a further revelation of innate delicacy. She walked in beauty—all her loveliness her own.

The fiddles shrieked in mad ecstasy; the milling feet made music all their own. Recklessness was in it and gay abandon and the wild desire to escape

from the enslaving monotony if only for a night.

"That Johann Lind sure can dance! By all the saints, it reminds me of my youth," shouted old Patrick.

Sheila had never met Johann but she knew well enough to whom the flattering remarks were addressed. There could be but one Johann Lind. Not only his unconscious grace but that peculiar indefinable magnetism—something that drew the eyes and held them—singled him out from the commonplace crowd. Whether dancing or no, Johann was the subject of more than one conjecture.

Sheila had been watching him, long before her uncle spoke, standing apart cynical, amused, like an actor in the wings.

She was not averse to meeting that puzzling young man; nor was her pleasure dampened when she found herself whirling away in a waltz with him. "You dance very well," she said with amiable condescension.

"And you, not too badly," was his shocking reply.

For a moment she considered deserting him, but a bold little bundle of skirts waved at him as they swept past the coffee stand, and she changed her mind.

Later, catching Eli smiling at him, Sheila decided to lead him away into the charming safety of a starlit night. Under the stars Miss Patrick spoke little of resignation and much of certain Portuguese sonnets.

(To be continued next month.)

Greatest Cannon Collection

Continued from page 15

"Under the powerful reign of the Sultan, son of Sultan Selim. God protects power. Made by order of all powerful Enin Djajieuheah Pasha. Beginning of the month of Ramazan 985 (April, 1587). Made by Djafer, instructor at Algeria."

The finest bronze specimen comes from Wurtemberg, cast in the 16th century, and is called the "Snake." The reptile, remarkably life-like in design, is coiled around the barrel of the cannon, with its head resting on the top near the mouth. The barrel is octagonal with on each side a human figure molded in reliefs. The breech is finished like a jewel.

Faced with such an array of 200 historic artillery, dating from the long ago until now, every one of which has a long story of its own, the combined relating of which requiring three fat volumes, the writer of this brief review must of necessity select a few of the

most noteworthy cannon of various periods for photographing and description.

Little did those ancient Crusaders, and jolly Henri IV., dream that one day in 1927 the great guns of their different ages would line the galleries of a vast building erected by a mightier warrior by far than they, Napoleon, for his wounded men that their weapons, deemed of such dread destructiveness in their day, would be as poppies when compared with the artillery of modern times.

Here the collection stands at last complete for all the world to see the evolution of ordnance not in France alone but across the entire face of the globe.

It is a story indeed worthy of three fat volumes to give the pictures and the history of all the varied deadly engines of warfare that man has used from the long ago until now.



Gallery of the Museum of the Invalides, Paris, where has just been placed the greatest varied collection of cannon in the world

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