

THE END OF THE ROAD.

BY WILLIAM HERVEY WOODS.

There was never a voice proclaimed the place,
There was never a guard around it,
Just a corner turned in the Lane of Life,
And, ere I could marvel, I found it—
A wicket-gate in a mouldering wall
With a wild vine over it springing,
And a cowed shape on the low stone seat
By the wicket sitting and singing.
"Smart men of Araby, Pilgrim and Pala-
din,
Join in the goodly array—
Knights of Pantagenet, horsemen of Sal-
adin—
All the world crowding the way."

In wonder I turned, and over the road
I had trodden, a mist was stooping,
And in it was thunder of viewless hoofs,
Tumultuous myriads, trooping
To that one portal: The ways of the world
From afar and afar came to it,
And the gatekeeper sang as, one by one,
He ushered the travelers through it.
"Hither rode Lancelot, parted from
Guinevere—
Princes and Beggars bold—
Some like a Charlemagne, riding in min-
iver,
Some in their gaberdines old."

Then opened the gate, and lilies I saw
In the cool grass, nodding and waving,
A murmur of bees was borne on the breeze,
A tinkle of rivulets laving
Velvety banks where the riders reclined
Asleep in the untroubled weather—
The beggar and king, the sage and the
knave.
"Light, light, ye gentlemen, cease from
your wandering,
Won is the ultimate quest,
Sages from counseling, fools from your
maundering.
Rest ye well. Silence is best."

But when I would enter, that keeper gray
With a skeleton finger staved me.
"Not yet," he whispered—His finger was
cold,
And the look of his eye affrayed me—
"Twas fancy untimely showed thee the
gate."
(She only the future may borrow).
Go, now; the feet of the galloping hours
Shall bring thee again—and to-morrow."
"Rest ye now soberly, striving is done for
you,
Finished the chase and fight—
If ye were winners or losers is one for you,
Rode ye for wrong or for right."
—Youth's Companion.



OF the thousands of Norwe-
gians and Swedes set upon
the prairies of Dakota twenty
years ago, comparatively few
read or understood English. It was
surprising, though, how quickly they
adjusted themselves to their new en-
vironment. While the women worked
in the prairie fields with the men, while
all were tillers of the soil and carriers
of burdens, they yet found time to
master much of the new tongue, to
open American schools and to pur-
chase American books and newspapers.
When the first hard winter came many
of the men and women willingly went
to school on such days as the blizzards
permitted and pored over spelling
books and arithmetic with the chil-
dren. A brave people were these de-
scendants of the Vikings. They were
pillaged by speculators on one side
and fought by the elements on the
other, but the thought of surrender
never entered their minds and they
conquered both adventurers and storms
in the end.

In the Hay Meadows school district
was a Norwegian family by the name
of Torgeson. The mother, Anna, was
perhaps twenty-two or twenty-three
years old. The father was thirty. The
three children were toddlers, too young
for school and books. Nevertheless
when winter school opened Anna Tor-
geson, with one child at her breast and
two at her skirts, forced her way

broke his vows and spoke in English
until the title to his land was clear.
But being conquered in this fashion
angered him. He resorted frequently
to strong drink, and the entreaties of
his wife and his friends could not keep
him from it.

The Hay Meadows district was a
temperance community. The settlers
from the distant lands of the North
were strongly religious, hard workers,
moderate in all habits, kindly to all
who met them. That Torgeson should
be the only one among them to fail
to rightly accept the new life in the
Republic pained them. They earnestly
labored with him, but he would not
listen. When Anna Torgeson made
known her desire to attend the district
school he swore loudly and at first
said she should not go. Later he an-
swered to her pleadings:

"Go if you will, but you put some-
thing between us two you will never
get over. I am as my fathers were.
If you would be different, all right.
But it will go hard with both of us
later."

Anna Torgeson was straight of limb
and blue of eyes. She was beautiful
when Torgeson made her his bride.
Motherhood had added to her charms.
She had mind, too—quick-witted intel-
ligence, a rare aptitude for knowing
the best and clinging to it. For her
children's sake she believed that she
ought to attend the district school.



GOING TO THE SCHOOL.

across the prairie to the sod school-
house and asked for admission. Tor-
geson himself did not go with her. He
was one of the few who opposed any
effort to change the order of things
that had prevailed in the home land.
He proposed to be a Norseman to the
last of his days. He would speak in
no tongue but his own. He would go
to no church but the "kirk," and that
not existing on the prairies he would
do without worship.

He wore his peaked hat, his oiled
coat, his skin trousers and avoided his
American neighbors except as he was
forced to trade with them. Although
he soon understood a few words of
English when a land office collector
came for the last payment on his final
proof notice he would speak to him
only in the Norse tongue. Then the
strong arm of the Government reached
out and Torgeson was frightened. He

When Torgeson finally gave his con-
sent she wound her arms about his
neck and kissed him long, but Tor-
geson pushed her away and growled.
He would not surrender. He came to
America but for gain; when that was
had, he would return to his folkland,
unchanged.

All through November and Decem-
ber of that dreary winter Anna Tor-
geson made her way to the schoolhouse
and worked for mastery of the Eng-
lish tongue. Torgeson stayed at the
farm, minding the cattle and their
fodder, or brooding over his pipe and
cups. That his wife should not side
with him was the bitterest thing he
had to endure. He was not a bad
man—only a cruelly obstinate one, and
having started on the wrong path, he
would not turn back and find the right
one. He might have made his wife's

winter a bright one. He might have
taken out the sledge and driven her
and the children the short mile to the
schoolhouse, but he would not. No
matter how deep the snow and fierce
the winds he let them go alone, un-
aided, unless neighbors gave them a
helping hand.

When January, the worst month
of the season, came, he made no effort
to assist them. So wide was the gulf
between husband and wife now that
he even let the New Year's Day pass
without the home celebration they had
never missed before. Even that night
when Anna Torgeson came to where
he brooded in his chair, and, weeping,
begged him to be the man of their first
days, he pushed her from him and
answered:

"I am not of yours. I have not
changed. It is you that has changed.
Let me be."

Anna Torgeson went on with the
school, praying every night to her God
that her husband might yet awaken
and be one with her again. In the
school she was the most apt pupil.
She was the first to learn to write
English, and the first to be able to spell
English rightly. Her neighbors, many
of whom had known her before her
marriage, rejoiced over her progress.

"Torgeson will be proud of his wife
yet," they said.

But Torgeson remained bitterly
against her. Only the babies gave
her love and comfort.

A January day came when the sun
rose warm over the snow-covered
prairies and in the air there was a
false whisper of spring. The Hay
Meadows folk on their way to the
school shook their heads. They had
learned that this beauty of nature, at
such a time, meant coming terror of
blinding sleet and deathly cold. All
through the morning the sunshine
flooded the interior of the schoolhouse
and the water dripped from the snow-
covered sod eaves, but the pupils with-
in did not trust the warmth. At noon
they ate their lunches by the open
door, but none failed to notice the
growing grayness of the sky in the
north and the change in the sweep of
the wind.

When school closed a frightful bliz-
zard was upon them. The thermom-
eter had fallen to far below zero and
the air was filled with sleet that cut
the skin like chopped glass. The twelve
pupils of the school looked at each
other in the growing darkness. Every
woman present had a man to guide
her home but Anna Torgeson. Every
child had a man protector but the chil-
dren of Anna Torgeson.

"The rest of you will go on," said
Anna Torgeson. "There is some fuel
here. I and my children will stay un-
til this is over."

Some offered to guide her home be-
fore they went their own way, but she
said the storm was growing worse
every minute, and they must hasten
for their own safety. They scraped
together such food as they had left
from noon and gave it to her. It was
not much for four mouths, but for the
baby there was Anna Torgeson's
breast. Just as the others prepared to
leave, Anna Torgeson called to one:
"Stay a moment. Torgeson will
worry. I will send a note. Get it to
him somehow when you can that he
may know I am safe."

And she wrote in English:
"Dear Husband: I am safe in the
school with the babies. Don't worry
about me. ANNIE TORGESON."

Late that afternoon, with the most
awful storm he had ever known howl-
ing about his home, Torgeson got that
note, and the beaver did not dare leave
him for his life, so fierce was the blast.
"I can't read it," grumbled Torgeson.

So the other read it to him, and
then Torgeson crumpled it in his hand
and said:

"Let her stay there. She cares more
for the school than for me."

He sat before his good fire hour after
hour, and once and awhile when he
thought he was unobserved he would
glance at the writing of the note he
could not read. At midnight he could
stand it no longer. He was Torgeson,
the obstinate, but his wife and babies
were over in that schoolhouse without
much fuel or food. He took with him
the man who had brought the note, and
they brought the horses out of the
stable and they fought as men never
fought before against snow and cold,
and they gained the school, a mile
away, in two hours, and Torgeson
beat open the door and the blast came
with him, but the anger and the old
pain had gone from him forever.

Bending over the stove to keep her-
self and babies alive, Anna Torgeson
heard his voice, knew by its note that
out of the horror he had struggled
with to reach her new love and hope
had come, and she leaped to him and
was caught in his arms, never to be
put from him again.—H. I. Cleveland,
in the Chicago Record-Herald.

Fish of Other Days.

The discovery in the sands of Jerl-
anage, at Woking, England, of well-
preserved examples of the teeth of pre-
historic sharks and the remains of
other fish, is announced in Nature.
The find is regarded as an unusually
interesting one, and the material has
been turned over to the experts of the
British Museum for examination.



Convict Labor on Roads.

THE suggestion which was
some time ago made in these
columns that able bodied in-
mates of prisons and peniten-
taries be set at work building im-
proved roads seems at last to be acted
upon to a considerable extent, and with
gratifying results. The convicts in
the State prisons are as a rule other-
wise employed, but those in charge of
the penitentiaries have not been able
to provide work in prison shops for the
prisoners under their control, and so
have sought it outside. In eight or
more counties of this State the peni-
tentiary prisoners are employed either
at road building or at crushing stone
for road building. It is not known that
any bad effects have been experienced
from the undertaking, while the good
effects are numerous and obvious.
Among the latter these are conspicu-
ous: The prisoners have the physical
and moral benefit of healthful labor
in the open air; the prisoners are made
to pay their way instead of being a
heavy charge upon the community; the
construction of good roads is promoted
and the cost of them is decreased; and
the number of prisoners is diminished,
for tramps and other "sons of rest"
avoid counties where committal to the
penitentiary means stone breaking and
road building. It may be added that
one of the chief objections to the
system—the offensive parading of con-
victs in the public view—has been
found groundless, for no one would
take the penitentiary prisoners work-
ing on the roads to be other than ordi-
nary laborers.

There is reason to believe that this
system might profitably and properly
be extended throughout the State, and
be applied to the inmates of State pris-
ons as well as of penitentiaries—when
other work fails. The prisoners might
also be employed at repairing and
maintaining the roads after they are
built. Most of the prisoners at Sing
Sing are now at work, but it is not
long since that most of them were
idle and were seriously suffering, mor-
ally and physically, from enforced
idleness. And yet within a few hours'
drive of Ossining are hundreds of
miles of road that are in their badness
a reproach to the community and a
cause of vexation and of actual pecu-
niary loss to all who are compelled to
use them. We do not mean, of course,
that counties and towns are to wait
until prisoners can be secured to build
good roads. But whenever and wher-
ever able bodied prisoners are idle the
reproach of bad roads is aggravated
twofold. All roads should be made
and kept good, and all prisoners who
are able to work should be kept at
healthful and profitable work. These
are two rules which should be con-
stantly observed, and between which
an intimate relationship is to be found.
—New York Tribune.

Benefit For Road Taxes.

Those who objected to the high taxes
for road improvement last spring may
find themselves more heavily taxed
with bad roads than if compelled to
pay cash to the collector. In some por-
tions of the State farmers are almost
blockaded when heavy snows fall or
the frost is leaving the ground. More
benefit is derived from road taxes than
from any other sums expended in the
community.—Philadelphia Record.

An Example of the Benefits.

An example of the benefits of good
roads to a country town is well set
forth by General E. G. Harrison, of
the Road Inquiry Office, Department
of Agriculture. He found that good
roads made Morristown, a little New
Jersey village, a centre of culture and
sociability because the people for
miles around, finding travel on the
highways easy and comfortable,
sought relaxation and improvement
and drove into the town to find them.
And still better, the good roads gave
a great impetus to free rural postal
delivery. He says:

In that section more than double the
number of miles were covered by car-
rier than on common roads, and now
these mails are delivered from house
to house at less expense than when
the mail was carried under the star
route system from village to village,
and left at the store or postoffice; a
saving of \$800 on those roads. I was
interested in getting the result of that
free rural delivery, and here it is. I
will give it to you in round numbers,
so you can remember it. It was es-
tablished and went in force in July,
1898; for the month of July a little
short of 1500 pieces were carried. In
the month of December of that year
2300 were carried. Now, take the
same months in the year 1899. In
July there were 3500, and in Decem-
ber, 8000 pieces carried, and a little
over. Now, you see, there is some
improvement there. That might be
on lines of business, but it is more
likely that it stirred up social interest

and letter writing, which all tends to
develop the country. Now, here is a
further result. You know the city de-
livery is by rules of the Postoffice De-
partment only put in cities, and it is
established where the city's popula-
tion is 10,000, or where the annual
receipts of the postoffice are \$10,000
and over. The result of this is that
now Morristown, N. J., has a city de-
livery, because the receipts have come
up to the required \$10,000. These are
some of the results of the system of
good roads.—New York Tribune.

A Great Work Undone.

No greater work remains undone in
this country than the improvement of
country roads.

TROUBLE WITH THE CASHIER.

Lunchrooms Feeding Thousands Find It
Hard to Balance Up.

One of the most difficult positions to
fill in the big retail establishments
where automatic cash registers are in
use is that of cashier. The question is
not so much one of honesty, as of ability
to perform the work day by day
without too great a margin of error.

None has found so great difficulty
in this connection as the owners of big
quick lunch establishments, where
"change" has to be made quickly at
the rush hours of noon, and when
but little time is allowed the cashier
to check receipts with the figures
marked up on the register.

The cashier at one of the largest
downtown places was recently dis-
charged simply because she was often
"off" in her change; that is, the cash
register and the amount turned in at
night did not tally. It mattered little
to the company when there was a
shortage, for, according to agreement,
the cashier made it up from her salary.
On many occasions there was even
overcash above the amount recorded.
The young woman turned in this over-
cash faithfully; the company dis-
charged her for having any overcash
at all.

When the young woman was dis-
charged, it may be noted incidentally,
she had become a great favorite with
the customers, and when it was learned
that they were to see her no more
behind the cashier's desk, some one
started a petition, which was signed
by over 600 names and turned in to
the management. The management
decided to give the young woman an-
other chance if she would come and
apply for the position, which she de-
clined to do.

Another cashier was taken on in her
place and lasted exactly four days.
Another girl succeeded. She lasted
two days. Still another came and
lasted four days. In all eight girls
were tried out behind the marble desk,
and then the company was no better
off than at first. Days came when
there were shortages to be taken out
of the young women's pockets, and
others when they honestly turned in
what was over and above the amount
on the cash register. But the shortage
and the overcash continued, and the
company has decided to give up ex-
periments and charge the difficulty
not to the incompetence of the cashiers
but the difficulty of filling the position
without mistakes.

The trouble is said to be that the
2500 or 3000 changes made during
the day are not, as in dry goods stores,
or other concerns, more or less scat-
tered throughout a day, but are all
crowded into an hour or so. The rate
at which one girl makes change during
that one hour is at the rate of 12,000 in
a day of nine hours.—New York Times.

Damage Done by a Horse's Hoofs.

A Boston automobile enthusiast with
a penchant for figures has calculated
that a sharp-shod horse pulverizes
twenty-four pounds of road material
on a macadamized highway for each
mile traveled. He arrived at this re-
sult, says Automobile Topics, by care-
fully collecting, with the aid of an en-
velope and a fine brush, all of the ma-
terial loosened by two of the equine's
hoof-beats. This performance he re-
peated in widely separated sections
of the cultured city, and collected the
material disengaged from the road sur-
face by six hoof-beats, and which is
usually blown away in the form of
dust. On weighing this material he
found that he had .0366 pounds, or
.0061 pounds per hoof-beat. Multi-
plying this by 1090 steps per mile for
each foot—or 4000 steps in all—he
found that it totaled twenty-four
pounds. A rubber-tired automobile, he
says, makes practically no impression
on the roadway. From which he con-
cludes that horses and steel-tired vehi-
cles are the sworn enemies of the auto-
mobile so far as good roads are con-
cerned. Some kind of a law to prevent
the rapid deterioration of roads under
steel hoofs and narrow steel tires
should, he thinks, be enacted at once—
the sooner the better.

The Water in Wood.

Chemists have come to the conclu-
sion that forty-five per cent. of water
is present in the composition of green
wood. Even when the lumber is sea-
soned, they hold that it is impossible
to drive out all the water, ten per cent.
of which remains even in highly sea-
soned wood.

Cuban railroads are compelled by
their charters to carry mails free