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 moldering wall
With a wild vine over it springing,
And a cowled shape on the low stone seat
By the wicket sitting and singing.
"Smart men of Araby, Pilgrim and Paladin,
Join in the goodly array—
Knights of Plantagenet, horsemen of Saladin—
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 anear came to it,
And the gatekeeper sang as, one by one,
He ushered the travelers through it.
"Hither rode Launcelot, parted from Guinever—
Princes and Beggarmen bold—
Some like a Charlemagne, riding in miniver,
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 stayed 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 flight—
If ye were winners or losers is one for you,
Rode ye for wrong or for right."

—Youth's Companion.

OF the thousands of Norwegians 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 environment. 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 purchase 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 children. A brave people were these descendants 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.

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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 Torgeson, with one child at her breast and two at her skirts, forced her way across the prairie to the sod schoolhouse and asked for admission. Torgeson 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 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.

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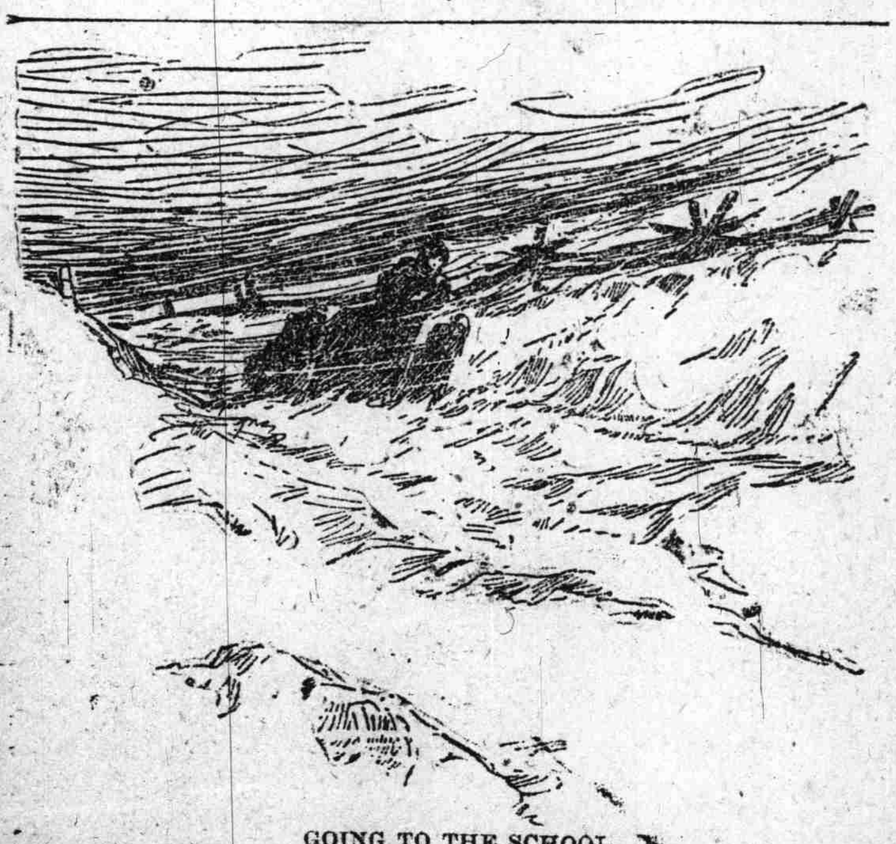
The Hay Meadows district was a temperance community. The settlers from the distant lands of the North were strongly religious, hard workers, moderate in all habits, kindly to all who met them. That Torgeson should be the only one among them to fail to rightly accept the new life in the Republic pained 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 answered to her pleadings:

"Go if you will, but you put something 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 intelligence, 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.

When Torgeson finally gave his consent she wound her arms about his neck and kissed him long, but Torgeson 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.

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All through November and December of that dreary winter Anna Torgeson made her way to the schoolhouse and worked for mastery of the English 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, unaided, 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.

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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 within 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 blizzard was upon them. The thermometer 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 children of Anna Torgeson.

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

Some offered to guide her home before 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."

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Late that afternoon, with the most awful storm he had ever known howling about his home, Torgeson got that note, and the bearer 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 herself 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 Jertianyage, at Woking, England, of well-preserved examples of the teeth of prehistoric 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.

CURIOSITIES IN LAW BOOKS.

Case Was Reversed Because of Voice Inflection of the Judge.

"Law books are full of curious decisions," said a member of the legal profession, "and frequently the higher courts have reversed cases on the most peculiar grounds imaginable. But I recall one case which is probably more peculiar than any other case which one may find among the many reports which have accumulated since the earliest report was handed down. As strange as it may seem, the ground upon which the Supreme Court reversed the finding of the lower court was found in an exception which had been taken to the intonation of the voice of the trial judge. It was in a suit for damages against a railroad corporation. Action had been brought against the company by a former employe who had been discharged and blacklisted by employers during a difference between the corporation and members of the Switchers' Union. Defamation of character and loss on account of being out of employment, exemplary considerations and other grounds were assigned in the declaration filed in the case. The trial came on and the evidence tended to show that the man had been discharged and blacklisted without reason, and that he had sustained positive damage on account of these things.

"But when the time came for the judge to charge the jury and to give the jurors the law from the books, as the saying goes, the interesting part of the yarn began to unfold. The judge was a deep-toned, deep-lunged fellow, and when he bellowed in earnest it would sound like a peal of thunder from Mammoth Cave. But when he made an effort to soften and modulate his voice he could make it as soft and as gentle as an angel's whisperings. This is exactly what he did, according to the attorneys for the plaintiff. While charging the law which affected the rights of the plaintiff, his tone was mild, meek, scarcely audible. 'But, gentlemen of the jury,' he stormed out with thundering emphasis, 'if on the other hand, you find so and so to be the case, you will return a verdict in accordance with your sworn duty for the defendant.' Emphasis settled that case. But the attorneys had been sharp enough to note an exception to the way in which his honor charged the law, with particular reference to the intonation of his voice. The motion for a new trial was made on the exceptions noted, the case appealed and the Supreme Court finally took the matter up. The attorneys explained the difficulties in the way of giving the judges an adequate idea of the effect of the trial judge's voice on the jury, but they gave a fair idea of it by saying that the law for the plaintiff 'was charged in nonpareil, while the law respecting the rights of the defendant company was handed down in bold-face box-car letters. The Supreme Court reversed the finding of the lower court, the case was remanded for trial again, and damages were finally assessed against the corporation."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Domestic Ice Machines.

Periodically the question is asked why there is nothing available in the shape of a small ice or refrigerating machine for domestic use. That such a machine is in wide demand and would meet with a ready sale is generally admitted, so that to many it seemed all the more curious, no doubt, that commercial enterprise did not long ago undertake to solve the problem. The whole question, however, may be answered by the statement that no better method of refrigeration has yet been found than the use of ammonia or a similar system, which involves the use of certain pressures and a certain number of elements in the cycle, such as compression, expansion and condensation, regardless of whether the plant is to turn out a fraction of a ton or a hundred tons. The handling of the refrigerating cycle and the safe manipulation of pressure requires skill—in fact, a skill somewhat above the average, and which cannot be expected from ordinary domestics. It, therefore, seems that the facts as they stand at present preclude the possibility of small domestic ice or refrigerating plants, and will so continue until some system may be devised differing widely from those now in use.—Cassier's Magazine.

Don't Get Rich, "Papa."

The children of a certain family, during its prosperity, were left in the nursery in charge of servants. When adversity came, the servants were discharged and the parents lived with the little ones. One evening, when the father had returned home after a day of anxiety and business worry, his little girl clambered on his knee, and, twining her arms around his neck, said:

"Papa, don't get rich again. You did not come into the nursery when you were rich, but now we can come around you, and get on your knees and kiss you. Don't get rich again, papa."

A man whose wealth keeps him from his family, sleep, healthy recreation, or the time to enjoy the legitimate pleasures of life, is managed by money.—Success.

DAD'S WAYS.

Just because he says, "God bless 'em,
They were made to make a noise!"
People say that dad's peculiar
In his bringing up of boys.
"They don't understand boy nature,
That's the trouble!"—dad, says he.
"Reckon that they've quite forgotten
All about the used-to-be.

"When my boys break loose and holler,
I break loose and holler, too,
Just to show they do no different
From the way we used to do.
When they want to go a-swimming,
I find time to go along;
Show 'em how to dive and side-stroke,
What is right and what is wrong.

"Take 'em fishing and out hunting,
Join 'em in a game of ball,
Teach 'em how to find the muskrat
And to know the plover's call.
Laugh at all their trifling mishaps,
Let them laugh in turn at me;
Take their 'dares'—from jumping fences
Round to shinning up a tree.

"So we're jolly boon companions,
Best of chums—my boys and me.
Bond between us can't be broken;
Triple-woven!"—dad, says he.
"Better lead a boy than drive him;
It's by far the better plan.
Then you need not fear the future
When he grows to be a man."

—T. W. Burgess.

Cholly—"I think I may change my mind." Miss Marbleheart (earnestly)—"I would if I were you."—Judge.

"What is a paramount issue?" "It the particular issue that a speaker finds it easiest to discuss."—Chicago Post.

They say that time is money. So
To luxury I turn
And count my riches here below,
For I have time to burn.

—Washington Star.

"Is the storekeeper honest?" "Honest! Well, rather! Why, he'll let you open either end of an apple barrel before purchasing."—Chicago Post.

Lady Sneerwell—"Have your daughters accomplished much in music?" Unfortunate Father — "Yes—the tenants below have moved."—Punch.

"No wife by any chance could be
As pleasant as a book to me,"
The bachelor said.
"A book once read
Is easily shut up, you see."

—Philadelphia Record.

"You'd better see to Johnny, dear," said the wife; "I think he's chipping off a piece of your cork leg to make a stopper for the molasses barrel—bless his cute little soul!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Mrs. Wederly — "John, aren't you ever going to get up and light the fire?" Wederly — "My dear, I don't mind hearing you talk, but I draw the line at these incendiary speeches."—Chicago News.

"Oo! Oo!" exclaimed Johnny on his first visit to church, "what's that?" "Sh," said his mamma, "that's the organ." "My! Is that an organ? There must be an awful big monkey that goes with that."—Philadelphia Press.

'Tis a saying trite and true
That pride goes before a fall;
'Tis easy quite to trip a man
Who thinks he knows it all.

—Chicago News.

Miss Touriste — "You have some strong and rugged types of manhood out in this Western country, don't you?" Stage Driver—"Yaas, miss, we hev men out here thet don't think it's nuthin' t' hold up a railroad train."—Ohio State Journal.

Mr. Newlywed—"The cashier of the 'Steenth Ward Bank informs me that you have overdrawn your account." Mrs. Newlywed—"What an idea! I haven't told a soul about it except Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown, and I'm sure I didn't overdraw the account a particle."—Judge.

"But," hissed the heavy villain, "suppose our plot should leak out?" His miserable accomplice shivered at the thought. "But it can't," cried the low comedian, emerging at that moment from behind a stage tree, "because from now on the plot thickens, you know."—Philadelphia Press.

Burke a Bore as a Public Speaker.

The most eloquent essay carefully prepared beforehand, when delivered by one wanting the orator's gifts, may as a speech be an utter failure. Burke is perhaps the most striking example of this. He simply drove everybody away. This is well and amusingly described by Lord Erskine to the American Ambassador, Mr. Rush, who had asked him about Burke's delivery:

"It was execrable," said he. "I was in the House of Commons when he made his great speech on American conciliation, the greaest he ever made. He drove everybody away. I wanted to go out with the rest, but was near him and afraid to get up, so I squeezed myself down and crawled under the benches, like a dog, until I got to the door without his seeing me, rejoicing in my escape. Next day I went to the Isle of Wight. When the speech followed me there I read it over and over again. I could hardly think of anything else. I carried it with me and thumbed it until it got like wadding for my gun."—Westminster Review.

France's total income from taxes was $546,846,209 in 1899.