

THE OLD MAN OF THE BIG CLOCK TOWER



THE LAST LEAD

The toll in the sun is forgotten
In the years that have passed since then:
The drag at the rake on the hummocks,
Keeping up with the hilled men;
The strain as we bore the haycocks—
From the meadow across the brook—
These seem as old as a tale that is told,
Or a print in a tattered book.
A story of some one; was it I?
A picture faded and worn
In a book that has been for years laid by
With half of its pages torn.
But I close my eyes, and the fragrance
Of that last rustling lead,
With its savor of trines and meadow rose,
(There were cranberry vines and sweet
grass too)
Wipe cling to the bushes along our way,
We lay at ease in the well-made hay,
They towered the pasture here;
And the last lead cracked up Wyman
Road
Beneath the brilliant stars.
—John Elliot Bowman.

ANOTHER HOME-COMING STORY
This is a story of about thirty years ago, which perhaps some of you will remember. It is worth repeating. Obviously it is quite necessary to substitute the names of the parties concerned. Numerous friends of those earlier days, some connected with the parties referred to, are with us yet.

Mrs. Galt's sister, Mrs. Putney, Putney's door side open, with a bang. "Man come to see you," he announced, loudly. "Great big tall man!" The man entered directly behind him, and close at his heels came the other three "putney Galties," who stepped themselves around the room comfortably and expectantly.

"Well, Mr. Ann Putney!" said the caller, in a resounding great voice, and dropped his large valise and picked up both her hands in one of his.

"Why Joseph Wolcott?" Mrs. Putney asked. "The top of her grey head was considerably below his shoulder, and she took a step back, the better to look up at him. She was flustered; her hands trembled a little. The four Galties had possession of all the chairs, and did not offer them to the visitor; so she brought two from another room."

"You've kept your looks wonderful well, Joseph," she said, after a moment of inspection. "You don't look any older than you did when you went to Manitoba."

Joseph laughed, surveying the little, narrow-shouldered, anxious-looking woman, he could not answer in like vein. His attention centered against his will, upon the knot, as large as a walnut, she looked at her cousin's husband with a rush of memory. She had not seen Martha for years, but her portly figure and her comely, smiling face were a distinct picture in her mind. To Martha all the pleasant things of life had come easily.

"The Galties. This is a wing of their house I'm living in."
"I went down to your old place first," said Joseph, with some hesitation. "I didn't know you'd left it. Who are the folks you rent it to? I didn't know you'd sold it."
"I sold it," Galtier's name."
"I'm going to live a team and go down and see old Mr. Galt, down on the Gore road." "I say he's living here, isn't he?" "We had to go down there to his sugar-hush every spring, because of his boys, and he'd fill us up with warm sugar. He'll remember me. Come along, Mr. Ann."

He made her go. The next day he went through the gate-mill and the shingle-factory, and the day after he and Mrs. Putney drove around in a four-wheeled carry-all and got up a load of men and went up to the Grand River fishing. His welcome was warm and his popularity was great.

He ransacked the old town for old acquaintances, and brought Mrs. Putney more news than she had heard in her whole life. The editor of "The Free Press" interviewed him, and made a column article of the information about the West and the political opinions gathered from "our former fellow-townsmen, now a wealthy stock-farmer of Manitoba."

Joseph had a continuous good time, and when Friday came he had said nothing about going home. Mrs. Putney went around to the front room, and ornamented with some separate spears in a tea-cup.

"I'll be right away," she said, with a painful effort, she twisted her fingers in the rusty black lace that trimmed her best dress scantily, and opened her eyes to the door.

"I've got to pay your father the rent, Friday; Friday's the first. And if Joseph says no, I don't care. I shall have enough left to get along with. I'll have to have next every day. And I ain't anything more coming in."

"I'll be right away," she said, with a painful effort, she twisted her fingers in the rusty black lace that trimmed her best dress scantily, and opened her eyes to the door.

"I've been making rugs some since that and don't want anything I could turn my hand to; but I can't make enough to live on. I can't make more. I don't spend hardly anything, goodness knows. I haven't had any new clothes I don't know when, and I don't eat much. I haven't had fresh meat before for a week. But I can't make what little expenses I've got, and that's the fact. I can't work for anything. My hand can't be bound to produce any. A little bit of money is all I've got to my name. I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know what I'm doing to!"

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Putney forgot her galling anxiety. It would have been the sight of Joseph's keen enjoyment of his visit. Mrs. Galtier gave him sleeping accommodation, and he spent most of his time on the porch of the grocery and the post office, with the old friends who rallied around him.

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mouth twice before she could speak. "I thought I'd ask you if you can wait a few days a week, maybe—on the rent," she faltered. "I haven't got much money on hand, and Mr. Wolcott's being here has cost me quite a good deal extra. I'll be very much obliged to you."

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as much as they did before Joe got married. "You know what Martha is, how she makes people welcome and enjoys it," he went on. "Why, we had a dance there in the spring. Two or three wagon-loads of 'em came out from town, and we set for a number and had a jaying good time. Martha and I danced with the rest of 'em," said Joseph, grinning his knee and laughing. "When we get you out there can't tell but what you'll take to dancing. You'll feel like it, anyhow. You'll feel as though you'd been pretty well stamped up here, when you see how we live."

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The Old Man

She almost trembled at the thought
Mrs. Kane was a timid soul—no doubt about it! Modern efficiency rather terrified her.
She wanted so much to talk to her sister in a town 100 miles away because a friend had told her how she enjoyed a weekly long distance chat with her home. But she didn't know how to go about it.
"There's nothing to it," her friend told her. "Just ask the operator for 'Long Distance' and when the answers tell her the number you want. If you don't know your sister's number, ask 'Information'—it's so very simple."
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