



THREE GIFTS.

I am curtailed away from the night, On the hearth the fire burns bright; My lamp is trimmed and lit And I sit in the glow of it; As each moment fades and dies, In my heart these thoughts arise:

I thank Thee, O God, for Fire! As I watch the flames aspire, My thought, too, soars above To the Heart of infinite love; May my soul burn and glow, As mere of Thyself I know!

I thank Thee, O God, for Light! As I sit by the lamp, to-night, This prayer, O Lord is mine!— That I, too, may softly shine— To guide, to bless, to cheer Thy children, O Father dear!

I thank Thee, O God, for Home! How many there are who roam, Far from the Father's roof Holding themselves aloof! May my door be open wide To Thy wandering ones outside!

Warmth is the heart of Fire, Oh! may my fond desire Be, gracious Friend, to prove The depth and the breadth of Love; So kindly more love divine In my heart, by the love in Thine!

Cheer is the soul of the Lamp; Tho' the night be dark and damp, And the merciless, pelting rain Beats on my window pane, Within doth Cheer prevail!— May my soul-cheer never fail!

Love is the center of Home; When'er its inmates come, Love greets them and leads them in To her innermost shrine within; So, Lord, in my heart and face May Love find a dwelling place.

Warmth and Cheer and Love— All sent by the Giver above! My heart sings for thankfulness And Thy holy name doth bless! Yet, these, Thy gifts so rare, Help me, in love, to share! —Helen Knight Wyman in Congregation- alist.

D'ri and I By IRVING BACHELLER Author of 'Eben Holden,' 'Darrel of the Blessed Isles,' etc. (Copyright, 1901, by Lotthrop Publishing Company.)

CHAPTER I.

A poet may be a good companion, but, so far as I know, he is ever the worst of fathers. Even as grandfather he is too near, for one poet can lay a streak of poverty over three generations. Doubt not I know whereof I speak, dear reader, for my mother's father was a poet—a French poet, too, whose lines had crossed the Atlantic long before that summer of 1770 when he came to Montreal. He died there, leaving only debts and those who had great need of a better legacy—my mother and grandmother.

As to my father, he had none of that fatal folly in him. He was a mountaineer of Vermont—a man of steely sinews that took well to the grip of a sword. He cut his way to fame in the northern army when the British came first to give us battle, and a bloody way it was. I have now a faded letter from Ethan Allen, grim old warrior, in which he calls my father "the best swordsman that ever straddled a horse." He was a "gallous chap" in his youth, so said my grandmother, with a great love of good clothes and gunpowder. He went to Montreal, as a boy, to be educated; took lessons in fencing, fought a duel, ran away from school, and came home with little learning and a wife. Punished by disinheritance, he took a farm, and left the plow to go into battle.

I wonder often that my mother could put up with the stress and hardship of his life, for she had gentle breeding, of which I knew little until I was grown to manhood, when I came to know also what a woman will do for the love of her heart. I remember well those tales of knights and ladies she used to tell me as we sat together on an evening, and also those adventures of her own knight, my good father, in the war with the British. My love of arms and of a just quarrel began then.

After the war came hard times. My father had not prospered handsomely, when, near the end of the summer of 1803, he sold his farm, and we all started west, over rough trails and roadways. There were seven of us, bound for the valley of the St. Lawrence—my father and mother, my two sisters, my grandmother, D'ri, the hired man, and myself, then a sturdy boy of ten. We had an ox-team and cart that carried our provision, the sacred feather beds of my mother, and some few other things.

We drove with us the first flock of sheep that ever went west. There were 40 of them, and they filled our days with trouble. But for our faithful dog Rover, I fear we should have lost heart and left them to the wild wolves. The cart had a low cover of canvas, and my mother and grandmother sat on the feather beds, and rode with small comfort even where the roads were level. My father let me carry my little pet rooster in a basket that hung from the cart-axle when not in my keeping. The rooster had a harder time than any of us, I fancy, for the days were hot and the roads rough. He was always panting, with open mouth and thoughtful eye, when I lifted the cover. But every day he gave us an example of cheerfulness not wholly without effect. He crowed triumphantly, betimes, in the hot basket, even when he was being tumbled about on the swamp ways. Nights I always found a perch for him on the limb of a tree, above the reach of predatory creatures. Every morning, as the dawn showed faintly in the

tree-tops, he gave it a lusty cheer, flapping his wings with all the seeming of delight. Then, often, while the echo rang, I would open my eyes and watch the light grow in the dusky cavern of the woods. He would sit dozing awhile after the first outbreak, and presently as the flood of light grew clearer, lift himself a little, take another peep at the sky, and crow again, turning his head to hear those weird, mocking roosters of the timber-land. Then, shortly, I would hear my father poking the fire or saying, as he patted the rooster: "Sass 'em back, ye noisy little brat! That's right; holler. Tell D'ri it's time t' bring some wood fer the fire."

In a few minutes the pot and kettle would be boiling and the camp all astir. We had trout and partridge and venison a-plenty for our meals, that were served in dishes of tin. Breakfast over, we packed our things. The cart went on ahead, my father bringing the oxen, while I started the sheep with D'ri.

Those sheep were as many thorns in our flesh that day we made off in the deep woods from Lake Champlain. Travel was new to them, and what with tearing through thickets and running wild in every slash, they kept us jumping. When they were leg-weary and used to travel, they began to go quietly. But slow work it was at best, 10 or 12 miles a day being all we could do, for the weather was hot and our road like the way of the transgressor. Our second night in the woods we could hear the wolves howling as we camped at dusk. We built our fire near the shore of a big pond, its still water framed in the vivid green of young tamaracks. A great hill rose on the farther side of it, with galleries of timber sloping to the summit, and peopled with many birds. We huddled the sheep together in a place where the trees were thick, while father brought from the cart a coil of small rope. We wound it about the trees, so the sheep were shut in a little yard. After supper we all sat by the fire, while D'ri told how he had been chased by wolves in the beaver country north of us.

D'ri was an odd character. He had his own way of expressing the three degrees of wonder, admiration and surprise. "Jerushy!"—accented on the second syllable—was the positive, "Jerushy Jane!" the comparative, and "Jerushy Jane Pepper!" the superlative. Who that poor lady might be I often wondered, but never ventured to inquire. In times of stress I have heard him swear by "Judas Priest," but never more profanely. In his youth he had been a sailor on the lake,



"D'RI PULLED UP SUDDENLY—AND LISTENED, PEERING INTO THE DUSK."

when some artist of the needle had tattooed a British jack on the back of his left hand—a thing he covered, of shame now, when he thought of it. His right hand had lost its forefinger in a sawmill. His rifle was distinguished by the name of Beeswax—"Ol' Beeswax" he called it sometimes—for no better reason than that it was "casy spoke an' had a kind of a powerful soun' tew it." He had a nose like a shoemaker's thumb; there was a deep curve from its wide tip to his forehead. He had a large, gray, inquiring eye and the watchful habit of the woodsman. Somewhere in the midst of a story he would pause and peer thoughtfully into the distance, meanwhile feeling the pipe-stem with his lips, and then resume the narrative as suddenly as he had stopped. He was a lank and powerful man, six feet tall in his stockings. He wore a thin beard that had the appearance of parched grass on his ruddy countenance. In the matter of hair, nature had treated him with a generosity most unusual. His heavy shock was sheared off square above his neck.

That evening, as he lay on his elbow in the firelight, D'ri had just entered the eventful field of reminiscence. The women were washing the dishes; my father had gone to the spring for water. D'ri pulled up suddenly, lifted his hat of faded felt and listened, peering into the dusk.

"Seems t' me them wolves is comin' nearer," he said, thoughtfully. Their cries were echoing in the far timber. We all rose and listened. In a moment my father came hurrying back with his pal of water.

"D'ri," said he, quietly, as he threw some wood on the fire, "they smell mutton. Mek the guns ready. We may git a few pelts. There's a big bounty on 'em here in York state."

We all stood about the fire listening as the wolves came nearer. "It 's the sheep that brings 'em," said my father. "Quite a considerable number on 'em, tew," said D'ri, as he stood cleaning the bore of his rifle. My young sisters began to cry.

"Need n't be scairt," said father. "They won't come very near. 'Fraider of us 'n we are o' 'em, a good deal."

"Tow-w-w!" said D'ri, with a laugh. "They'll be apt t' stub ther toes 'fore they git very nigh us."

This did not quite agree with the tales he had previously been telling. I went for my sword, and buckled its belt about me, the scabbard hanging to my heels. Presently some creature came bounding over the brush. I saw him break through the wall of darkness and stop quickly in the firelight. Then D'ri brought him down with his rifle.

"Started him up back there 'n the woods a few mild," said D'ri. "He was mekin' fer this 'ere pond—thet's what he was dewin'."

"What for?" I inquired. "'Cause fer the reason why he knowed he would n't mek no tracks 'n the water, ner no scent," said D'ri, with some show of contempt for my ignorance.

The deer lay floundering in the briars some 50 feet away. My father ran with his knife and put him quickly out of misery. Then we hauled the carcass to clear ground.

"Let it lie where 't is fer now," said he, as we came back to the fire. Then he got our two big traps out of the cart and set them beside the carcass and covered them with leaves. The howling of the wolves had ceased. I could hear only the creaking of a dead limb high above us, and the bellow of frogs in the near pond. We had fastened the trap chains and were coming back to the fire, when the dog rose, barking fiercely; then we heard the crack of D'ri's rifle.

"More 'n 50 wolves eroun' here," he whispered as we ran up to him. "Never seech a snag on 'em."

The sheep were stirring nervously. Near the pen a wolf lay kicking where D'ri had dropped him.

"Rest on 'em snooked off when the gun hollered," he went on, whispering as before. My mother and grandmother sat with my sisters in the cart, hushing their murmurs of fear. Early in the evening I had tied Rover to the cart-wheel, where he was growling hotly, impatient of the leash.

"See?" said D'ri, pointing with his finger. "See 'em?—there 'n the dark by that air big hemlock."

We could make out a dim stir in the shadows where he pointed. Presently we heard the spring and rattle of a trap. As we turned that way, the other trap took hold hard; as it sprang we could hear a wolf yelp.

"Meks 'em holler," said D'ri, "thet 'ol' hetrap does, when it teks holt. Stay here by the sheep, 'n I'll go over 'n give 'em somethin' fer spraint ankles."

Other wolves were swarming over the dead deer, and the two in the traps were snarling and snapping at them. My father and D'ri fired at the bunch, killing one of the captives and another—the largest wolf I ever saw. The pack had slunk away as they heard the rifles. Our remaining captive struggled to get free, but in a moment D'ri had brained him with an ax. He and my father reset our traps and hauled the dead wolves into the firelight. There they began to skin them, for the bounty was \$10 for each in the new towns—a sum that made our adventure profitable. I built fires on the farther side of the sheep, and, as they brightened, I could see, here and there, the gleaming eyes of a wolf in the darkness. I was up all night heaping wood upon the fires, while D'ri and my father skinned the wolves and dressed the deer. They had just finished when the cock crew.

"Holler, ye gol-dum little cuss!" D'ri shouted as he went over to him. "Can't no snookin' wolf crack our bones fer us. Peeled 'em—thet's what we done tew 'em! Tuk 'n' knocked 'em head over heels. Judas Priest! He can peck a man's finger some, can't he?"

The light was coming and he went off to the spring for water, while I brought the spider and pots. The great, green-roofed temple of the woods, that had so lately rung with the howl of wolves, began to fill with far wandering echoes of sweet song.

"That was a big cat over there by the spring las' night," said D'ri, as we all sat down to breakfast. "Tracks bigger 'n a griddle! Smelt the mutton, mos' likely."

"Like mutton?" I inquired. "Yis-ir-ee, they dew," said he. "Kind o' mince-ple fer 'em. Like deer meat, tew. Snook eroun' the ponds after dark. Ef they see a deer 'n the water they wallop 'im quicker 'n lightning; jump right in k'slap 'n tek 'im."

We were off at sunrise, on a road that grew rougher every mile. At noon we came to a river so swollen as to make a dangerous ford. After dinner my father waded in, going hips under where the water was deep and swift.

Then he cut a long pole and took my mother on his shoulders and entered the broad stream, steadying himself with the pole. When she had got down safe on the other side, he came back for grandmother and my sisters, and took them over in the same way. D'ri, meanwhile, bound up the feather beds and carried them on his head, leaving the dog and me to tend the sheep. All our blankets and clothing were carried across in the same manner. Then I mounted the cart, with my rooster, lashing the oxen till they took to the stream. They had tied the bell-wether to the axle, and, as I started, men and dog drove the sheep after me. The oxen wallowed in the deep water, and our sheep, after some hesitation, began to swim. The big cart floated like a raft part of the way, and we landed with no great difficulty. Farther on the road became nothing better than a rude trail, where, frequently, we had to stop and chop through heavy logs and roll them away. On a steep hillside the oxen fell, breaking the tongue, and the cart tipped side-

wise and rolled bottom up. My rooster was badly flung about, and began crowing and flapping as the basket settled. When I opened it he flew out, running for his life, as if finally resolved to quit us. Fortunately, we were all walking, and nobody was hurt. My father and D'ri were busy half a day "righting up," as they called it, mending the tongue and cover, and getting the cart on its wheels and down the steep pitch.

After two days of trail travel we came out on the Chateaugay road, stopping awhile to bait our sheep and cattle on the tame grass and tender briars. It was a great joy to see the clear road, with here and there a settler's cabin, its yard aglow with the marigold, the hollyhock and the fragrant honeysuckle. We got to the tavern at Chateaugay about dusk and put up for the night, as becomes a Christian.

Next afternoon we came to rough roads again, camping at sundown along the shore of a noisy brook. The dog began to bark fiercely while supper was making, and scurried off into a thicket.

D'ri was stooping over, cooking the meat. He rose and listened. "Thet air dog's a leetle scairt," said he. "Guess we better go 'n see whut 's the matter."

He took his rifle and I my sword—I never thought of another weapon—making off through the brush. The dog came whining to D'ri and rushing on, eager for us to follow. We hurried after him, and in a moment D'ri and the dog, who were ahead of me, halted suddenly.

"It's a painter," said D'ri, as I came up. "See 'im in thet air tree-top. I'll larrup 'im with Ol' Beeswax, then jes' like es not he'll mek some music. Better grab holt o' the dog. 'T won't dew fer 'im to git tew rambunctious, er the fust thing he knows he won't hev no insides in 'im."

I could see the big cat clinging high in the top boughs of a birch and looking calmly down at us. The tree-top swayed, quivering, as it held the great dun beast. My heart was like to smother me when D'ri raised his rifle and took aim. The dog broke away at the crack of it. The painter reeled and spat; then he came crashing through the branches, striking right and left with his fore paws to save himself. He hit the ground heavily, and the dog was on him. The painter lay as if dead. Before I could get near, Rover began shaking him by the neck. He came to suddenly, and struck the dog with a front claw, dragging him down. A loud yelp followed the blow. Quick as a flash D'ri caught the painter by the tail and one hind leg. With a quick surge of his great, slouching shoulders, he flung him at arm's-length. The lithe body doubled on a tree trunk, quivered, and sank down, as the dog came free. In a jiffy I had run my sword through the cat's belly and made an end of him.

"Knew 'f he got them hind hooks on thet air dog he'd rake his ribs right off," said D'ri, as he lifted his hat to scratch his head. "Would n't 'a left nothin' but the backbone—nut a thing—an' thet would n't 'a been a real fust-class one, nuther."

When D'ri was very positive, his words were well braced with negatives. We took the painter by the hind legs and dragged him through the bushes to our camp. The dog had a great rip across his shoulder, where the claws had struck and made furrows; but he felt a mighty pride in our capture, and never had a better appetite for a meal.

[To Be Continued.]

The Limit.

Clara—I'm afraid Charles is a hopeless gambler. Belle—Why.

"Because, when he threw a dollar into the collection box at the charity concert he tossed it to see if it would come down head or tail up on the plate."—Detroit Free Press.

Tender Grab for Tenderfoot.

A fastidious and correct Bostonian, on a tour through the west, recently stopped over night at a small town in the Indian territory. Feeling a little indisposed in the morning as a result of the unaccustomed crudeness of the environment, he searched the breakfast menu in vain for some such dainty as chicken's livers en Brochette. Finally he ordered soft boiled eggs and cream toast, and received a severe shock as the stentorian voice of the waiter roared through the room, "Four in water, four minutes—and a graveyard stew!"—Boston Budget.

Very Porous.

"It is really ridiculous," said Mr. Figg, "to see the style the Henderbys put on, when everyone knows that they are as poor as—as poor as—"

"Plaster," suggested the youthful son and heir.

"Poor as what?" "Poor as plaster—porous plaster—don't you know?" "Now, look here, Mrs. F., if you don't send that impudent kid to bed in five minutes, I'll thrash him till he can't stand. I'm not going to have any new humorists in this house."—Smith's Weekly.

Unbiased Criticism.

"What would you do, Nora," asked the young lady of the housemaid, "if you could play the piano the same as I do?" "Sure, an' Ol' wouldn't be afther gettin' discouraged at all, at all," replied Nora. "Ol'd kape right on larnin' till Ol' could play decently."—Cincinnati Inquirer.

He Was Willing.

Mrs. Henpeck—What do you think of giving me for a birthday present? Henpeck—Great idea! but to whom could I give you? I really haven't an enemy in the world.—Catholic Standard and Times.

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