

THE THREE EVENINGS.

Several miles from the little town of Van Meters, in Eastern Pennsylvania, stood, somewhat back from the dusty highway, a small white cottage shaded by a few fruit trees.

Inside the house, from a table placed close to the wall, three people—Felix Filiatreault, his wife and Pierre, his son, who sat facing the open window—were partaking of their simple evening repast. They were eating in silence, for it was to be Pierre's last supper with them for a long time to come—he was going out into the world to seek and to claim.

From where he sat he could look out upon the little garden with its well-kept paths and nicely-tended beds, beautiful with its delicate and varying shades of green contrasting with the brown earth, all of which was set off, like a picture in a mat, by the low whitewashed fence which surrounded it, while the gentle winds blowing in through the window wafted to him across the table the sweet odor of the roses which grew just outside. There under that large apple tree and on that seat he had often sat with his father viewing the sunset or listening to tales of sunny France of long ago. This evening he thought that the river, which flowed in the distance, had never appeared so silvery, nor the hills beyond so beautiful. Up above them, disported by the breeze, was a large fleecy cloud and now, catching the last rays of the sun already hidden, it took on a beautiful hue, and as it slowly moved about seemed to him like some great fiery dragon. But the sun sank farther and farther behind the horizon, the river lost its silver, the hills their detail, and the beautiful play of colors in the sky ceased and twilight had fallen.

It all seemed so sadly beautiful to Pierre, and his heart welled up within him when he thought that the morrow should find him gone.

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Years had passed. 'Twas late one evening last May in one of our large northern cities. Around the tables in a "private saloon" were seated a company of about a dozen men and women drinking and talking. They were not of the lowest class of humanity—they were of that homeless people who congregate at such places because they have no other.