

The House on the Uplands.

By A. B. DeMille.

THE great Tantremar Marsh is a narrow expanse of diked land at the head of the Bay of Fundy. One hundred and sixty years ago it was an important section of the debatable ground between the French and English possessions in North America.

I was riding my wheel along the road skirting the wide marsh which stretched away on the left until it merged in a line of rolling hills. For some distance past I had been vaguely conscious of a house that seemed to dominate the highway just at this point.

As I rose abreast of the garden a figure rose from among the tall flowers and hailed me. I dismounted and approached the gate, where an old man was standing. He spoke in a singularly gentle voice.

"Sir," said he, "have you passed anyone lately, coming in this direction? A tall man, it would have been, on horseback."

"No," I answered, "the road seemed deserted this afternoon."

The old man looked at me wistfully, sighing as if much disappointed.

"Whom are you expecting?" I ventured a little touch, I must admit, by his aspect.

"It's my brother," he replied. "My brother James. I've been looking for him these many years, but this summer I know he's coming back, and we'll go off to England together—to England—home!"—and again he shot that wistful glance at my face.

"England!" I exclaimed. "That's a far cry from Tantremar. But I am hot and thirsty. Can you give me a drink of water? Then, if you will, you can tell me about your brother. I am going to the village, and perhaps may see him there."

The old man's face lighted up eagerly. He opened the gate, which sagged heavily back on creaking hinges.

"I take this right kind of you, sir," he said. "Come up to my house and accept my hospitality."

The old man turned to me when we reached the house.

"I am afraid," said he, "that James' horse may shy at that machine of yours if he comes up to the house and passes it. I hope you won't mind putting it to one side."

"Certainly not," I replied. "I'll put it here around the corner."

Within the house the rooms were large, and as we entered one of them from the wide hallway a smell of musty age came to my nostrils. My host threw open some heavy shutters and the sunlight poured in, revealing an old-fashioned parlor with furniture in the fashion of a generation back—massive, dark and rich. All was on a far grander scale than that of the farmhouses round about.

I sat down, but no sooner had the old man left the room than I started up again, with the peculiar sensation that some one was watching me. I glanced hastily around. The light flooded every corner, and no hiding place was visible, unless it should be behind the heavy window curtains.

Half ashamed of myself, I went over and pulled them aside. Then I turned back, and instantly my attention was seized by a portrait which hung above the mantelpiece. It was the mournful face of a man, with eyes that followed one's every movement. This explained my uneasiness—I had unconsciously caught their gaze fixed upon me.

At this moment, however, my host returned with the water. As I drank he pointed to the picture, saying:

"That is my brother, before he left. A many years ago, sir? A many years ago! But I'll tell you about him."

"It's 40 years since I came out from England. And I'm not an old man yet, though my gray hairs make me look so, for I've had much trouble in the past. But it's near over now, and when James comes we'll pack up the things and go home again."

"James and I came out together; we were always together—together at school, and we should have gone to the university together, but that my father cast me off one day, in a fit of rage, because I would not do a certain thing he wished. Then James said—I can recall his very words: 'Cheer up, old fellow, I'll stick to you.' When my father learned this, and saw that James would keep his word, he was bitter sorry for what he'd done. But he wouldn't forgive me, and he couldn't turn James against me. So he gave James £1,000 in gold and a part of the household furniture—you see it about us now—and we came out here together."

"Land was cheap, so we bought a farm and built this house. The life was rough, and never a letter came

from home; but there was always a deal to look after, and by and by we grew to love the marshes and the big tides of the bay. It was lonely sometimes in the long winters, but we soon accustomed ourselves to that. The worst was when the autumn storms came up the bay, for then often the Akelands would be flooded, and our cattle and sheep be in danger. And sometimes there would be wrecks of good ships"—he paused, with a puzzled expression, then hastily resumed:

"But one summer James fell sick. I can't recall the year—my memory is not what it used to be. I am much alone, sir. But James fell sick, and I was hard pressed to bring him around. He recovered at last, and then I showed him a letter which had come for him. It was from our father's lawyer, and it told us that father was dead, and James, as the eldest son, should go home to settle up the estate. Never a word of forgiveness, mark you, from him that was dead! He was a stern man. Now this was a good thing for James, meaning change of air and a long sea voyage to put new life into him. I went with him as far as Halifax, where he took the Cunard steamer."

"Yet sometimes now I wish he'd never gone. He was sad at leaving the farm. I—"

The speaker stopped and moved restlessly in his chair. Suddenly he turned to me and said:

"You think he will return soon, do you not?"

"Why, yes," I replied, somewhat surprised by the question; "I don't see why he shouldn't."

Once more the old man gave his peculiar, wistful glance. Then he went over to the picture above the mantelpiece.

"It fell down one night long ago," he said, as if to himself. "There was a storm and I was away—somewhere—I forget where. The rain was flooding the marshes and the wind was howling up the bay. God help the poor ships out that night! And when I came home the picture was lying on the floor." He ceased. There was a long silence. Finally, he struck his forehead impatiently. "I cannot remember what happened that night. The storm and the darkness, and—where was James? But it doesn't matter now, for he's coming home soon." . . . Another pause followed, which lasted until I rose to leave.

Going down the garden path he stopped and called attention to his flowers.

"I am getting all in order for James' homecoming," he explained. "He is fond of bright flowers."

"I'll look out for your brother in the village," I rejoined. "I think I'd recognize him from the picture."

"I'm greatly obliged to you for your kind words," replied my companion. "Tell James to hasten out, for I've long been waiting for him!"

The village was only a few miles off, and I soon arrived there. My stopping place was a small hotel which overlooked the head of the bay. As I sat outside smoking in the cool of the evening the landlord stoined me for the customary chat.

"Well," he began, "how fur did you git to-day?"

I told him and then related my experience, touching lightly on the old man's story.

"So he stopped you, did he?" said the landlord, with a chuckle, "and told you 'bout brother James? Well, you ain't the fust, nor 'bout a thousand, that old Jarge Montague has told the same story to."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"This is the how of it," answered the landlord, tilting his chair into a more comfortable position. "I was a lad at the time, but I can remember it all right. Him an' his brother come out from England—that's all right. An' then his brother got took sick an' went home when the old man died—that's all right. But now I'll tell you what old Jarge didn't tell you. James Montague did come out here again, but he warn't alive when he landed. He landed from a wreck with a hole busted in his skull!"

Seeing my amazed look, the speaker proceeded to explain.

"He come out to Halifax in a Cunard steamer; she was called the Scotia, I guess—one of them big paddle boats that used to run in the old days. That was 'way back in the sixties. Then he took passage in a schooner for the village here. She was called the Curlew. She got 'round safe, an' come up an' near reached the head of the bay, when a big storm an' high tide got her, an' she was wrecked half a mile below here an' every soul drowned. Old Jarge—he was young Jarge then—had come into the village with a couple of hosses for himself an' his brother to ride out to the house. The fust he seen of his brother James was when he was washed ashore, with his head cut up terrible. Old Jarge didn't say nuthin'—jest seen about the berial, and then shut himself up in the big house. That was thirty years ago. Lately he's taken to stoppin' people on the road an' askin' if they has seen his brother James. We mostly lafs at him, but I guess it's kinder rough on th' old feller."

I often saw the old man after this, and he was invariably moving about his garden, which seemed daily to grow in beauty. He greeted me always with the same wistful question, and for pity of his loneliness I always answered him kindly.

Hitherto the summer had been free from bad weather. Day after day the sun made glorious the wide marshes and the surging tides of the bay. At last, one night late in August, I saw a huge wall of cloud blotting out the stars to the south and west and went to bed with the sough of rising wind in my ears. In the morning the landlord announced that

the storm would come in with the tide. Despite his warning, however, I set out for an afternoon ride along the upland road.

The road was so good and the air so bracing that I was many miles out before I thought of turning. When I did the dusk was gathering down and the huge marsh looked dim and lonely. The storm was coming in good earnest, for down over the bay a swift flame of lightning leaped forth, followed by a growl of thunder. With this there was the growing darkness and now and then a spatter of rain. I fought steadily on, however, and was half way home before night shut in. But night brought the full fury of the tempest. Soon the lightning was my only guide. It proved a safeguard, too, for while going fast down hill a flash revealed a fallen tree scarcely ten feet away. I did not wait to see what would happen, but slid off and rolled in the mud, leaving the bicycle to its fate. Then I trudged manfully on afoot, trundling my wrecked machine, while the wind shrieked in my face and the rain drenched me to the skin.

At last, far ahead, a light appeared. Then another and another, until a brilliant glow shone in the darkness, and then, quite suddenly, I recognized the outline of the house on the uplands. But what was the reason of this illumination? There was a light in every window. I hastened forward and soon stumbled through the gate, up the pathway to the front door, where I knocked loud and long. It was thrown open and my old friend appeared, gazing eagerly at me.

"Why! Why!" he exclaimed. "It's you! I thought it was James!" and a look of deep disappointment came over his face. "Have you seen him?"

"No," I answered, and the light fell full on my soaked and muddy garments. The old man gave a cry.

"I treat you ill!" he said. "Come in, come in! and you can get dry, and we can welcome James together. For you do not sneer and laugh as the others do." He drew me in and shut the door. We went through the hall, catching a glimpse of bright-lit parlors as we passed, to the big kitchen at its farther end.

Here a huge fire blazed and I was quickly dry. The old man gave me a hot drink from a brew which simmered beside the hearth. It put new life into me.

"Is your brother really coming to-night?" I asked, determined to humor him.

"Yes, oh yes!" he cried tremulously. "See, read this!" With shaking hands he unfolded a sheet of paper and gave it to me.

It was a letter, frayed and worn, dated 30 years back. It said that the writer had arrived in Halifax by the steamer Scotia, of the Cunard line, and would come round by schooner, avoiding the tedious coach journey.

I purpose to come round in the Curlew schooner, which sails within a week. Have the house ready for me, George, and a Jorum of that good Punch you used to make so well. I will drive out from the Village. And I shall be right glad to be home again, Old Fellow, for we had a rough voyage across."

I am, dear George, Your Affect. Bro., JAMES.

So it concluded. The signature was stained and blurred. And as I handed back the letter and the old man folded it so reverently and replaced it in his pocket, the pity of it all brought tears to my own eyes. But my host was looking at me expectantly, so I forced a smile and talked to him of the returning one.

How the storm thundered outside! I saw that it would be almost impossible to reach the village, and gladly accepted the old man's proposal that I should stay with him. "For," said he, "it will be pleasant for James, and I would like you to know him."

When my clothes were dry, we went over to the house together. It was ablaze with light. Wax candles were placed in every window and the somber parlors were gay with old-fashioned lamps.

"We brought them all out when we came," explained the old man. "And James will be glad when he sees the lights shining to welcome him home."

"But will he come such a night as this?" I said as a gust of wind shook the house and jarred us where we stood.

"Yes, oh, yes." The voice was very weak. "They told me this afternoon that the Curlew was in the bay, and I know James is coming to-night!" He went to a window. "Hark! Don't you hear a horse?"

But it was only a rain-squall driving along the road.

The wind gradually shifted, and when we returned to the kitchen the storm was thundering at the front door and echoing in the hall. Several times it tore at the entrance like a living thing—so like that I half turned round, while my companion started from his seat. Soon, however, my fatigue began to overpower me. Even the increasing nervousness of the old man could not keep me awake. I was rapidly nearing the borders of a slumber when the storm, which had dropped for a moment to utter silence, came roaring over the marsh anew. It struck the house, it hammered at the door, and the door flew open with a crash.

The old man sprang up and started out into the hall; then, uttering a low cry of "James! Welcome home at last!" he rushed from room to room. And upon the moment a giant blast swept through the house; instantly all was in darkness. I felt my way cautiously along the hall until I stumbled over something on the rain-lashed threshold.

It was the old man. I carried him into the kitchen and lit a candle. He lay very still, with a smile upon his face—I had never seen him smile before. And when morning came I was glad that he could not wake to see his bright garden ruined by the storm.—N. Y. Independent.

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A south pole expedition is the proper thing. The north pole is worn thread-bare. Even if it is found it will be a chestnut. It has been talked to death. The south pole is something of a dark horse. We shall hereafter give our adherence to the south pole. It is just as good a pole as the other and there is no reason on earth why its antipodal rival should monopolize all the glory and newspaper advertising. A pole is a pole, and this earth could no more revolve without the southern one than the northern one. The north pole, of course, says the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, got the start among writers and they have kept talking about it until some of us are nearly bored to death. We think the north pole is greatly overrated. When it is discovered, mark our word, it will be found to be a very ordinary object. The earth is slightly flattened at the poles, say geographers, and there has been such a stream of travel over the territory near the north pole that it is now probably a great deal more flattened than the other and not near as serviceable or sightly a pole. Any fastidious person would prefer a pristine pole—one from which the bloom has not been rubbed, one that has not been coquetted with by man from immemorial time. A pole that is surrounded by primeval icebergs that are not speckled thick with cans of tomatoes, broken sledges, broken promises, skins of Eskimo dogs, frozen toes and frozen profanity left behind by previous polar picnic parties is by far the more charming. The north pole must look like the vicinity of the Yellowstone geysers, the Yosemite valley, Mount Washington and Coney Island by this time, when we consider the vast number of excursions that have taken place to it and the debris they have left behind. It is getting too common. Nature there must have lost the unsophisticated face it wore when Dr. Franklin first sailed those seas. If you want to avoid the crowd go to the south pole.

Motorman Lome Macadam, on a New York street car, said to a passenger, William T. Stewart, when he recognized a musical voice.

"You must get inside," and the result is that Motorman Macadam is now taking lessons in a school of opera at the instigation and solicitation of Mr. Stewart. Mr. Stewart recognized in the mellow and resonant tones with which those four words were spoken that their owner had a magical voice, and, though he got inside, he took the motorman's number; not for the usual purpose of writing an unpleasant letter to the company, but to bring about a further acquaintance. This is probably the first time on record that a motorman has been rewarded through making a passenger obey the rules. Usually, observes the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, such a beginning is followed by a high-keyed controversy in which both voices range through the lower, middle and higher registers without anything musical or harmonious being observed by either disputant or the other passengers. If there is any timbre at all recognizable it is splintery and unsatisfactory. The incident serves to point out that every man who earnestly and honestly strives to do his duty will be requited. Motorman Macadam only sought to compel his benefactor to get inside; and now he is on the high road to being a famous opera singer. Moral, tell everybody to get inside and see what will happen.

True to its regular formula of hospitality, says Roswell Field, in the Post, Chicago welcomed Young Bear and his 15 companions to the stockyards and showed them specimens of the white man's skill which made the Custer massacre and the Modoc outbreak look like a snow fight. They returned cowed and disheartened. Nothing will keep down an Indian outbreak so successfully as an introduction to civilization's expertness in killing.

An Italian cruiser captured two Venezuelan vessels and secured many thousand bolivars. The circumstance that money is named after the liberator, Gen. Bolivar, is a reminder that although various things, from a state down to a pie, are called after the Father of his Country, the United States mint does not coin "washingtons."

The indiscriminate use of headache powders, all of which contain more or less acetanilid, has in a number of instances caused marked evidences of anilin poisoning, and more than one death has been reported as a result of these preparations.

The city council of Worcester, Mass., recently passed an ordinance raising Mayor Fletcher's salary from \$2,500 to \$4,000. His honor vetoed the measure, giving as his reason his belief that public duty should not be a matter of dollars and cents.

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