

**EVERED**

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Evered by Ben Ames Williams

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**BEN AMES WILLIAMS**

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BY  
BEN AMES WILLIAMS



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U. D. P. C.

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## EVERED

### I

**T**HERE is romance in the very look of the land of which I write. Beauty beyond belief, of a sort to make your breath come more quickly; and drama—comedy or tragedy according to the eye and the mood of the seer. Loneliness and comradeship, peace and conflict, friendship and enmity, gayety and somberness, laughter and tears. The bold hills, little cousins to the mountains, crowd close round each village; the clear brooks thread wood and meadow; the birches and scrub hardwood are taking back the abandoned farms. When the sun drops low in the west there is a strange and moving purple tinge upon the slopes; and the shadows are as blue as blue can be. When the sun is high there is a greenery about this northern land which is almost tropical in its richness and variety.

The little villages lie for the most part in



sheltered valley spots. Not all of them. Liberty, for example, climbs up along a steep hill road on your way to St. George's Pond, or over the Sheepscot Ridge, for trout. No spot lovelier anywhere. But you will come upon other little house clusters, a white church steeple topping every one, at unsuspected crossroads, with some meadowland round and about, and a brook running through the village itself, and perhaps a mill sprawled busily across the brook. It is natural that the villages should thus seek shelter; for when the winter snows come down this is a harsh land, and bitter cold. So is it all the more strange that the outlying farms are so often set high upon the hills, bare to the bleak gales. And the roads, too, like to seek and keep the heights. From Fraternity itself, for example, there is a ten-mile ridge southwest to Union, and a road along the whole length of the ridge's crest, from which you may look for miles on either side.

This is not a land of bold emprises; neither is it one of those localities which are said to be happy because they have no history. There is history in the very names of the villages hereabouts. Liberty, and Union, and Freedom; Equality, and Fraternity. And men will tell

you how their fathers' fathers came here in the train of General Knox, when that warrior, for Revolutionary services rendered, was given title to all the countryside; and how he sub-granted to his followers; and how they cleared farms, and tilled the soil, and lumbered out the forests, and exterminated deer and moose and bear. Seventy years ago, they will tell you, there was no big game hereabouts; but since then many farms, deserted, have been overrun by the forests; and the bear are coming back, and there are deer tracks along every stream, and moose in the swamps, and wildcats scream in the night. Twenty or thirty or forty miles to the north the big woods of Maine begin; so that this land is an outpost of the wilderness, thrust southward among the closer dwellings of man.

The people of these towns are of ancient stock. The grandfathers of many of them came in with General Knox; most of them have been here for fifty years or more, they or their forbears. A few Frenchmen have drifted down from Quebec; a few Scotch and Irish have come in here as they come everywhere. Half a dozen British seamen escaped, once upon a time, from a man-of-war in Penobscot Bay, and fled inland,

and were hidden away until their ship was gone. Whereupon they married and became part and parcel of the land, and their stock survives. By the mere reading of the names of these folk upon the R. F. D. boxes at their doors you may know their antecedents. Bubier and Saladine, Varney and Motley, McCorrison and MacLure, Thomas and Davis, Sohier and Brine—a five-breed blend of French and English, Scotch and Welsh and Irish; in short, as clear a strain of good Yankee blood as you are like to come upon.

Sturdy folk, and hardy workers. You will find few idlers; and by the same token you will find few slavish toilers, lacking soul to whip a trout brook now and then or shoot a woodcock or a deer. Most men hereabouts would rather catch a trout than plant a potato; most men would rather shoot a partridge than cut a cord of wood. And they act upon their inclinations in these matters. The result is that the farms are perhaps a thought neglected; and no one is very rich in worldly goods; and a man who inherits a thousand dollars has come into money. Yet have they all that any man wisely may desire; for they have food and drink and shelter, and good comradeship, and the woods