Roughing It in the Bush eBook

Roughing It in the Bush by Susanna Moodie

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INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD EDITION

Published by Richard Bentley in 1854

In most instances, emigration is a matter of necessity, not of choice; and this is more especially true of the emigration of persons of respectable connections, or of any station or position in the world. Few educated persons, accustomed to the refinements and luxuries of European society, ever willingly relinquish those advantages, and place themselves beyond the protective influence of the wise and revered institutions of their native land, without the pressure of some urgent cause. Emigration may, indeed, generally be regarded as an act of severe duty, performed at the expense of personal enjoyment, and accompanied by the sacrifice of those local attachments which stamp the scenes amid which our childhood grew, in imperishable characters, upon the heart. Nor is it until adversity has pressed sorely upon the proud and wounded spirit of the well-educated sons and daughters of old but impoverished families, that they gird up the loins of the mind, and arm themselves with fortitude to meet and dare the heart-breaking conflict.

The ordinary motives for the emigration of such persons may be summed up in a few brief words;—the emigrant's hope of bettering his condition, and of escaping from the vulgar sarcasms too often hurled at the less-wealthy by the purse-proud, common-place people of the world. But there is a higher motive still, which has its origin in that love of independence which springs up spontaneously in the breasts of the high-souled children of a glorious land. They cannot labour in a menial capacity in the country where they were born and educated to command. They can trace no difference between themselves and the more fortunate individuals of a race whose blood warms their veins, and whose name they bear. The want of wealth alone places an impassable barrier between them and the more favoured offspring of the same parent stock; and they go forth to make for themselves a new name and to find another country, to forget the past and to live in the future, to exult in the prospect of their children being free and the land of their adoption great.

The choice of the country to which they devote their talents and energies depends less upon their pecuniary means than upon the fancy of the emigrant or the popularity of a name. From the year 1826 to 1829, Australia and the Swan River were all the rage. No other portions of the habitable globe were deemed worthy of notice. These were the El Dorados and lands of Goshen to which all respectable emigrants eagerly flocked. Disappointment, as a matter of course, followed their high-raised expectations. Many of the most sanguine of these adventurers returned to their native shores in a worse condition than when they left them. In 1830, the great tide of emigration flowed westward. Canada became the great land-mark for the rich in hope and poor in purse. Public newspapers and private letters teemed with the unheard-of advantages to be derived from a settlement in this highly-favoured region.

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Its salubrious climate, its fertile soil, commercial advantages, great water privileges, its proximity to the mother country, and last, not least, its almost total exemption from taxation—that bugbear which keeps honest John Bull in a state of constant ferment—-were the theme of every tongue, and lauded beyond all praise. The general interest, once excited, was industriously kept alive by pamphlets, published by interested parties, which prominently set forth all the good to be derived from a settlement in the Backwoods of Canada; while they carefully concealed the toil and hardship to be endured in order to secure these advantages. They told of lands yielding forty bushels to the acre, but they said nothing of the years when these lands, with the most careful cultivation, would barely return fifteen; when rust and smut, engendered by the vicinity of damp over-hanging woods, would blast the fruits of the poor emigrant's labour, and almost deprive him of bread. They talked of log houses to be raised in a single day, by the generous exertions of friends and neighbours, but they never ventured upon a picture of the disgusting scenes of riot and low debauchery exhibited during the raising, or upon a description of the dwellings when raised—dens of dirt and misery, which would, in many instances, be shamed by an English pig-sty. The necessaries of life were described as inestimably cheap; but they forgot to add that in remote bush settlements, often twenty miles from a market town, and some of them even that distance from the nearest dwelling, the necessaries of life which would be deemed indispensable to the European, could not be procured at all, or, if obtained, could only be so by sending a man and team through a blazed forest road,—a process far too expensive for frequent repetition.

Oh, ye dealers in wild lands—ye speculators in the folly and credulity of your fellow men—what a mass of misery, and of misrepresentation productive of that misery, have ye not to answer for! You had your acres to sell, and what to you were the worn-down frames and broken hearts of the infatuated purchasers? The public believed the plausible statements you made with such earnestness, and men of all grades rushed to hear your hired orators declaim upon the blessings to be obtained by the clearers of the wilderness.

Men who had been hopeless of supporting their families in comfort and independence at home, thought that they had only to come out to Canada to make their fortunes; almost even to realise the story told in the nursery, of the sheep and oxen that ran about the streets, ready roasted, and with knives and forks upon their backs. They were made to believe that if it did not actually rain gold, that precious metal could be obtained, as is now stated of California and Australia, by stooping to pick it up.

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The infection became general. A Canada mania pervaded the middle ranks of British society; thousands and tens of thousands for the space of three or four years landed upon these shores. A large majority of the higher class were officers of the army and navy, with their families—a class perfectly unfitted by their previous habits and education for contending with the stern realities of emigrant life. The hand that has long held the sword, and been accustomed to receive implicit obedience from those under its control, is seldom adapted to wield the spade and guide the plough, or try its strength against the stubborn trees of the forest. Nor will such persons submit cheerfully to the saucy familiarity of servants, who, republicans in spirit, think themselves as good as their employers. Too many of these brave and honourable men were easy dupes to the designing land-speculators. Not having counted the cost, but only looked upon the bright side of the picture held up to their admiring gaze, they fell easily into the snares of their artful seducers.

To prove their zeal as colonists, they were induced to purchase large tracts of wild land in remote and unfavourable situations. This, while it impoverished and often proved the ruin of the unfortunate immigrant, possessed a double advantage to the seller. He obtained an exorbitant price for the land which he actually sold, while the residence of a respectable settler upon the spot greatly enhanced the value and price of all other lands in the neighbourhood.

It is not by such instruments as those I have just mentioned, that Providence works when it would reclaim the waste places of the earth, and make them subservient to the wants and happiness of its creatures. The Great Father of the souls and bodies of men knows the arm which wholesome labour from infancy has made strong, the nerves which have become iron by patient endurance, by exposure to weather, coarse fare, and rude shelter; and He chooses such, to send forth into the forest to hew out the rough paths for the advance of civilization. These men become wealthy and prosperous, and form the bones and sinews of a great and rising country. Their labour is wealth, not exhaustion; its produce independence and content, not home-sickness and despair. What the Backwoods of Canada are to the industrious and ever-to-be-honoured sons of honest poverty, and what they are to the refined and accomplished gentleman, these simple sketches will endeavour to portray. They are drawn principally from my own experience, during a sojourn of nineteen years in the colony.

In order to diversify my subject, and make it as amusing as possible, I have between the sketches introduced a few small poems, all written during my residence in Canada, and descriptive of the country.

In this pleasing task, I have been assisted by my husband, J. W. Dunbar Moodie, author of “Ten Years in South Africa.”

BELLEVILLE, UPPER CANADA

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CANADA

Canada, the blest—the free!
With prophetic glance, I see
Visions of thy future glory,
Giving to the world's great story
A page, with mighty meaning fraught,
That asks a wider range of thought.
Borne onward on the wings of Time,
I trace thy future course sublime;
And feel my anxious lot grow bright,
While musing on the glorious sight;—
My heart rejoicing bounds with glee
To hail thy noble destiny!

Even now thy sons inherit
All thy British mother's spirit.
Ah! no child of bondage thou;
With her blessing on thy brow,
And her deathless, old renown
Circling thee with freedom's crown,
And her love within thy heart,
Well may'st thou perform thy part,
And to coming years proclaim
Thou art worthy of her name.
Home of the homeless!—friend to all
Who suffer on this earthly ball!
On thy bosom sickly care
Quite forgets her squalid lair;
Gaunt famine, ghastly poverty
Before thy gracious aspect fly,
And hopes long crush'd, grow bright again,
And, smiling, point to hill and plain.

By thy winter's stainless snow,
Starry heavens of purer glow,
Glorious summers, fervid, bright,
Basking in one blaze of light;
By thy fair, salubrious clime;
By thy scenery sublime;
By thy mountains, streams, and woods;
By thy everlasting floods;
If greatness dwells beneath the skies,
Thou to greatness shalt arise!

Nations old, and empires vast,
From the earth had darkly pass'd
Ere rose the fair auspicious morn
When thou, the last, not least, wast born.
Through the desert solitude
Of trackless waters, forests rude,
Thy guardian angel sent a cry
All jubilant of victory!
"Joy," she cried, "to th' untill'd earth,
Let her joy in a mighty birth,—
Night from the land has pass'd away,
The desert basks in noon of day.
Joy, to the sullen wilderness,
I come, her gloomy shades to bless,
To bid the bear and wild-cat yield
Their savage haunts to town and field.
Joy, to stout hearts and willing hands,
That win a right to these broad lands,
And reap the fruit of honest toil,
Lords of the rich, abundant soil.

"Joy, to the sons of want, who groan
In lands that cannot feed their own;
And seek, in stern, determined mood,
Homes in the land of lake and wood,
And leave their hearts' young hopes behind,
Friends in this distant world to find;
Led by that God, who from His throne
Regards the poor man's stifled moan.
Like one awaken'd from the dead,
The peasant lifts his drooping head,
Nerves his strong heart and sunburnt hand,
To win a potion of the land,
That glooms before him far and wide
In frowning woods and surging tide
No more oppress'd, no more a slave,
Here freedom dwells beyond the wave.

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“Joy, to those hardy sires who bore
The day’s first heat—their toils are o’er;
Rude fathers of this rising land,
Theirs was a mission truly grand.
Brave peasants whom the Father, God,
Sent to reclaim the stubborn sod;
Well they perform’d their task, and won
Altar and hearth for the woodman’s son.
Joy, to Canada’s unborn heirs,
A deathless heritage is theirs;
For, sway’d by wise and holy laws,
Its voice shall aid the world’s great cause,
Shall plead the rights of man, and claim
For humble worth an honest name;
Shall show the peasant-born can be,
When call’d to action, great and free.
Like fire, within the flint conceal’d,
By stern necessity reveal’d,
Kindles to life the stupid sod,
Image of perfect man and God.

“Joy, to thy unborn sons, for they
Shall hail a brighter, purer day;
When peace and Christian brotherhood
Shall form a stronger tie than blood—
And commerce, freed from tax and chain,
Shall build a bridge o’er earth and main;
And man shall prize the wealth of mind,
The greatest blessing to mankind;
True Christians, both in word and deed,
Ready in virtue’s cause to bleed,
Against a world combined to stand,
And guard the honour of the land.
Joy, to the earth, when this shall be,
Time verges on eternity.”

CHAPTER I

A VISIT TO GROSSE ISLE

Alas! that man’s stern spirit e’er should mar
A scene so pure—so exquisite as this.

The dreadful cholera was depopulating Quebec and Montreal when our ship cast anchor off Grosse Isle, on the 30th of August 1832, and we were boarded a few minutes after by the health-officers.

One of these gentlemen—a little, shrivelled-up Frenchman—from his solemn aspect and attenuated figure, would have made no bad representative of him who sat upon the pale horse. He was the only grave Frenchman I had ever seen, and I naturally enough regarded him as a phenomenon. His companion—a fine-looking fair-haired Scotchman—though a little consequential in his manners, looked like one who in his own person could combat and vanquish all the evils which flesh is heir to. Such was the contrast between these doctors, that they would have formed very good emblems, one, of vigorous health, the other, of hopeless decay.

Our captain, a rude, blunt north-country sailor, possessing certainly not more politeness than might be expected in a bear, received his sprucely dressed visitors on the deck, and, with very little courtesy, abruptly bade them follow him down into the cabin.

The officials were no sooner seated, than glancing hastily round the place, they commenced the following dialogue:—

“From what port, captain?”

Now, the captain had a peculiar language of his own, from which he commonly expunged all the connecting links. Small words, such as “and” and “the,” he contrived to dispense with altogether.

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“Scotland—sailed from port o’ Leith, bound for Quebec, Montreal— general cargo—-seventy-two steerage, four cabin passengers—brig Anne, one hundred and ninety-two tons burden, crew eight hands.”

Here he produced his credentials, and handed them to the strangers. The Scotchman just glanced over the documents, and laid them on the table.

“Had you a good passage out?”

“Tedious, baffling winds, heavy fogs, detained three weeks on Banks—foul weather making Gulf—short of water, people out of provisions, steerage passengers starving.”

“Any case of sickness or death on board?”

“All sound as crickets.”

“Any births?” lisped the little Frenchman.

The captain screwed up his mouth, and after a moment’s reflection he replied, “Births? Why, yes; now I think on’t, gentlemen, we had one female on board, who produced three at a birth.”

“That’s uncommon,” said the Scotch doctor, with an air of lively curiosity. “Are the children alive and well? I should like much to see them.” He started up, and knocked his head—for he was very tall—against the ceiling. “Confound your low cribs! I have nearly dashed out my brains.”

“A hard task, that,” looked the captain to me. He did not speak, but I knew by his sarcastic grin what was uppermost in his thoughts. “The young ones all males—fine thriving fellows. Step upon deck, Sam Frazer,” turning to his steward; “bring them down for doctors to see.” Sam vanished, with a knowing wink to his superior, and quickly returned, bearing in his arms three fat, chuckle-headed bull-terriers, the sagacious mother following close at his heels, and looked ready to give and take offence on the slightest provocation.

“Here, gentlemen, are the babies,” said Frazer, depositing his burden on the floor. “They do credit to the nursing of the brindled slut.”

The old tar laughed, chuckled, and rubbed his hands in an ecstacy of delight at the indignation and disappointment visible in the countenance of the Scotch Esculapius, who, angry as he was, wisely held his tongue. Not so the Frenchman; his rage scarcely knew bounds—he danced in a state of most ludicrous excitement, he shook his fist at our rough captain, and screamed at the top of his voice—

“Sacre, you bete! You tink us dog, ven you try to pass your puppies on us for babies?”

“Hout, man, don’t be angry,” said the Scotchman, stifling a laugh; “you see ’tis only a joke!”

“Joke! me no understand such joke. Bete!” returned the angry Frenchman, bestowing a savage kick on one of the unoffending pups which was frisking about his feet. The pup yelped; the slut barked and leaped furiously at the offender, and was only kept from biting him by Sam, who could scarcely hold her back for laughing; the captain was uproarious; the offended Frenchman alone maintained a severe and dignified aspect. The dogs were at length dismissed, and peace restored.

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After some further questioning from the officials, a Bible was required for the captain to take an oath. Mine was mislaid, and there was none at hand.

“Confound it!” muttered the old sailor, tossing over the papers in his desk; “that scoundrel, Sam, always stows my traps out of the way.” Then taking up from the table a book which I had been reading, which happened to be Voltaire’s History of Charles XII., he presented it, with as grave an air as he could assume, to the Frenchman. Taking for granted that it was the volume required, the little doctor was too polite to open the book, the captain was duly sworn, and the party returned to the deck.

Here a new difficulty occurred, which nearly ended in a serious quarrel. The gentlemen requested the old sailor to give them a few feet of old planking, to repair some damage which their boat had sustained the day before. This the captain could not do. They seemed to think his refusal intentional, and took it as a personal affront. In no very gentle tones, they ordered him instantly to prepare his boats, and put his passengers on shore.

“Stiff breeze—short sea,” returned the bluff old seaman; “great risk in making land—-boats heavily laden with women and children will be swamped. Not a soul goes on shore this night.”

“If you refuse to comply with our orders, we will report you to the authorities.”

“I know my duty—you stick to yours. When the wind falls off, I’ll see to it. Not a life shall be risked to please you or your authorities.”

He turned upon his heel, and the medical men left the vessel in great disdain. We had every reason to be thankful for the firmness displayed by our rough commander. That same evening we saw eleven persons drowned, from another vessel close beside us while attempting to make the shore.

By daybreak all was hurry and confusion on board the Anne. I watched boat after boat depart for the island, full of people and goods, and envied them the glorious privilege of once more standing firmly on the earth, after two long months of rocking and rolling at sea. How ardently we anticipate pleasure, which often ends in positive pain! Such was my case when at last indulged in the gratification so eagerly desired. As cabin passengers, we were not included in the general order of purification, but were only obliged to send our servant, with the clothes and bedding we had used during the voyage, on shore, to be washed.

The ship was soon emptied of all her live cargo. My husband went off with the boats, to reconnoitre the island, and I was left alone with my baby in the otherwise empty vessel. Even Oscar, the Captain’s Scotch terrier, who had formed a devoted attachment to me during the voyage, forgot his allegiance, became possessed of the land mania, and was

away with the rest. With the most intense desire to go on shore, I was doomed to look and long and envy every boatful of emigrants that glided past. Nor was this all;

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the ship was out of provisions, and I was condemned to undergo a rigid fast until the return of the boat, when the captain had promised a supply of fresh butter and bread. The vessel had been nine weeks at sea; the poor steerage passengers for the two last weeks had been out of food, and the captain had been obliged to feed them from the ship's stores. The promised bread was to be obtained from a small steam-boat, which plied daily between Quebec and the island, transporting convalescent emigrants and their goods in her upward trip, and provisions for the sick on her return.

How I reckoned on once more tasting bread and butter! The very thought of the treat in store served to sharpen my appetite, and render the long fast more irksome. I could now fully realise all Mrs. Bowdich's longings for English bread and butter, after her three years' travel through the burning African deserts, with her talented husband.

"When we arrived at the hotel at Plymouth," said she, "and were asked what refreshment we chose—'Tea, and home-made bread and butter,' was my instant reply. 'Brown bread, if you please, and plenty of it.' I never enjoyed any luxury like it. I was positively ashamed of asking the waiter to refill the plate. After the execrable messes, and the hard ship-biscuit, imagine the luxury of a good slice of English bread and butter!"

At home, I laughed heartily at the lively energy with which that charming woman of genius related this little incident in her eventful history—but off Grosse Isle, I realised it all.

As the sun rose above the horizon, all these matter-of-fact circumstances were gradually forgotten, and merged in the surpassing grandeur of the scene that rose majestically before me. The previous day had been dark and stormy, and a heavy fog had concealed the mountain chain, which forms the stupendous background to this sublime view, entirely from our sight. As the clouds rolled away from their grey, bald brows, and cast into denser shadow the vast forest belt that girdled them round, they loomed out like mighty giants—Titans of the earth, in all their rugged and awful beauty—a thrill of wonder and delight pervaded my mind. The spectacle floated dimly on my sight—my eyes were blinded with tears—blinded with the excess of beauty. I turned to the right and to the left, I looked up and down the glorious river; never had I beheld so many striking objects blended into one mighty whole! Nature had lavished all her noblest features in producing that enchanting scene.

The rocky isle in front, with its neat farm-houses at the eastern point, and its high bluff at the western extremity, crowned with the telegraph—the middle space occupied by tents and sheds for the cholera patients, and its wooded shores dotted over with motley groups—added greatly to the picturesque effect of the land scene. Then the broad, glittering river, covered with boats darting to and fro, conveying

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passengers from twenty-five vessels, of various size and tonnage, which rode at anchor, with their flags flying from the mast-head, gave an air of life and interest to the whole. Turning to the south side of the St. Lawrence, I was not less struck with its low fertile shores, white houses, and neat churches, whose slender spires and bright tin roofs shone like silver as they caught the first rays of the sun. As far as the eye could reach, a line of white buildings extended along the bank; their background formed by the purple hue of the dense, interminable forest. It was a scene unlike any I had ever beheld, and to which Britain contains no parallel. Mackenzie, an old Scotch dragoon, who was one of our passengers, when he rose in the morning, and saw the parish of St. Thomas for the first time, exclaimed: "Weel, it beats a'! Can thae white clouts be a' houses? They look like claes hung out to drie!" There was some truth in this odd comparison, and for some minutes, I could scarcely convince myself that the white patches scattered so thickly over the opposite shore could be the dwellings of a busy, lively population.

"What sublime views of the north side of the river those habitans of St. Thomas must enjoy," thought I. Perhaps familiarity with the scene has rendered them indifferent to its astonishing beauty.

Eastward, the view down the St. Lawrence towards the Gulf, is the finest of all, scarcely surpassed by anything in the world. Your eye follows the long range of lofty mountains until their blue summits are blended and lost in the blue of the sky. Some of these, partially cleared round the base, are sprinkled over with neat cottages; and the green slopes that spread around them are covered with flocks and herds. The surface of the splendid river is diversified with islands of every size and shape, some in wood, others partially cleared, and adorned with orchards and white farm-houses. As the early sun streamed upon the most prominent of these, leaving the others in deep shade, the effect was strangely novel and imposing. In more remote regions, where the forest has never yet echoed to the woodman's axe, or received the impress of civilisation, the first approach to the shore inspires a melancholy awe, which becomes painful in its intensity.

Land of vast hills and mighty streams,
The lofty sun that o'er thee beams
On fairer clime sheds not his ray,
When basking in the noon of day
Thy waters dance in silver light,
And o'er them frowning, dark as night,
Thy shadowy forests, soaring high,
Stretch forth beyond the aching eye,
And blend in distance with the sky.

And silence—awful silence broods
Profoundly o’er these solitudes;
Nought but the lapsing of the floods
Breaks the deep stillness of the woods;
A sense of desolation reigns
O’er these unpeopled forest plains.
Where sounds of life ne’er wake a tone
Of cheerful praise round Nature’s throne,
Man finds himself with God—alone.

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My daydreams were dispelled by the return of the boat, which brought my husband and the captain from the island.

“No bread,” said the latter, shaking his head; “you must be content to starve a little longer. Provision-ship not in till four o’clock.” My husband smiled at the look of blank disappointment with which I received these unwelcome tidings, “Never mind, I have news which will comfort you. The officer who commands the station sent a note to me by an orderly, inviting us to spend the afternoon with him. He promises to show us everything worthy of notice on the island. Captain —— claims acquaintance with me; but I have not the least recollection of him. Would you like to go?”

“Oh, by all means. I long to see the lovely island. It looks a perfect paradise at this distance.”

The rough sailor-captain screwed his mouth on one side, and gave me one of his comical looks, but he said nothing until he assisted in placing me and the baby in the boat.

“Don’t be too sanguine, Mrs. Moodie; many things look well at a distance which are bad enough when near.”

I scarcely regarded the old sailor’s warning, so eager was I to go on shore—to put my foot upon the soil of the new world for the first time—I was in no humour to listen to any depreciation of what seemed so beautiful.

It was four o’clock when we landed on the rocks, which the rays of an intensely scorching sun had rendered so hot that I could scarcely place my foot upon them. How the people without shoes bore it, I cannot imagine. Never shall I forget the extraordinary spectacle that met our sight the moment we passed the low range of bushes which formed a screen in front of the river. A crowd of many hundred Irish emigrants had been landed during the present and former day; and all this motley crew —men, women, and children, who were not confined by sickness to the sheds (which greatly resembled cattle-pens) were employed in washing clothes, or spreading them out on the rocks and bushes to dry.

The men and boys were in the water, while the women, with their scanty garments tucked above their knees, were trampling their bedding in tubs, or in holes in the rocks, which the retiring tide had left half full of water. Those who did not possess washing-tubs, pails, or iron pots, or could not obtain access to a hole in the rocks, were running to and fro, screaming and scolding in no measured terms. The confusion of Babel was among them. All talkers and no hearers—each shouting and yelling in his or her uncouth dialect, and all accompanying their vociferations with violent and extraordinary gestures, quite incomprehensible to the uninitiated. We were literally stunned by the

strife of tongues. I shrank, with feelings almost akin to fear, from the hard-featured, sun-burnt harpies, as they elbowed rudely past me.

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I had heard and read much of savages, and have since seen, during my long residence in the bush, somewhat of uncivilised life; but the Indian is one of Nature's gentlemen—-he never says or does a rude or vulgar thing. The vicious, uneducated barbarians who form the surplus of over-populous European countries, are far behind the wild man in delicacy of feeling or natural courtesy. The people who covered the island appeared perfectly destitute of shame, or even of a sense of common decency. Many were almost naked, still more but partially clothed. We turned in disgust from the revolting scene, but were unable to leave the spot until the captain had satisfied a noisy group of his own people, who were demanding a supply of stores.

And here I must observe that our passengers, who were chiefly honest Scotch labourers and mechanics from the vicinity of Edinburgh, and who while on board ship had conducted themselves with the greatest propriety, and appeared the most quiet, orderly set of people in the world, no sooner set foot upon the island than they became infected by the same spirit of insubordination and misrule, and were just as insolent and noisy as the rest.

While our captain was vainly endeavouring to satisfy the unreasonable demands of his rebellious people, Moodie had discovered a woodland path that led to the back of the island. Sheltered by some hazel-bushes from the intense heat of the sun, we sat down by the cool, gushing river, out of sight, but, alas! not out of hearing of the noisy, riotous crowd. Could we have shut out the profane sounds which came to us on every breeze, how deeply should we have enjoyed an hour amid the tranquil beauties of that retired and lovely spot!

The rocky banks of the island were adorned with beautiful evergreens, which sprang up spontaneously in every nook and crevice. I remarked many of our favourite garden shrubs among these wildings of nature: the fillagree, with its narrow, dark glossy-green leaves; the privet, with its modest white blossoms and purple berries; the lignum-vitae, with its strong resinous odour; the burnet-rose, and a great variety of elegant unknowns.

Here, the shores of the island and mainland, receding from each other, formed a small cove, overhung with lofty trees, clothed from the base to the summit with wild vines, that hung in graceful festoons from the topmost branches to the water's edge. The dark shadows of the mountains, thrown upon the water, as they towered to the height of some thousand feet above us, gave to the surface of the river an ebon hue. The sunbeams, dancing through the thick, quivering foliage, fell in stars of gold, or long lines of dazzling brightness, upon the deep black waters, producing the most novel and beautiful effects. It was a scene over which the spirit of peace might brood in silent adoration; but how spoiled by the discordant yells of the filthy beings who were sullying the purity of the air and water with contaminating sights and sounds!

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We were now joined by the sergeant, who very kindly brought us his capful of ripe plums and hazel-nuts, the growth of the island; a joyful present, but marred by a note from Captain ——, who had found that he had been mistaken in his supposed knowledge of us, and politely apologised for not being allowed by the health-officers to receive any emigrant beyond the bounds appointed for the performance of quarantine.

I was deeply disappointed, but my husband laughingly told me that I had seen enough of the island; and turning to the good-natured soldier, remarked, that “it could be no easy task to keep such wild savages in order.”

“You may well say that, sir—but our night scenes far exceed those of the day. You would think they were incarnate devils; singing, drinking, dancing, shouting, and cutting antics that would surprise the leader of a circus. They have no shame—are under no restraint—nobody knows them here, and they think they can speak and act as they please; and they are such thieves that they rob one another of the little they possess. The healthy actually run the risk of taking the cholera by robbing the sick. If you have not hired one or two stout, honest fellows from among your fellow passengers to guard your clothes while they are drying, you will never see half of them again. They are a sad set, sir, a sad set. We could, perhaps, manage the men; but the women, sir!—the women! Oh, sir!”

Anxious as we were to return to the ship, we were obliged to remain until sun-down in our retired nook. We were hungry, tired, and out of spirits; the mosquitoes swarmed in myriads around us, tormenting the poor baby, who, not at all pleased with her first visit to the new world, filled the air with cries, when the captain came to tell us that the boat was ready. It was a welcome sound. Forcing our way once more through the still squabbling crowd, we gained the landing place. Here we encountered a boat, just landing a fresh cargo of lively savages from the Emerald Isle. One fellow, of gigantic proportions, whose long, tattered great-coat just reached below the middle of his bare red legs, and, like charity, hid the defects of his other garments, or perhaps concealed his want of them, leaped upon the rocks, and flourishing aloft his shilelagh, bounded and capered like a wild goat from his native mountains. “Whurrah! my boys!” he cried, “Shure we’ll all be jintlemen!”

“Pull away, my lads!” said the captain. Then turning to me, “Well, Mrs. Moodie, I hope that you have had enough of Grosse Isle. But could you have witnessed the scenes that I did this morning—”

Here he was interrupted by the wife of the old Scotch dragoon, Mackenzie, running down to the boat and laying her hand familiarly upon his shoulder, “Captain, dinna forget.”

“Forget what?”

She whispered something confidentially in his ear.

“Oh, ho! the brandy!” he responded aloud. “I should have thought, Mrs. Mackenzie, that you had had enough of that same on yon island?”

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“Aye, sic a place for decent folk,” returned the drunken body, shaking her head. “One needs a drap o’ comfort, captain, to keep up one’s heart ava.”

The captain set up one of his boisterous laughs as he pushed the boat from the shore. “Hollo! Sam Frazer! steer in, we have forgotten the stores.”

“I hope not, captain,” said I; “I have been starving since daybreak.”

“The bread, the butter, the beef, the onions, and potatoes are here, sir,” said honest Sam, particularizing each article.

“All right; pull for the ship. Mrs. Moodie, we will have a glorious supper, and mind you don’t dream of Grosse Isle.”

In a few minutes we were again on board. Thus ended my first day’s experience of the land of all our hopes.

OH! CAN YOU LEAVE YOUR NATIVE LAND?

A Canadian Song

Oh! can you leave your native land
An exile’s bride to be;
Your mother’s home, and cheerful hearth,
To tempt the main with me;
Across the wide and stormy sea
To trace our foaming track,
And know the wave that heaves us on
Will never bear us back?

And can you in Canadian woods
With me the harvest bind,
Nor feel one lingering, sad regret
For all you leave behind?
Can those dear hands, unused to toil,
The woodman’s wants supply,
Nor shrink beneath the chilly blast
When wintry storms are nigh?

Amid the shades of forests dark,
Our loved isle will appear
An Eden, whose delicious bloom
Will make the wild more drear.
And you in solitude will weep

O’er scenes beloved in vain,
And pine away your life to view
Once more your native plain.

Then pause, dear girl! ere those fond lips
Your wanderer’s fate decide;
My spirit spurns the selfish wish—
You must not be my bride.
But oh, that smile—those tearful eyes,
My firmer purpose move—
Our hearts are one, and we will dare
All perils thus to love!

[This song has been set to a beautiful plaintive air, by my husband.]

CHAPTER II

QUEBEC

Queen of the West!—upon thy rocky throne,
In solitary grandeur sternly placed;
In awful majesty thou sitt’st alone,
By Nature’s master-hand supremely graced.
The world has not thy counterpart—thy dower,
Eternal beauty, strength, and matchless power.

The clouds enfold thee in their misty vest,
The lightning glances harmless round thy brow;
The loud-voiced thunder cannot shake thy nest,
Or warring waves that idly chafe below;
The storm above, the waters at thy feet—
May rage and foam, they but secure thy seat.

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The mighty river, as it onward rushes
  To pour its floods in ocean's dread abyss,
Checks at thy feet its fierce impetuous gushes,
  And gently fawns thy rocky base to kiss.
Stern eagle of the crag! thy hold should be
The mountain home of heaven-born liberty!

True to themselves, thy children may defy
  The power and malice of a world combined;
While Britain's flag, beneath thy deep blue sky,
  Spreads its rich folds and wantons in the wind;
The offspring of her glorious race of old
May rest securely in their mountain hold.

On the 2nd of September, the anchor was weighed, and we bade a long farewell to Grosse Isle. As our vessel struck into mid-channel, I cast a last lingering look at the beautiful shores we were leaving. Cradled in the arms of the St. Lawrence, and basking in the bright rays of the morning sun, the island and its sister group looked like a second Eden just emerged from the waters of chaos. With what joy could I have spent the rest of the fall in exploring the romantic features of that enchanting scene! But our bark spread her white wings to the favouring breeze, and the fairy vision gradually receded from my sight, to remain for ever on the tablets of memory.

The day was warm, and the cloudless heavens of that peculiar azure tint which gives to the Canadian skies and waters a brilliancy unknown in more northern latitudes. The air was pure and elastic, the sun shone out with uncommon splendour, lighting up the changing woods with a rich mellow colouring, composed of a thousand brilliant and vivid dyes. The mighty river rolled flashing and sparkling onward, impelled by a strong breeze, that tipped its short rolling surges with a crest of snowy foam.

Had there been no other object of interest in the landscape than this majestic river, its vast magnitude, and the depth and clearness of its waters, and its great importance to the colony, would have been sufficient to have riveted the attention, and claimed the admiration of every thinking mind.

Never shall I forget that short voyage from Grosse Isle to Quebec. I love to recall, after the lapse of so many years, every object that awoke in my breast emotions of astonishment and delight. What wonderful combinations of beauty, and grandeur, and power, at every winding of that noble river! How the mind expands with the sublimity of the spectacle, and soars upward in gratitude and adoration to the Author of all being, to thank Him for having made this lower world so wondrously fair—a living temple, heaven-arched, and capable of receiving the homage of all worshippers.

Every perception of my mind became absorbed into the one sense of seeing, when, upon rounding Point Levi, we cast anchor before Quebec. What a scene!—Can the world produce such another? Edinburgh had been the beau ideal to me of all that was beautiful in Nature—a vision of the northern Highlands had haunted my dreams across the Atlantic; but all these past recollections faded before the present of Quebec.

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Nature has lavished all her grandest elements to form this astonishing panorama. There frowns the cloud-capped mountain, and below, the cataract foams and thunders; wood, and rock, and river combine to lend their aid in making the picture perfect, and worthy of its Divine Originator.

The precipitous bank upon which the city lies piled, reflected in the still deep waters at its base, greatly enhances the romantic beauty of the situation. The mellow and serene glow of the autumnal day harmonised so perfectly with the solemn grandeur of the scene around me, and sank so silently and deeply into my soul, that my spirit fell prostrate before it, and I melted involuntarily into tears. Yes, regardless of the eager crowds around me, I leant upon the side of the vessel and cried like a child—not tears of sorrow, but a gush from the heart of pure and unalloyed delight. I heard not the many voices murmuring in my ears—I saw not the anxious beings that thronged our narrow deck—my soul at that moment was alone with God. The shadow of His glory rested visibly on the stupendous objects that composed that magnificent scene; words are perfectly inadequate to describe the impression it made upon my mind—the emotions it produced. The only homage I was capable of offering at such a shrine was tears—tears the most heartfelt and sincere that ever flowed from human eyes. I never before felt so overpoweringly my own insignificance, and the boundless might and majesty of the Eternal.

Canadians, rejoice in your beautiful city! Rejoice and be worthy of her—for few, very few, of the sons of men can point to such a spot as Quebec—and exclaim, “She is ours! —God gave her to us, in her beauty and strength!—We will live for her glory—we will die to defend her liberty and rights—to raise her majestic brow high above the nations!”

Look at the situation of Quebec!—the city founded on the rock that proudly holds the height of the hill. The queen sitting enthroned above the waters, that curb their swiftness and their strength to kiss and fawn around her lovely feet.

Canadians!—as long as you remain true to yourselves and her, what foreign invader could ever dare to plant a hostile flag upon that rock-defended height, or set his foot upon a fortress rendered impregnable by the hand of Nature? United in friendship, loyalty, and love, what wonders may you not achieve? to what an enormous altitude of wealth and importance may you not arrive? Look at the St. Lawrence, that king of streams, that great artery flowing from the heart of the world, through the length and breadth of the land, carrying wealth and fertility in its course, and transporting from town to town along its beautiful shores the riches and produce of a thousand distant climes. What elements of future greatness and prosperity encircle you on every side! Never yield up these solid advantages to become an humble dependent on the great republic —wait patiently, loyally, lovingly, upon the illustrious parent from whom you sprang, and by whom you have been fostered into life and political importance; in the fulness of time she will proclaim your childhood past, and bid you stand up in your own strength, a free Canadian people!

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British mothers of Canadian sons!—learn to feel for their country the same enthusiasm which fills your hearts when thinking of the glory of your own. Teach them to love Canada—to look upon her as the first, the happiest, the most independent country in the world! Exhort them to be worthy of her—to have faith in her present prosperity, in her future greatness, and to devote all their talents, when they themselves are men, to accomplish this noble object. Make your children proud of the land of their birth, the land which has given them bread—the land in which you have found an altar and a home; do this, and you will soon cease to lament your separation from the mother country, and the loss of those luxuries which you could not, in honor to yourself, enjoy; you will soon learn to love Canada as I now love it, who once viewed it with a hatred so intense that I longed to die, that death might effectually separate us for ever.

But, oh! beware of drawing disparaging contrasts between the colony and its illustrious parent. All such comparisons are cruel and unjust;—you cannot exalt the one at the expense of the other without committing an act of treason against both.

But I have wandered away from my subject into the regions of thought, and must again descend to common work-a-day realities.

The pleasure we experienced upon our first glance at Quebec was greatly damped by the sad conviction that the cholera-plague raged within her walls, while the almost ceaseless tolling of bells proclaimed a mournful tale of woe and death. Scarcely a person visited the vessel who was not in black, or who spoke not in tones of subdued grief. They advised us not to go on shore if we valued our lives, as strangers most commonly fell the first victims to the fatal malady. This was to me a severe disappointment, who felt an intense desire to climb to the crown of the rock, and survey the noble landscape at my feet. I yielded at last to the wishes of my husband, who did not himself resist the temptation in his own person, and endeavored to content myself with the means of enjoyment placed within my reach. My eyes were never tired of wandering over the scene before me.

It is curious to observe how differently the objects which call forth intense admiration in some minds will affect others. The Scotch dragoon, Mackenzie, seeing me look long and intently at the distant Falls of Montmorency, drily observed,—

“It may be a’ vera fine; but it looks na’ better to my thinken than hanks o’ white woo’ hung out o’re the bushes.”

“Weel,” cried another, “thae fa’s are just bonnie; ’tis a braw land, nae doubt; but no’ just so braw as auld Scotland.”

“Hout man! hauld your clavers, we shall a’ be lairds here,” said a third; “and ye maun wait a muckle time before they wad think aucht of you at hame.”

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I was not a little amused at the extravagant expectations entertained by some of our steerage passengers. The sight of the Canadian shores had changed them into persons of great consequence. The poorest and the worst-dressed, the least-deserving and the most repulsive in mind and morals, exhibited most disgusting traits of self-importance. Vanity and presumption seemed to possess them altogether. They talked loudly of the rank and wealth of their connexions at home, and lamented the great sacrifices they had made in order to join brothers and cousins who had foolishly settled in this beggarly wooden country.

Girls, who were scarcely able to wash a floor decently, talked of service with contempt, unless tempted to change their resolution by the offer of twelve dollars a month. To endeavour to undeceive them was a useless and ungracious task. After having tried it with several without success, I left it to time and bitter experience to restore them to their sober senses. In spite of the remonstrances of the captain, and the dread of the cholera, they all rushed on shore to inspect the land of Goshen, and to endeavour to realise their absurd anticipations.

We were favoured, a few minutes after our arrival, with another visit from the health-officers; but in this instance both the gentlemen were Canadians. Grave, melancholy-looking men, who talked much and ominously of the prevailing disorder, and the impossibility of strangers escaping from its fearful ravages. This was not very consoling, and served to depress the cheerful tone of mind which, after all, is one of the best antidotes against this awful scourge. The cabin seemed to lighten, and the air to circulate more freely, after the departure of these professional ravens. The captain, as if by instinct, took an additional glass of grog, to shake off the sepulchral gloom their presence had inspired.

The visit of the doctors was followed by that of two of the officials of the Customs—-vulgar, illiterate men, who, seating themselves at the cabin table, with a familiar nod to the captain, and a blank stare at us, commenced the following dialogue:—

Custom-house officer (after making inquiries as to the general cargo of the vessel): “Any good brandy on board, captain?”

Captain (gruffly): “Yes.”

Officer: “Best remedy for the cholera known. The only one the doctors can depend upon.”

Captain (taking the hint): “Gentlemen, I’ll send you up a dozen bottles this afternoon.”

Officer: “Oh, thank you. We are sure to get it genuine from you. Any Edinburgh ale in your freight?”

Captain (with a slight shrug): “A few hundreds in cases. I’ll send you a dozen with the brandy.”

Both: “Capital!”

First officer: “Any short, large-bowled, Scotch pipes, with metallic lids?”

Captain (quite impatiently): “Yes, yes; I’ll send you some to smoke, with the brandy. What else?”

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Officer: “We will now proceed to business.”

My readers would have laughed, as I did, could they have seen how doggedly the old man shook his fist after these worthies as they left the vessel. “Scoundrels!” he muttered to himself; and then turning to me, “They rob us in this barefaced manner, and we dare not resist or complain, for fear of the trouble they can put us to. If I had those villains at sea, I’d give them a taste of brandy and ale that they would not relish.”

The day wore away, and the lengthened shadows of the mountains fell upon the waters, when the Horsley Hill, a large three-masted vessel from Waterford, that we had left at the quarantine station, cast anchor a little above us. She was quickly boarded by the health-officers, and ordered round to take up her station below the castle. To accomplish this object she had to heave her anchor; when lo! a great pine-tree, which had been sunk in the river, became entangled in the chains. Uproarious was the mirth to which the incident gave rise among the crowds that thronged the decks of the many vessels then at anchor in the river. Speaking-trumpets resounded on every side; and my readers may be assured that the sea-serpent was not forgotten in the multitude of jokes which followed.

Laughter resounded on all sides; and in the midst of the noise and confusion, the captain of the Horsley Hill hoisted his colours downwards, as if making signals of distress, a mistake which provoked renewed and long-continued mirth.

I laughed until my sides ached; little thinking how the Horsley Hill would pay us off for our mistimed hilarity.

Towards night, most of the steerage passengers returned, greatly dissatisfied with their first visit to the city, which they declared to be a filthy hole, that looked a great deal better from the ship’s side than it did on shore. This, I have often been told, is literally the case. Here, as elsewhere, man has marred the magnificent creation of his Maker.

A dark and starless night closed in, accompanied by cold winds and drizzling rain. We seemed to have made a sudden leap from the torrid to the frigid zone. Two hours before, my light summer clothing was almost insupportable, and now a heavy and well-lined plaid formed but an inefficient screen from the inclemency of the weather. After watching for some time the singular effect produced by the lights in the town reflected in the water, and weary with a long day of anticipation and excitement, I made up my mind to leave the deck and retire to rest. I had just settled down my baby in her berth, when the vessel struck, with a sudden crash that sent a shiver through her whole frame. Alarmed, but not aware of the real danger that hung over us, I groped my way to the cabin, and thence ascended to the deck.

Here a scene of confusion prevailed that baffles description. By some strange fatality, the Horsley Hill had changed her position, and run foul of us in the dark. The Anne was

a small brig, and her unlucky neighbour a heavy three-masted vessel, with three hundred Irish emigrants on board; and as her bowspirit was directly across the bows of the Anne, and she anchored, and unable to free herself from the deadly embrace, there was no small danger of the poor brig going down in the unequal struggle.

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Unable to comprehend what was going on, I raised my head above my companion ladder, just at the critical moment when the vessels were grappled together. The shrieks of the women, the shouts and oaths of the men, and the barking of the dogs in either ship, aided the dense darkness of the night in producing a most awful and stunning effect.

“What is the matter?” I gasped out. “What is the reason of this dreadful confusion?”

The captain was raging like a chafed bull, in the grasp of several frantic women, who were clinging, shrieking, to his knees.

With great difficulty I persuaded the women to accompany me below. The mate hurried off with the cabin light upon the deck, and we were left in total darkness to await the result.

A deep, strange silence fell upon my heart. It was not exactly fear, but a sort of nerving of my spirit to meet the worst. The cowardly behaviour of my companions inspired me with courage. I was ashamed of their pusillanimity and want of faith in the Divine Providence. I sat down, and calmly begged them to follow my example.

An old woman, called Williamson, a sad reprobate, in attempting to do so, set her foot within the fender, which the captain had converted into a repository for empty glass bottles; the smash that ensued was echoed by a shriek from the whole party.

“God guide us,” cried the ancient dame; “but we are going into eternity. I shall be lost; my sins are more in number than the hairs of my head.” This confession was followed by oaths and imprecations too blasphemous to repeat.

Shocked and disgusted at her profanity, I bade her pray, and not waste the few moments that might be hers in using oaths and bad language.

“Did you not hear the crash?” said she.

“I did; it was of your own making. Sit down and be quiet.”

Here followed another shock, that made the vessel heave and tremble; and the dragging of the anchor increased the uneasy motion which began to fill the boldest of us with alarm.

“Mrs. Moodie, we are lost,” said Margaret Williamson, the youngest daughter of the old woman, a pretty girl, who had been the belle of the ship, flinging herself on her knees before me, and grasping both my hands in hers. “Oh, pray for me! pray for me! I cannot, I dare not, pray for myself; I was never taught a prayer.” Her voice was choked with convulsive sobs, and scalding tears fell in torrents from her eyes over my hands. I never witnessed such an agony of despair. Before I could say one word to comfort her,

another shock seemed to lift the vessel upwards. I felt my own blood run cold, expecting instantly to go down; and thoughts of death, and the unknown eternity at our feet, flitted vaguely through my mind.

“If we stay here, we shall perish,” cried the girl, springing to her feet. “Let us go on deck, mother, and take our chance with the rest.”

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“Stay,” I said; “you are safer here. British sailors never leave women to perish. You have fathers, husbands, brothers on board, who will not forget you. I beseech you to remain patiently here until the danger is past.” I might as well have preached to the winds. The headstrong creatures would no longer be controlled. They rushed simultaneously upon deck, just as the Horsley Hill swung off, carrying with her part of the outer frame of our deck and the larger portion of our stern. When tranquillity was restored, fatigued both in mind and body, I sunk into a profound sleep, and did not awake until the sun had risen high above the wave-encircled fortress of Quebec.

The stormy clouds had all dispersed during the night; the air was clear and balmy; the giant hills were robed in a blue, soft mist, which rolled around them in fleecy volumes. As the beams of the sun penetrated their shadowy folds, they gradually drew up like a curtain, and dissolved like wreaths of smoke into the clear air.

The moment I came on deck, my old friend Oscar greeted me with his usual joyous bark, and with the sagacity peculiar to his species, proceeded to shew me all the damage done to the vessel during the night. It was laughable to watch the motions of the poor brute, as he ran from place to place, stopping before, or jumping upon, every fractured portion of the deck, and barking out his indignation at the ruinous condition in which he found his marine home. Oscar had made eleven voyages in the Anne, and had twice saved the life of the captain. He was an ugly specimen of the Scotch terrier, and greatly resembled a bundle of old rope-yarn; but a more faithful or attached creature I never saw. The captain was not a little jealous of Oscar’s friendship for me. I was the only person the dog had ever deigned to notice, and his master regarded it as an act of treason on the part of his four-footed favourite. When my arms were tired with nursing, I had only to lay my baby on my cloak on deck, and tell Oscar to watch her, and the good dog would lie down by her, and suffer her to tangle his long curls in her little hands, and pull his tail and ears in the most approved baby fashion, without offering the least opposition; but if any one dared to approach his charge, he was alive on the instant, placing his paws over the child, and growling furiously. He would have been a bold man who had approached the child to do her injury. Oscar was the best plaything, and as sure a protector, as Katie had.

During the day, many of our passengers took their departure; tired of the close confinement of the ship, and the long voyage, they were too impatient to remain on board until we reached Montreal. The mechanics obtained instant employment, and the girls who were old enough to work, procured situations as servants in the city. Before night, our numbers were greatly reduced. The old dragoon and his family, two Scotch fiddlers of the name of Duncan, a Highlander called Tam Grant, and his wife and little son, and our own party, were all that remained of the seventy-two passengers that left the Port of Leith in the brig Anne.

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In spite of the earnest entreaties of his young wife, the said Tam Grant, who was the most mercurial fellow in the world, would insist upon going on shore to see all the lions of the place. “Ah, Tam! Tam! ye will die o’ the cholera,” cried the weeping Maggie. “My heart will brak if ye dinna bide wi’ me an’ the bairnie.” Tam was deaf as Ailsa Craig. Regardless of tears and entreaties, he jumped into the boat, like a wilful man as he was, and my husband went with him. Fortunately for me, the latter returned safe to the vessel, in time to proceed with her to Montreal, in tow of the noble steamer, British America; but Tam, the volatile Tam was missing. During the reign of the cholera, what at another time would have appeared but a trifling incident, was now invested with doubt and terror. The distress of the poor wife knew no bounds. I think I see her now, as I saw her then, sitting upon the floor of the deck, her head buried between her knees, rocking herself to and fro, and weeping in the utter abandonment of her grief. “He is dead! he is dead! My dear, dear Tam! The pestilence has seized upon him; and I and the puir bairn are left alone in the strange land.” All attempts at consolation were useless; she obstinately refused to listen to probabilities, or to be comforted. All through the night I heard her deep and bitter sobs, and the oft-repeated name of him that she had lost.

The sun was sinking over the plague-stricken city, gilding the changing woods and mountain peaks with ruddy light; the river mirrored back the gorgeous sky, and moved in billows of liquid gold; the very air seemed lighted up with heavenly fires, and sparkled with myriads of luminous particles, as I gazed my last upon that beautiful scene.

The tow-line was now attached from our ship to the British America, and in company with two other vessels, we followed fast in her foaming wake. Day lingered on the horizon just long enough to enable me to examine, with deep interest, the rocky heights of Abraham, the scene of our immortal Wolfe’s victory and death; and when the twilight faded into night, the moon arose in solemn beauty, and cast mysterious gleams upon the strange stern landscape. The wide river, flowing rapidly between its rugged banks, rolled in inky blackness beneath the overshadowing crags; while the waves in mid-channel flashed along in dazzling light, rendered more intense by the surrounding darkness. In this luminous track the huge steamer glided majestically forward, flinging showers of red earth-stars from the funnel into the clear air, and looking like some fiery demon of the night enveloped in smoke and flame.

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The lofty groves of pine frowned down in hearse-like gloom upon the mighty river, and the deep stillness of the night, broken alone by its hoarse wailings, filled my mind with sad forebodings—alas! too prophetic of the future. Keenly, for the first time, I felt that I was a stranger in a strange land; my heart yearned intensely for my absent home. Home! the word had ceased to belong to my present—it was doomed to live for ever in the past; for what emigrant ever regarded the country of his exile as his home? To the land he has left, that name belongs for ever, and in no instance does he bestow it upon another. “I have got a letter from home!” “I have seen a friend from home!” “I dreamt last night that I was at home!” are expressions of everyday occurrence, to prove that the heart acknowledges no other home than the land of its birth.

From these sad reveries I was roused by the hoarse notes of the bagpipe. That well-known sound brought every Scotchman upon deck, and set every limb in motion on the decks of the other vessels. Determined not to be outdone, our fiddlers took up the strain, and a lively contest ensued between the rival musicians, which continued during the greater part of the night. The shouts of noisy revelry were in no way congenial to my feelings. Nothing tends so much to increase our melancholy as merry music when the heart is sad; and I left the scene with eyes brimful of tears, and my mind painfully agitated by sorrowful recollections and vain regrets.

The strains we hear in foreign lands,
No echo from the heart can claim;
The chords are swept by strangers’ hands,
And kindle in the breast no flame,
Sweet though they be.
No fond remembrance wakes to fling
Its hallowed influence o’er the chords;
As if a spirit touch’d the string,
Breathing, in soft harmonious words,
Deep melody.

The music of our native shore
A thousand lovely scenes endears;
In magic tones it murmurs o’er
The visions of our early years;—
The hopes of youth;
It wreathes again the flowers we wreathed
In childhood’s bright, unclouded day;
It breathes again the vows we breathed,
At beauty’s shrine, when hearts were gay
And whisper’d truth;

It calls before our mental sight
Dear forms whose tuneful lips are mute,

Bright, sunny eyes long closed in night,
Warm hearts now silent as the lute
That charm'd our ears;
It thrills the breast with feelings deep,
Too deep for language to impart;
And bids the spirit joy and weep,
In tones that sink into the heart,
And melt in tears.

CHAPTER III

OUR JOURNEY UP THE COUNTRY

Fly this plague-stricken spot! The hot, foul air
Is rank with pestilence—the crowded marts
And public ways, once populous with life,
Are still and noisome as a churchyard vault;
Aghast and shuddering, Nature holds her breath
In abject fear, and feels at her strong heart
The deadly pangs of death.

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Of Montreal I can say but little. The cholera was at its height, and the fear of infection, which increased the nearer we approached its shores, cast a gloom over the scene, and prevented us from exploring its infected streets. That the feelings of all on board very nearly resembled our own might be read in the anxious faces of both passengers and crew. Our captain, who had never before hinted that he entertained any apprehensions on the subject, now confided to us his conviction that he should never quit the city alive: "This cursed cholera! Left it in Russia—found it on my return to Leith—meets me again in Canada. No escape the third time." If the captain's prediction proved true in his case, it was not so in ours. We left the cholera in England, we met it again in Scotland, and, under the providence of God, we escaped its fatal visitation in Canada.

Yet the fear and the dread of it on that first day caused me to throw many an anxious glance on my husband and my child. I had been very ill during the three weeks that our vessel was becalmed upon the Banks of Newfoundland, and to this circumstance I attribute my deliverance from the pestilence. I was weak and nervous when the vessel arrived at Quebec, but the voyage up the St. Lawrence, the fresh air and beautiful scenery were rapidly restoring me to health.

Montreal from the river wears a pleasing aspect, but it lacks the grandeur, the stern sublimity of Quebec. The fine mountain that forms the background to the city, the Island of St. Helens in front, and the junction of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa—which run side by side, their respective boundaries only marked by a long ripple of white foam, and the darker blue tint of the former river—constitute the most remarkable features in the landscape.

The town itself was, at that period, dirty and ill-paved; and the opening of all the sewers, in order to purify the place and stop the ravages of the pestilence, rendered the public thoroughfares almost impassable, and loaded the air with intolerable effluvia, more likely to produce than stay the course of the plague, the violence of which had, in all probability, been increased by these long-neglected receptacles of uncleanliness.

The dismal stories told us by the excise-officer who came to inspect the unloading of the vessel, of the frightful ravages of the cholera, by no means increased our desire to go on shore.

"It will be a miracle if you escape," he said. "Hundreds of emigrants die daily; and if Stephen Ayres had not providentally come among us, not a soul would have been alive at this moment in Montreal."

"And who is Stephen Ayres?" said I.

"God only knows," was the grave reply. "There was a man sent from heaven, and his name was John."

“But I thought this man was called Stephen?”

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“Ay, so he calls himself; but ’tis certain that he is not of the earth. Flesh and blood could never do what he has done—the hand of God is in it. Besides, no one knows who he is, or whence he comes. When the cholera was at the worst, and the hearts of all men stood still with fear, and our doctors could do nothing to stop its progress, this man, or angel, or saint, suddenly made his appearance in our streets. He came in great humility, seated in an ox-cart, and drawn by two lean oxen and a rope harness. Only think of that! Such a man in an *old ox-cart*, drawn by *rope harness*! The thing itself was a miracle. He made no parade about what he could do, but only fixed up a plain pasteboard notice, informing the public that he possessed an infallible remedy for the cholera, and would engage to cure all who sent for him.”

“And was he successful?”

“Successful! It beats all belief; and his remedy so simple! For some days we all took him for a quack, and would have no faith in him at all, although he performed some wonderful cures upon poor folks, who could not afford to send for the doctor. The Indian village was attacked by the disease, and he went out to them, and restored upward of a hundred of the Indians to perfect health. They took the old lean oxen out of the cart, and drew him back to Montreal in triumph. This ’stablished him at once, and in a few days’ time he made a fortune. The very doctors sent for him to cure them; and it is to be hoped that in a few days he will banish the cholera from the city.”

“Do you know his famous remedy?”

“Do I not?—Did he not cure me when I was at the last gasp? Why, he makes no secret of it. It is all drawn from the maple-tree. First he rubs the patient all over with an ointment, made of hog’s lard and maple-sugar and ashes, from the maple-tree; and he gives him a hot draught of maple-sugar and ley, which throws him into a violent perspiration. In about an hour the cramps subside; he falls into a quiet sleep, and when he awakes he is perfectly restored to health.” Such were our first tidings of Stephen Ayres, the cholera doctor, who is universally believed to have effected some wonderful cures. He obtained a wide celebrity throughout the colony.[1]

[1] A friend of mine, in this town, has an original portrait of this notable empiric—this man sent from heaven. The face is rather handsome, but has a keen, designing expression, and is evidently that of an American, from its complexion and features.

The day of our arrival in the port of Montreal was spent in packing and preparing for our long journey up the country. At sunset, I went upon deck to enjoy the refreshing breeze that swept from the river. The evening was delightful; the white tents of the soldiers on the Island of St. Helens glittered in the beams of the sun, and the bugle-call, wafted over the waters, sounded so cheery and inspiring, that it banished all fears of the cholera, and, with fear, the heavy gloom that had clouded my mind since we left

Quebec. I could once more hold sweet converse with nature, and enjoy the soft loveliness of the rich and harmonious scene.

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A loud cry from one of the crew startled me; I turned to the river, and beheld a man struggling in the water a short distance from our vessel. He was a young sailor, who had fallen from the bowsprit of a ship near us.

There is something terribly exciting in beholding a fellow-creature in imminent peril, without having the power to help him. To witness his death-struggles—to feel in your own person all the dreadful alternations of hope and fear—and, finally, to see him die, with scarcely an effort made for his preservation. This was our case.

At the moment he fell into the water, a boat with three men was within a few yards of the spot, and actually sailed over the spot where he sank. Cries of “Shame!” from the crowd collected upon the bank of the river, had no effect in rousing these people to attempt the rescue of a perishing fellow-creature. The boat passed on. The drowning man again rose to the surface, the convulsive motion of his hands and feet visible above the water, but it was evident that the struggle would be his last.

“Is it possible that they will let a human being perish, and so near the shore, when an oar held out would save his life?” was the agonising question at my heart, as I gazed, half-maddened by excitement, on the fearful spectacle. The eyes of a multitude were fixed upon the same object—but not a hand stirred. Every one seemed to expect from his fellow an effort which he was incapable of attempting himself.

At this moment—splash! a sailor plunged into the water from the deck of a neighbouring vessel, and dived after the drowning man. A deep “Thank God!” burst from my heart. I drew a freer breath as the brave fellow’s head appeared above the water. He called to the man in the boat to throw him an oar, or the drowning man would be the death of them both. Slowly they put back the boat—the oar was handed; but it came too late! The sailor, whose name was Cook, had been obliged to shake off the hold of the dying man to save his own life. He dived again to the bottom, and succeeded in bringing to shore the body of the unfortunate being he had vainly endeavoured to succour. Shortly after, he came on board our vessel, foaming with passion at the barbarous indifference manifested by the men in the boat.

“Had they given me the oar in time, I could have saved him. I knew him well—he was an excellent fellow, and a good seaman. He has left a wife and three children in Liverpool. Poor Jane!—how can I tell her that I could not save her husband?”

He wept bitterly, and it was impossible for any of us to witness his emotion without joining in his grief.

From the mate I learned that this same young man had saved the lives of three women and a child when the boat was swamped at Grosse Isle, in attempting to land the passengers from the Horsley Hill.

Such acts of heroism are common in the lower walks of life. Thus, the purest gems are often encased in the rudest crust; and the finest feelings of the human heart are fostered in the chilling atmosphere of poverty.

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While this sad event occupied all our thoughts, and gave rise to many painful reflections, an exclamation of unqualified delight at once changed the current of our thoughts, and filled us with surprise and pleasure. Maggie Grant had fainted in the arms of her husband.

Yes, there was Tam—her dear, reckless Tam, after all her tears and lamentations, pressing his young wife to his heart, and calling her by a thousand endearing pet names.

He had met with some countrymen at Quebec, had taken too much whiskey on the joyful occasion, and lost his passage in the Anne, but had followed, a few hours later, in another steam-boat; and he assured the now happy Maggie, as he kissed the infant Tam, whom she held up to his admiring gaze, that he never would be guilty of the like again. Perhaps he kept his word; but I much fear that the first temptation would make the lively laddie forget his promise.

Our luggage having been removed to the Custom-house, including our bedding, the captain collected all the ship's flags for our accommodation, of which we formed a tolerably comfortable bed; and if our dreams were of England, could it be otherwise, with her glorious flag wrapped around us, and our heads resting upon the Union Jack?

In the morning we were obliged to visit the city to make the necessary arrangements for our upward journey.

The day was intensely hot. A bank of thunderclouds lowered heavily above the mountain, and the close, dusty streets were silent, and nearly deserted. Here and there might be seen a group of anxious-looking, care-worn, sickly emigrants, seated against a wall among their packages, and sadly ruminating upon their future prospects.

The sullen toll of the death-bell, the exposure of ready-made coffins in the undertakers' windows, and the oft-recurring notice placarded on the walls, of funerals furnished at such and such a place, at cheapest rate and shortest notice, painfully reminded us, at every turning of the street, that death was everywhere—perhaps lurking in our very path; we felt no desire to examine the beauties of the place. With this ominous feeling pervading our minds, public buildings possessed few attractions, and we determined to make our stay as short as possible.

Compared with the infected city, our ship appeared an ark of safety, and we returned to it with joy and confidence, too soon to be destroyed. We had scarcely re-entered our cabin, when tidings were brought to us that the cholera had made its appearance: a brother of the captain had been attacked.

It was advisable that we should leave the vessel immediately, before the intelligence could reach the health-officers. A few minutes sufficed to make the necessary

preparations; and in less than half an hour we found ourselves occupying comfortable apartments in Goodenough's hotel, and our passage taken in the stage for the following morning.

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The transition was like a dream. The change from the close, rank ship, to large, airy, well-furnished rooms and clean attendants, was a luxury we should have enjoyed had not the dread of cholera involved all things around us in gloom and apprehension. No one spoke upon the subject; and yet it was evident that it was uppermost in the thoughts of all. Several emigrants had died of the terrible disorder during the week, beneath the very roof that sheltered us, and its ravages, we were told, had extended up the country as far as Kingston; so that it was still to be the phantom of our coming journey, if we were fortunate enough to escape from its head-quarters.

At six o'clock the following morning, we took our places in the coach for Lachine, and our fears of the plague greatly diminished as we left the spires of Montreal in the distance. The journey from Montreal westward has been so well described by many gifted pens, that I shall say little about it. The banks of the St. Lawrence are picturesque and beautiful, particularly in those spots where there is a good view of the American side. The neat farm-houses looked to me, whose eyes had been so long accustomed to the watery waste, homes of beauty and happiness; and the splendid orchards, the trees at that season of the year being loaded with ripening fruit of all hues, were refreshing and delicious.

My partiality for the apples was regarded by a fellow-traveller with a species of horror. "Touch them not, if you value your life." Every draught of fresh air and water inspired me with renewed health and spirits, and I disregarded the well-meant advice; the gentlemen who gave it had just recovered from the terrible disease. He was a middle-aged man, a farmer from the Upper Province, Canadian born. He had visited Montreal on business for the first time. "Well, sir," he said, in answer to some questions put to him by my husband respecting the disease, "I can tell you what it is: a man smitten with the cholera stares death right in the face; and the torment he is suffering is so great that he would gladly die to get rid of it."

"You were fortunate, C——, to escape," said a backwood settler, who occupied the opposite seat; "many a younger man has died of it."

"Ay; but I believe I never should have taken it had it not been for some things they gave me for supper at the hotel; oysters, they called them, oysters; they were alive! I was once persuaded by a friend to eat them, and I liked them well enough at the time. But I declare to you that I felt them crawling over one another in my stomach all night. The next morning I was seized with the cholera."

"Did you swallow them whole, C——?" said the former spokesman, who seemed highly tickled by the evil doings of the oysters.

"To be sure. I tell you, the creatures are alive. You put them on your tongue, and I'll be bound you'll be glad to let them slip down as fast as you can."

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“No wonder you had the cholera,” said the backwoodsman, “you deserved it for your barbarity. If I had a good plate of oysters here, I’d teach you the way to eat them.”

Our journey during the first day was performed partly by coach, partly by steam. It was nine o’clock in the evening when we landed at Cornwell, and took coach for Prescott. The country through which we passed appeared beautiful in the clear light of the moon; but the air was cold, and slightly sharpened by frost. This seemed strange to me in the early part of September, but it is very common in Canada. Nine passengers were closely packed into our narrow vehicle, but the sides being of canvas, and the open space allowed for windows unglazed, I shivered with cold, which amounted to a state of suffering, when the day broke, and we approached the little village of Matilda. It was unanimously voted by all hands that we should stop and breakfast at a small inn by the road-side, and warm ourselves before proceeding to Prescott.

The people in the tavern were not stirring, and it was some time before an old white-headed man unclosed the door, and showed us into a room, redolent with fumes of tobacco, and darkened by paper blinds. I asked him if he would allow me to take my infant into a room with a fire.

“I guess it was a pretty considerable cold night for the like of her,” said he. “Come, I’ll show you to the kitchen; there’s always a fire there.” I cheerfully followed, accompanied by our servant.

Our entrance was unexpected, and by no means agreeable to the persons we found there. A half-clothed, red-haired Irish servant was upon her knees, kindling up the fire; and a long, thin woman, with a sharp face, and an eye like a black snake, was just emerging from a bed in the corner. We soon discovered this apparition to be the mistress of the house.

“The people can’t come in here!” she screamed in a shrill voice, darting daggers at the poor old man.

“Sure there’s a baby, and the two women critters are perished with cold,” pleaded the good old man.

“What’s that to me? They have no business in my kitchen.”

“Now, Almira, do hold on. It’s the coach has stopped to breakfast with us; and you know we don’t often get the chance.”

All this time the fair Almira was dressing as fast as she could, and eyeing her unwelcome female guests, as we stood shivering over the fire.

“Breakfast!” she muttered, “what can we give them to eat? They pass our door a thousand times without any one alighting; and now, when we are out of everything, they

must stop and order breakfast at such an unreasonable hour. How many are there of you?" turning fiercely to me.

"Nine," I answered, laconically, continuing to chafe the cold hands and feet of the child.

"Nine! That bit of beef will be nothing, cut into steaks for nine. What's to be done, Joe?" (to the old man.)

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“Eggs and ham, summat of that dried venison, and pumpkin pie,” responded the aide-de-camp, thoughtfully. “I don’t know of any other fixings.”

“Bestir yourself, then, and lay out the table, for the coach can’t stay long,” cried the virago, seizing a frying-pan from the wall, and preparing it for the reception of eggs and ham. “I must have the fire to myself. People can’t come crowding here, when I have to fix breakfast for nine; particularly when there is a good room elsewhere provided for their accommodation.” I took the hint, and retreated to the parlour, where I found the rest of the passengers walking to and fro, and impatiently awaiting the advent of breakfast.

To do Almira justice, she prepared from her scanty materials a very substantial breakfast in an incredibly short time, for which she charged us a quarter of a dollar per head.

At Prescott we embarked on board a fine new steam-boat, William IV., crowded with Irish emigrants, proceeding to Cobourg and Toronto.

While pacing the deck, my husband was greatly struck by the appearance of a middle-aged man and his wife, who sat apart from the rest, and seemed struggling with intense grief, which, in spite of all their efforts at concealment, was strongly impressed upon their features. Some time after, I fell into conversation with the woman, from whom I learned their little history. The husband was factor to a Scotch gentleman, of large landed property, who had employed him to visit Canada, and report the capabilities of the country, prior to his investing a large sum of money in wild lands. The expenses of their voyage had been paid, and everything up to that morning had prospered them. They had been blessed with a speedy passage, and were greatly pleased with the country and the people; but of what avail was all this? Their only son, a fine lad of fourteen, had died that day of the cholera, and all their hopes for the future were buried in his grave. For his sake they had sought a home in this far land; and here, at the very onset of their new career, the fell disease had taken him from them for ever—here, where, in such a crowd, the poor heart-broken mother could not even indulge her natural grief!

“Ah, for a place where I might greet!” she said; “it would relieve the burning weight at my heart. But with sae many strange eyes glowering upon me, I tak’ shame to mysel’ to greet.”

“Ah, Jeannie, my puir woman,” said the husband, grasping her hand, “ye maun bear up; ‘tis God’s will; an sinfu’ creatures like us mauna repine. But oh, madam,” turning to me, “we have sair hearts the day!”

Poor bereaved creatures, how deeply I commiserated their grief—how I respected the poor father, in the stern efforts he made to conceal from indifferent spectators the

anguish that weighed upon his mind! Tears are the best balm that can be applied to the anguish of the heart. Religion teaches man to bear his sorrows with becoming fortitude, but tears contribute largely both to soften and to heal the wounds from whence they flow.

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At Brockville we took in a party of ladies, which somewhat relieved the monotony of the cabin, and I was amused by listening to their lively prattle, and the little gossip with which they strove to wile away the tedium of the voyage. The day was too stormy to go upon deck—thunder and lightening, accompanied with torrents of rain. Amid the confusion of the elements, I tried to get a peep at the Lake of the Thousand Isles; but the driving storm blended all objects into one, and I returned wet and disappointed to my berth. We passed Kingston at midnight, and lost all our lady passengers but two. The gale continued until daybreak, and noise and confusion prevailed all night, which were greatly increased by the uproarious conduct of a wild Irish emigrant, who thought fit to make his bed upon the mat before the cabin door. He sang, he shouted, and harangued his countrymen on the political state of the Emerald Isle, in a style which was loud if not eloquent. Sleep was impossible, whilst his stentorian lungs continued to pour forth torrents of unmeaning sound.

Our Dutch stewardess was highly enraged. His conduct, she said, “was perfectly ondacent.” She opened the door, and bestowing upon him several kicks, bade him get away “out of that,” or she would complain to the captain.

In answer to this remonstrance, he caught her by the foot, and pulled her down. Then waving the tattered remains of his straw hat in the air, he shouted with an air of triumph, “Git out wid you, you ould witch! Shure the ladies, the purty darlints, never sent you wid that ugly message to Pat, who loves them so intirely that he manes to kape watch over them through the blessed night.” Then making us a ludicrous bow, he continued, “Ladies, I’m at yer sarvice; I only wish I could get a dispensation from the Pope, and I’d marry yeas all.” The stewardess bolted the door, and the mad fellow kept up such a racket that we all wished him at the bottom of the Ontario.

The following day was wet and gloomy. The storm had protracted the length of our voyage for several hours, and it was midnight when we landed at Cobourg.

THERE’S REST

(Written at midnight on the river St. Lawrence)

There’s rest when eve, with dewy fingers,
  Draws the curtains of repose
Round the west, where light still lingers,
  And the day’s last glory glows;
There’s rest in heaven’s unclouded blue,
  When twinkling stars steal one by one,
So softly on the gazer’s view,
  As if they sought his glance to shun.

There’s rest when o’er the silent meads
  The deepening shades of night advance;
And sighing through their fringe of reeds,
  The mighty stream’s clear waters glance.
There’s rest when all above is bright,
  And gently o’er these summer isles
The full moon pours her mellow light,
  And heaven on earth serenely smiles.

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There’s rest when angry storms are o’er,
And fear no longer vigil keeps;
When winds are heard to rave no more,
And ocean’s troubled spirit sleeps;
There’s rest when to the pebbly strand,
The lapsing billows slowly glide;
And, pillow’d on the golden sand,
Breathes soft and low the slumbering tide.

There’s rest, deep rest, at this still hour—
A holy calm,—a pause profound;
Whose soothing spell and dreamy power
Lulls into slumber all around.
There’s rest for labour’s hardy child,
For Nature’s tribes of earth and air,—
Whose sacred balm and influence mild,
Save guilt and sorrow, all may share.

There’s rest beneath the quiet sod,
When life and all its sorrows cease,
And in the bosom of his God
The Christian finds eternal peace,—
That peace the world cannot bestow,
The rest a Saviour’s death-pangs bought,
To bid the weary pilgrim know
A rest surpassing human thought.

CHAPTER IV

TOM WILSON’S EMIGRATION

“Of all odd fellows, this fellow was the oddest. I have seen many strange fish in my days, but I never met with his equal.”

About a month previous to our emigration to Canada, my husband said to me, “You need not expect me home to dinner to-day; I am going with my friend Wilson to Y——, to hear Mr. C—— lecture upon emigration to Canada. He has just returned from the North American provinces, and his lectures are attended by vast numbers of persons who are anxious to obtain information on the subject. I got a note from your friend B—— this morning, begging me to come over and listen to his palaver; and as Wilson thinks of emigrating in the spring, he will be my walking companion.”

“Tom Wilson going to Canada!” said I, as the door closed on my better-half. “What a backwoodsman he will make! What a loss to the single ladies of S——! What will they do without him at their balls and picnics?”

One of my sisters, who was writing at a table near me, was highly amused at this unexpected announcement. She fell back in her chair and indulged in a long and hearty laugh. I am certain that most of my readers would have joined in her laugh had they known the object which provoked her mirth. “Poor Tom is such a dreamer,” said my sister, “it would be an act of charity in Moodie to persuade him from undertaking such a wild-goose chase; only that I fancy my good brother is possessed with the same mania.”

“Nay, God forbid!” said I. “I hope this Mr. ——, with the unpronounceable name, will disgust them with his eloquence; for B—— writes me word, in his droll way, that he is a coarse, vulgar fellow, and lacks the dignity of a bear. Oh! I am certain they will return quite sickened with the Canadian project.” Thus I laid the flattering unction to my soul, little dreaming that I and mine should share in the strange adventures of this oddest of all odd creatures.

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It might be made a subject of curious inquiry to those who delight in human absurdities, if ever there were a character drawn in works of fiction so extravagantly ridiculous as some which daily experience presents to our view. We have encountered people in the broad thoroughfares of life more eccentric than ever we read of in books; people who, if all their foolish sayings and doings were duly recorded, would vie with the drollest creations of Hood, or George Colman, and put to shame the flights of Baron Munchausen. Not that Tom Wilson was a romancer; oh no! He was the very prose of prose, a man in a mist, who seemed afraid of moving about for fear of knocking his head against a tree, and finding a halter suspended to its branches—a man as helpless and as indolent as a baby.

Mr. Thomas, or Tom Wilson, as he was familiarly called by all his friends and acquaintances, was the son of a gentleman, who once possessed a large landed property in the neighbourhood; but an extravagant and profligate expenditure of the income which he derived from a fine estate which had descended from father to son through many generations, had greatly reduced the circumstances of the elder Wilson. Still, his family held a certain rank and standing in their native county, of which his evil courses, bad as they were, could not wholly deprive them. The young people—and a very large family they made of sons and daughters, twelve in number—were objects of interest and commiseration to all who knew them, while the worthless father was justly held in contempt and detestation. Our hero was the youngest of the six sons; and from his childhood he was famous for his nothing-to-doishness. He was too indolent to engage heart and soul in the manly sports of his comrades; and he never thought it necessary to commence learning his lessons until the school had been in an hour. As he grew up to man's estate, he might be seen dawdling about in a black frock-coat, jean trousers, and white kid gloves, making lazy bows to the pretty girls of his acquaintance; or dressed in a green shooting-jacket, with a gun across his shoulder, sauntering down the wooded lanes, with a brown spaniel dodging at his heels, and looking as sleepy and indolent as his master.

The slowness of all Tom's movements was strangely contrasted with his slight, and symmetrical figure; that looked as if it only awaited the will of the owner to be the most active piece of human machinery that ever responded to the impulses of youth and health. But then, his face! What pencil could faithfully delineate features at once so comical and lugubrious—features that one moment expressed the most solemn seriousness, and the next, the most grotesque and absurd abandonment to mirth? In him, all extremes appeared to meet; the man was a contradiction to himself. Tom was a person of few words, and so intensely lazy that it required a strong effort of will to enable him to answer the questions of inquiring friends; and when at length aroused to exercise his colloquial powers, he performed the task in so original a manner that it never failed to upset the gravity of the interrogator. When he raised his large, prominent, leaden-coloured eyes from the ground, and looked the inquirer steadily in the face, the effect was irresistible; the laugh would come—do your best to resist it.

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Poor Tom took this mistimed merriment in very good part, generally answering with a ghastly contortion which he meant for a smile, or, if he did trouble himself to find words, with, “Well, that’s funny! What makes you laugh? At me, I suppose? I don’t wonder at it; I often laugh at myself.”

Tom would have been a treasure to an undertaker. He would have been celebrated as a mute; he looked as if he had been born in a shroud, and rocked in a coffin. The gravity with which he could answer a ridiculous or impertinent question completely disarmed and turned the shafts of malice back upon his opponent. If Tom was himself an object of ridicule to many, he had a way of quietly ridiculing others that bade defiance to all competition. He could quiz with a smile, and put down insolence with an incredulous stare. A grave wink from those dreamy eyes would destroy the veracity of a travelled dandy for ever.

Tom was not without use in his day and generation; queer and awkward as he was, he was the soul of truth and honour. You might suspect his sanity—a matter always doubtful—but his honesty of heart and purpose, never.

When you met Tom in the streets, he was dressed with such neatness and care (to be sure it took him half the day to make his toilet), that it led many persons to imagine that this very ugly young man considered himself an Adonis; and I must confess that I rather inclined to this opinion. He always paced the public streets with a slow, deliberate tread, and with his eyes fixed intently on the ground—like a man who had lost his ideas, and was diligently employed in searching for them. I chanced to meet him one day in this dreamy mood.

“How do you do, Mr. Wilson?” He stared at me for several minutes, as if doubtful of my presence or identity.

“What was that you said?”

I repeated the question; and he answered, with one of his incredulous smiles—

“Was it to me you spoke? Oh, I am quite well, or I should not be walking here. By the way, did you see my dog?”

“How should I know your dog?”

“They say he resembles me. He’s a queer dog, too; but I never could find out the likeness. Good night!”

This was at noonday; but Tom had a habit of taking light for darkness, and darkness for light, in all he did or said. He must have had different eyes and ears, and a different way of seeing, hearing, and comprehending, than is possessed by the generality of his species; and to such a length did he carry this abstraction of soul and sense, that he

would often leave you abruptly in the middle of a sentence; and if you chanced to meet him some weeks after, he would resume the conversation with the very word at which he had cut short the thread of your discourse.

A lady once told him in jest that her youngest brother, a lad of twelve years old, had called his donkey Braham, in honour of the great singer of that name. Tom made no answer, but started abruptly away. Three months after, she happened to encounter him on the same spot, when he accosted her, without any previous salutation,

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“You were telling me about a donkey, Miss ——, a donkey of your brother’s—Braham, I think you called him—yes, Braham; a strange name for an ass! I wonder what the great Mr. Braham would say to that. Ha, ha, ha!”

“Your memory must be excellent, Mr. Wilson, to enable you to remember such a trifling circumstance all this time.”

“Trifling, do you call it? Why, I have thought of nothing else ever since.”

From traits such as these my readers will be tempted to imagine him brother to the animal who had dwelt so long in his thoughts; but there were times when he surmounted this strange absence of mind, and could talk and act as sensibly as other folks.

On the death of his father, he emigrated to New South Wales, where he contrived to doze away seven years of his valueless existence, suffering his convict servants to rob him of everything, and finally to burn his dwelling. He returned to his native village, dressed as an Italian mendicant, with a monkey perched upon his shoulder, and playing airs of his own composition upon a hurdy-gurdy. In this disguise he sought the dwelling of an old bachelor uncle, and solicited his charity. But who that had once seen our friend Tom could ever forget him? Nature had no counterpart of one who in mind and form was alike original. The good-natured old soldier, at a glance, discovered his hopeful nephew, received him into his house with kindness, and had afforded him an asylum ever since.

One little anecdote of him at this period will illustrate the quiet love of mischief with which he was imbued. Travelling from W—— to London in the stage-coach (railways were not invented in those days), he entered into conversation with an intelligent farmer who sat next to him; New South Wales, and his residence in that colony, forming the leading topic. A dissenting minister who happened to be his vis-a-vis, and who had annoyed him by making several impertinent remarks, suddenly asked him, with a sneer, how many years he had been there.

“Seven,” returned Tom, in a solemn tone, without deigning a glance at his companion.

“I thought so,” responded the other, thrusting his hands into his breeches pockets. “And pray, sir, what were you sent there for?”

“Stealing pigs,” returned the incorrigible Tom, with the gravity of a judge. The words were scarcely pronounced when the questioner called the coachman to stop, preferring a ride outside in the rain to a seat within with a thief. Tom greatly enjoyed the hoax, which he used to tell with the merriest of all grave faces.

Besides being a devoted admirer of the fair sex, and always imagining himself in love with some unattainable beauty, he had a passionate craze for music, and played upon the violin and flute with considerable taste and execution. The sound of a favourite melody operated upon the breathing automaton like magic, his frozen faculties experienced a sudden thaw, and the stream of life leaped and gambolled for a while with uncontrollable vivacity. He laughed, danced, sang, and made love in a breath, committing a thousand mad vagaries to make you acquainted with his existence.

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My husband had a remarkably sweet-toned flute, and this flute Tom regarded with a species of idolatry.

“I break the Tenth Commandment, Moodie, whenever I hear you play upon that flute. Take care of your black wife,” (a name he had bestowed upon the coveted treasure), “or I shall certainly run off with her.”

“I am half afraid of you, Tom. I am sure if I were to die, and leave you my black wife as a legacy, you would be too much overjoyed to lament my death.”

Such was the strange, helpless, whimsical being who now contemplated an emigration to Canada. How he succeeded in the speculation the sequel will show.

It was late in the evening before my husband and his friend Tom Wilson returned from Y——. I had provided a hot supper and a cup of coffee after their long walk, and they did ample justice to my care.

Tom was in unusually high spirits, and appeared wholly bent upon his Canadian expedition.

“Mr. C—— must have been very eloquent, Mr. Wilson,” said I, “to engage your attention for so many hours.”

“Perhaps he was,” returned Tom, after a pause of some minutes, during which he seemed to be groping for words in the salt-cellar, having deliberately turned out its contents upon the tablecloth. “We were hungry after our long walk, and he gave us an excellent dinner.”

“But that had nothing to do with the substance of his lecture.”

“It was the substance, after all,” said Moodie, laughing; “and his audience seemed to think so, by the attention they paid to it during the discussion. But, come, Wilson, give my wife some account of the intellectual part of the entertainment.”

“What! I—I—I—I give an account of the lecture? Why, my dear fellow, I never listened to one word of it!”

“I thought you went to Y—— on purpose to obtain information on the subject of emigration to Canada?”

“Well, and so I did; but when the fellow pulled out his pamphlet, and said that it contained the substance of his lecture, and would only cost a shilling, I thought that it was better to secure the substance than endeavour to catch the shadow—so I bought the book, and spared myself the pain of listening to the oratory of the writer. Mrs. Moodie! he had a shocking delivery, a drawling, vulgar voice; and he spoke with such a

nasal twang that I could not bear to look at him, or listen to him. He made such grammatical blunders, that my sides ached with laughing at him. Oh, I wish you could have seen the wretch! But here is the document, written in the same style in which it was spoken. Read it; you have a rich treat in store."

I took the pamphlet, not a little amused at his description of Mr. C——, for whom I felt an uncharitable dislike.

"And how did you contrive to entertain yourself, Mr. Wilson, during his long address?"

"By thinking how many fools were collected together, to listen to one greater than the rest. By the way, Moodie, did you notice farmer Flitch?"

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“No; where did he sit?”

“At the foot of the table. You must have seen him, he was too big to be overlooked. What a delightful squint he had! What a ridiculous likeness there was between him and the roast pig he was carving! I was wondering all dinner-time how that man contrived to cut up that pig; for one eye was fixed upon the ceiling, and the other leering very affectionately at me. It was very droll; was it not?”

“And what do you intend doing with yourself when you arrive in Canada?” said I.

“Find out some large hollow tree, and live like Bruin in winter by sucking my paws. In the summer there will be plenty of mast and acorns to satisfy the wants of an abstemious fellow.”

“But, joking apart, my dear fellow,” said my husband, anxious to induce him to abandon a scheme so hopeless, “do you think that you are at all qualified for a life of toil and hardship?”

“Are you?” returned Tom, raising his large, bushy, black eyebrows to the top of his forehead, and fixing his leaden eyes steadfastly upon his interrogator, with an air of such absurd gravity that we burst into a hearty laugh.

“Now what do you laugh for? I am sure I asked you a very serious question.”

“But your method of putting it is so unusual that you must excuse us for laughing.”

“I don’t want you to weep,” said Tom; “but as to our qualifications, Moodie, I think them pretty equal. I know you think otherwise, but I will explain. Let me see; what was I going to say?—ah, I have it! You go with the intention of clearing land, and working for yourself, and doing a great deal. I have tried that before in New South Wales, and I know that it won’t answer. Gentlemen can’t work like labourers, and if they could, they won’t—it is not in them, and that you will find out. You expect, by going to Canada, to make your fortune, or at least secure a comfortable independence. I anticipate no such results; yet I mean to go, partly out of a whim, partly to satisfy my curiosity whether it is a better country than New South Wales; and lastly, in the hope of bettering my condition in a small way, which at present is so bad that it can scarcely be worse. I mean to purchase a farm with the three hundred pounds I received last week from the sale of my father’s property; and if the Canadian soil yields only half what Mr. C—— says it does, I need not starve. But the refined habits in which you have been brought up, and your unfortunate literary propensities—(I say unfortunate, because you will seldom meet people in a colony who can or will sympathise with you in these pursuits)—they will make you an object of mistrust and envy to those who cannot appreciate them, and will be a source of constant mortification and disappointment to yourself. Thank God! I have no literary propensities; but in spite of the latter advantage, in all probability I shall

make no exertion at all; so that your energy, damped by disgust and disappointment, and my laziness, will end in the same thing, and we shall both return like bad pennies to our native shores. But, as I have neither wife nor child to involve in my failure, I think, without much self-flattery, that my prospects are better than yours."

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This was the longest speech I ever heard Tom utter; and, evidently astonished at himself, he sprang abruptly from the table, overset a cup of coffee into my lap, and wishing us *good day* (it was eleven o'clock at night), he ran out of the house.

There was more truth in poor Tom's words than at that moment we were willing to allow; for youth and hope were on our side in those days, and we were most ready to believe the suggestions of the latter.

My husband finally determined to emigrate to Canada, and in the hurry and bustle of a sudden preparation to depart, Tom and his affairs for a while were forgotten.

How dark and heavily did that frightful anticipation weigh upon my heart! As the time for our departure drew near, the thought of leaving my friends and native land became so intensely painful that it haunted me even in sleep. I seldom awoke without finding my pillow wet with tears. The glory of May was upon the earth—of an English May. The woods were bursting into leaf, the meadows and hedge-rows were flushed with flowers, and every grove and copsewood echoed to the warblings of birds and the humming of bees. To leave England at all was dreadful—to leave her at such a season was doubly so. I went to take a last look at the old Hall, the beloved home of my childhood and youth; to wander once more beneath the shade of its venerable oaks—to rest once more upon the velvet sward that carpeted their roots. It was while reposing beneath those noble trees that I had first indulged in those delicious dreams which are a foretaste of the enjoyments of the spirit-land. In them the soul breathes forth its aspirations in a language unknown to common minds; and that language is Poetry. Here annually, from year to year, I had renewed my friendship with the first primroses and violets, and listened with the untiring ear of love to the spring roundelay of the blackbird, whistled from among his bower of May blossoms. Here, I had discoursed sweet words to the tinkling brook, and learned from the melody of waters the music of natural sounds. In these beloved solitudes all the holy emotions which stir the human heart in its depths had been freely poured forth, and found a response in the harmonious voice of Nature, bearing aloft the choral song of earth to the throne of the Creator.

How hard it was to tear myself from scenes endeared to me by the most beautiful and sorrowful recollections, let those who have loved and suffered as I did, say. However the world had frowned upon me, Nature, arrayed in her green loveliness, had ever smiled upon me like an indulgent mother, holding out her loving arms to enfold to her bosom her erring but devoted child.

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Dear, dear England! why was I forced by a stern necessity to leave you? What heinous crime had I committed, that I, who adored you, should be torn from your sacred bosom, to pine out my joyless existence in a foreign clime? Oh, that I might be permitted to return and die upon your wave-encircled shores, and rest my weary head and heart beneath your daisy-covered sod at last! Ah, these are vain outbursts of feeling—-melancholy relapses of the spring home-sickness! Canada! thou art a noble, free, and rising country—the great fostering mother of the orphans of civilisation. The offspring of Britain, thou must be great, and I will and do love thee, land of my adoption, and of my children's birth; and, oh, dearer still to a mother's heart-land of their graves!

* * * * * *

Whilst talking over our coming separation with my sister C——, we observed Tom Wilson walking slowly up the path that led to the house. He was dressed in a new shooting-jacket, with his gun lying carelessly across his shoulder, and an ugly pointer dog following at a little distance.

"Well, Mrs. Moodie, I am off," said Tom, shaking hands with my sister instead of me. "I suppose I shall see Moodie in London. What do you think of my dog?" patting him affectionately.

"I think him an ugly beast," said C——. "Do you mean to take him with you?"

"An ugly beast!—Duchess a beast? Why she is a perfect beauty!—Beauty and the beast! Ha, ha, ha! I gave two guineas for her last night." (I thought of the old adage.) "Mrs. Moodie, your sister is no judge of a dog."

"Very likely," returned C——, laughing. "And you go to town to-night, Mr. Wilson? I thought as you came up to the house that you were equipped for shooting."

"To be sure; there is capital shooting in Canada."

"So I have heard—plenty of bears and wolves. I suppose you take out your dog and gun in anticipation?"

"True," said Tom.

"But you surely are not going to take that dog with you?"

"Indeed I am. She is a most valuable brute. The very best venture I could take. My brother Charles has engaged our passage in the same vessel."

"It would be a pity to part you," said I. "May you prove as lucky a pair as Whittington and his cat."

“Whittington! Whittington!” said Tom, staring at my sister, and beginning to dream, which he invariably did in the company of women. “Who was the gentleman?”

“A very old friend of mine, one whom I have known since I was a very little girl,” said my sister; “but I have not time to tell you more about him now. If you so to St. Paul’s Churchyard, and inquire for Sir Richard Whittington and his cat, you will get his history for a mere trifle.”

“Do not mind her, Mr. Wilson, she is quizzing you,” quoth I; “I wish you a safe voyage across the Atlantic; I wish I could add a happy meeting with your friends. But where shall we find friends in a strange land?”

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“All in good time,” said Tom. “I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you in the backwoods of Canada before three months are over. What adventures we shall have to tell one another! It will be capital. Good-bye.”

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“Tom has sailed,” said Captain Charles Wilson, stepping into my little parlour a few days after his eccentric brother’s last visit. “I saw him and Duchess safe on board. Odd as he is, I parted with him with a full heart; I felt as if we never should meet again. Poor Tom! he is the only brother left me now that I can love. Robert and I never agreed very well, and there is little chance of our meeting in this world. He is married, and settled down for life in New South Wales; and the rest—John, Richard, George, are all gone—-all!”

“Was Tom in good spirits when you parted?”

“Yes. He is a perfect contradiction. He always laughs and cries in the wrong place. ‘Charles,’ he said, with a loud laugh, ’tell the girls to get some new music against I return: and, hark ye! if I never come back, I leave them my Kangaroo Waltz as a legacy.’”

“What a strange creature!”

“Strange, indeed; you don’t know half his oddities. He has very little money to take out with him, but he actually paid for two berths in the ship, that he might not chance to have a person who snored sleep near him. Thirty pounds thrown away upon the mere chance of a snoring companion! ‘Besides, Charles,’ quoth he, ’I cannot endure to share my little cabin with others; they will use my towels, and combs, and brushes, like that confounded rascal who slept in the same berth with me coming from New South Wales, who had the impudence to clean his teeth with my toothbrush. Here I shall be all alone, happy and comfortable as a prince, and Duchess shall sleep in the after-berth, and be my queen.’ And so we parted,” continued Captain Charles. “May God take care of him, for he never could take care of himself.”

“That puts me in mind of the reason he gave for not going with us. He was afraid that my baby would keep him awake of a night. He hates children, and says that he never will marry on that account.”

* * * * * *

We left the British shores on the 1st of July, and cast anchor, as I have already shown, under the Castle of St. Louis, at Quebec, on the 2nd of September, 1832. Tom Wilson sailed the 1st of May, and had a speedy passage, and was, as we heard from his friends, comfortably settled in the bush, had bought a farm, and meant to commence

operations in the fall. All this was good news, and as he was settled near my brother's location, we congratulated ourselves that our eccentric friend had found a home in the wilderness at last, and that we should soon see him again.

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On the 9th of September, the steam-boat William IV. landed us at the then small but rising town of ——, on Lake Ontario. The night was dark and rainy; the boat was crowded with emigrants; and when we arrived at the inn, we learnt that there was no room for us—not a bed to be had; nor was it likely, owing to the number of strangers that had arrived for several weeks, that we could obtain one by searching farther. Moodie requested the use of a sofa for me during the night; but even that produced a demur from the landlord. Whilst I awaited the result in a passage, crowded with strange faces, a pair of eyes glanced upon me through the throng. Was it possible?—could it be Tom Wilson? Did any other human being possess such eyes, or use them in such an eccentric manner? In another second he had pushed his way to my side, whispering in my ear, “We met, ’twas in a crowd.”

“Tom Wilson, is that you?”

“Do you doubt it? I flatter myself that there is no likeness of such a handsome fellow to be found in the world. It is I, I swear!—although very little of me is left to swear by. The best part of me I have left to fatten the mosquitoes and black flies in that infernal bush. But where is Moodie?”

“There he is—trying to induce Mr. S——, for love or money, to let me have a bed for the night.”

“You shall have mine,” said Tom. “I can sleep upon the floor of the parlour in a blanket, Indian fashion. It’s a bargain—I’ll go and settle it with the Yankee directly; he’s the best fellow in the world! In the meanwhile here is a little parlour, which is a joint-stock affair between some of us young hopefuls for the time being. Step in here, and I will go for Moodie; I long to tell him what I think of this confounded country. But you will find it out all in good time;” and, rubbing his hands together with a most lively and mischievous expression, he shouldered his way through trunks, and boxes, and anxious faces, to communicate to my husband the arrangement he had so kindly made for us.

“Accept this gentleman’s offer, sir, till to-morrow,” said Mr. S——, “I can then make more comfortable arrangements for your family; but we are crowded—crowded to excess. My wife and daughters are obliged to sleep in a little chamber over the stable, to give our guests more room. Hard that, I guess, for decent people to locate over the horses.”

These matters settled, Moodie returned with Tom Wilson to the little parlour, in which I had already made myself at home.

“Well, now, is it not funny that I should be the first to welcome you to Canada?” said Tom.

“But what are you doing here, my dear fellow?”

“Shaking every day with the ague. But I could laugh in spite of my teeth to hear them make such a confounded rattling; you would think they were all quarrelling which should first get out of my mouth. This shaking mania forms one of the chief attractions of this new country.”

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“I fear,” said I, remarking how thin and pale he had become, “that this climate cannot agree with you.”

“Nor I with the climate. Well, we shall soon be quits, for, to let you into a secret, I am now on my way to England.”

“Impossible!”

“It is true.”

“And the farm—what have you done with it?”

“Sold it.”

“And your outfit?”

“Sold that too.”

“To whom?”

“To one who will take better care of both than I did. Ah! such a country!—such people!—such rogues! It beats Australia hollow; you know your customers there—but here you have to find them out. Such a take-in!—God forgive them! I never could take care of money; and, one way or other, they have cheated me out of all mine. I have scarcely enough left to pay my passage home. But, to provide against the worst, I have bought a young bear, a splendid fellow, to make my peace with my uncle. You must see him; he is close by in the stable.”

“To-morrow we will pay a visit to Bruin; but tonight do tell us something about yourself, and your residence in the bush.”

“You will know enough about the bush by-and-by. I am a bad historian,” he continued, stretching out his legs and yawning horribly, “a worse biographer. I never can find words to relate facts. But I will try what I can do; mind, don’t laugh at my blunders.”

We promised to be serious—no easy matter while looking at and listening to Tom Wilson, and he gave us, at detached intervals, the following account of himself:—

“My troubles began at sea. We had a fair voyage, and all that; but my poor dog, my beautiful Duchess!—that beauty in the beast—died. I wanted to read the funeral service over her, but the captain interfered—the brute!—and threatened to throw me into the sea along with the dead bitch, as the unmannerly ruffian persisted in calling my canine friend. I never spoke to him again during the rest of the voyage. Nothing happened worth relating until I got to this place, where I chanced to meet a friend who knew your brother, and I went up with him to the woods. Most of the wise men of Gotham we met

on the road were bound to the woods; so I felt happy that I was, at least, in the fashion. Mr. —— was very kind, and spoke in raptures of the woods, which formed the theme of conversation during our journey—their beauty, their vastness, the comfort and independence enjoyed by those who had settled in them; and he so inspired me with the subject that I did nothing all day but sing as we rode along—

‘A life in the woods for me;’

until we came to the woods, and then I soon learned to sing that same, as the Irishman says, on the other side of my mouth.”

Here succeeded a long pause, during which friend Tom seemed mightily tickled with his reminiscences, for he leaned back in his chair, and from time to time gave way to loud, hollow bursts of laughter.

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“Tom, Tom! are you going mad?” said my husband, shaking him.

“I never was sane, that I know of,” returned he. “You know that it runs in the family. But do let me have my laugh out. The woods! Ha! ha! When I used to be roaming through those woods, shooting—though not a thing could I ever find to shoot, for birds and beasts are not such fools as our English emigrants—and I chanced to think of you coming to spend the rest of your lives in the woods—I used to stop, and hold my sides, and laugh until the woods rang again. It was the only consolation I had.”

“Good Heavens!” said I, “let us never go to the woods.”

“You will repent if you do,” continued Tom. “But let me proceed on my journey. My bones were well-nigh dislocated before we got to D——. The roads for the last twelve miles were nothing but a succession of mud-holes, covered with the most ingenious invention ever thought of for racking the limbs, called corduroy bridges; not breeches, mind you,—for I thought, whilst jolting up and down over them, that I should arrive at my destination minus that indispensable covering. It was night when we got to Mr. ——’s place. I was tired and hungry, my face disfigured and blistered by the unremitting attentions of the blackflies that rose in swarms from the river. I thought to get a private room to wash and dress in, but there is no such thing as privacy in this country. In the bush, all things are in common; you cannot even get a bed without having to share it with a companion. A bed on the floor in a public sleeping-room! Think of that; a public sleeping-room!—men, women, and children, only divided by a paltry curtain. Oh, ye gods! think of the snoring, squalling, grumbling, puffing; think of the kicking, elbowing, and crowding; the suffocating heat, the mosquitoes, with their infernal buzzing—and you will form some idea of the misery I endured the first night of my arrival in the bush.

“But these are not half the evils with which you have to contend. You are pestered with nocturnal visitants far more disagreeable than even the mosquitoes, and must put up with annoyances more disgusting than the crowded, close room. And then, to appease the cravings of hunger, fat pork is served to you three times a day. No wonder that the Jews eschewed the vile animal; they were people of taste. Pork, morning, noon, and night, swimming in its own grease! The bishop who complained of partridges every day should have been condemned to three months’ feeding upon pork in the bush; and he would have become an anchorite, to escape the horrid sight of swine’s flesh for ever spread before him. No wonder I am thin; I have been starved—starved upon pritters and port, and that disgusting specimen of unleavened bread, yclept cakes in the pan.

“I had such a horror of the pork diet, that whenever I saw the dinner in progress I fled to the canoe, in the hope of drowning upon the waters all reminiscences of the hateful banquet; but even here the very fowls of the air and the reptiles of the deep lifted up their voices, and shouted, ‘Pork, pork, pork!’”

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M—— remonstrated with his friend for deserting the country for such minor evils as these, which, after all, he said, could easily be borne.

“Easily borne!” exclaimed the indignant Wilson. “Go and try them; and then tell me that. I did try to bear them with a good grace, but it would not do. I offended everybody with my grumbling. I was constantly reminded by the ladies of the house that gentlemen should not come to this country without they were able to put up with a *little* inconvenience; that I should make as good a settler as a butterfly in a beehive; that it was impossible to be nice about food and dress in the *bush*; that people must learn to eat what they could get, and be content to be shabby and dirty, like their neighbours in the *bush*,—until that horrid word *bush* became synonymous with all that was hateful and revolting in my mind.

“It was impossible to keep anything to myself. The children pulled my books to pieces to look at the pictures; and an impudent, bare-legged Irish servant-girl took my towels to wipe the dishes with, and my clothes-brush to black the shoes—an operation which she performed with a mixture of soot and grease. I thought I should be better off in a place of my own, so I bought a wild farm that was recommended to me, and paid for it double what it was worth. When I came to examine my estate, I found there was no house upon it, and I should have to wait until the fall to get one put up, and a few acres cleared for cultivation. I was glad to return to my old quarters.

“Finding nothing to shoot in the woods, I determined to amuse myself with fishing; but Mr. —— could not always lend his canoe, and there was no other to be had. To pass away the time, I set about making one. I bought an axe, and went to the forest to select a tree. About a mile from the lake, I found the largest pine I ever saw. I did not much like to try my maiden hand upon it, for it was the first and the last tree I ever cut down. But to it I went; and I blessed God that it reached the ground without killing me in its way thither. When I was about it, I thought I might as well make the canoe big enough; but the bulk of the tree deceived me in the length of my vessel, and I forgot to measure the one that belonged to Mr. ——. It took me six weeks hollowing it out, and when it was finished, it was as long as a sloop-of-war, and too unwieldy for all the oxen in the township to draw it to the water. After all my labour, my combats with those wood-demons the black-flies, sand-flies, and mosquitoes, my boat remains a useless monument of my industry. And worse than this, the fatigue I had endured while working at it late and early, brought on the ague; which so disgusted me with the country that I sold my farm and all my traps for an old song; purchased Bruin to bear me company on my voyage home; and the moment I am able to get rid of this tormenting fever, I am off.”

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Argument and remonstrance were alike in vain, he could not be dissuaded from his purpose. Tom was as obstinate as his bear.

The next morning he conducted us to the stable to see Bruin. The young denizen of the forest was tied to the manger, quietly masticating a cob of Indian corn, which he held in his paw, and looked half human as he sat upon his haunches, regarding us with a solemn, melancholy air. There was an extraordinary likeness, quite ludicrous, between Tom and the bear. We said nothing, but exchanged glances. Tom read our thoughts.

“Yes,” said he, “there is a strong resemblance; I saw it when I bought him. Perhaps we are brothers;” and taking in his hand the chain that held the bear, he bestowed upon him sundry fraternal caresses, which the ungrateful Bruin returned with low and savage growls.

“He can’t flatter. He’s all truth and sincerity. A child of nature, and worthy to be my friend; the only Canadian I ever mean to acknowledge as such.”

About an hour after this, poor Tom was shaking with ague, which in a few days reduced him so low that I began to think he never would see his native shores again. He bore the affliction very philosophically, and all his well days he spent with us.

One day my husband was absent, having accompanied Mr. S—— to inspect a farm, which he afterwards purchased, and I had to get through the long day at the inn in the best manner I could. The local papers were soon exhausted. At that period they possessed little or no interest for me. I was astonished and disgusted at the abusive manner in which they were written, the freedom of the press being enjoyed to an extent in this province unknown in more civilised communities.

Men, in Canada, may call one another rogues and miscreants, in the most approved Billingsgate, through the medium of the newspapers, which are a sort of safety-valve to let off all the bad feelings and malignant passions floating through the country, without any dread of the horsewhip. Hence it is the commonest thing in the world to hear one editor abusing, like a pickpocket, an opposition brother; calling him a reptile—a crawling thing—a calumniator—a hired vendor of lies; and his paper a smut-machine—a vile engine of corruption, as base and degraded as the proprietor, &c. Of this description was the paper I now held in my hand, which had the impudence to style itself the Reformer—not of morals or manners, certainly, if one might judge by the vulgar abuse that defiled every page of the precious document. I soon flung it from me, thinking it worthy of the fate of many a better production in the olden times, that of being burned by the common hangman; but, happily, the office of hangman has become obsolete in Canada, and the editors of these refined journals may go on abusing their betters with impunity.

Books I had none, and I wished that Tom would make his appearance, and amuse me with his oddities; but he had suffered so much from the ague the day before that when he did enter the room to lead me to dinner, he looked like a walking corpse—the dead among the living! so dark, so livid, so melancholy, it was really painful to look upon him.

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“I hope the ladies who frequent the ordinary won’t fall in love with me,” said he, grinning at himself in the miserable looking-glass that formed the case of the Yankee clock, and was ostentatiously displayed on a side table; “I look quite killing to-day. What a comfort it is, Mrs. M——, to be above all rivalry.”

In the middle of dinner, the company was disturbed by the entrance of a person who had the appearance of a gentleman, but who was evidently much flustered with drinking. He thrust his chair in between two gentlemen who sat near the head of the table, and in a loud voice demanded fish.

“Fish, sir?” said the obsequious waiter, a great favourite with all persons who frequented the hotel; “there is no fish, sir. There was a fine salmon, sir, had you come sooner; but ’tis all eaten, sir.”

“Then fetch me some.”

“I’ll see what I can do, sir,” said the obliging Tim, hurrying out.

Tom Wilson was at the head of the table, carving a roast pig, and was in the act of helping a lady, when the rude fellow thrust his fork into the pig, calling out as he did so —

“Hold, sir! give me some of that pig! You have eaten among you all the fish, and now you are going to appropriate the best parts of the pig.”

Tom raised his eyebrows, and stared at the stranger in his peculiar manner, then very coolly placed the whole of the pig on his plate. “I have heard,” he said, “of dog eating dog, but I never before saw pig eating pig.”

“Sir! do you mean to insult me?” cried the stranger, his face crimsoning with anger.

“Only to tell you, sir, that you are no gentleman. Here, Tim,” turning to the waiter, “go to the stable and bring in my bear; we will place him at the table to teach this man how to behave himself in the presence of ladies.”

A general uproar ensued; the women left the table, while the entrance of the bear threw the gentlemen present into convulsions of laughter. It was too much for the human biped; he was forced to leave the room, and succumb to the bear.

My husband concluded his purchase of the farm, and invited Wilson to go with us into the country and try if change of air would be beneficial to him; for in his then weak state it was impossible for him to return to England. His funds were getting very low, and Tom thankfully accepted the offer. Leaving Bruin in the charge of Tim (who delighted in the oddities of the strange English gentleman), Tom made one of our party to ——.

THE LAMENT OF A CANADIAN EMIGRANT

Though distant, in spirit still present to me,
My best thoughts, my country, still linger with thee;
My fond heart beats quick, and my dim eyes run o’er,
When I muse on the last glance I gave to thy shore.
The chill mists of night round thy white cliffs were curl’d,
But I felt there was no spot like thee in the world—
No home to which memory so fondly would turn,
No thought that within me so madly would burn.

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But one stood beside me whose presence repress'd
The deep pang of sorrow that troubled my breast;
And the babe on my bosom so calmly reclining,
Check'd the tears as they rose, and all useless repining.
Hard indeed was the struggle, from thee forced to roam;
But for their sakes I quitted both country and home.

Bless'd Isle of the Free! I must view thee no more;
My fortunes are cast on this far-distant shore;
In the depths of dark forests my soul droops her wings;
In tall boughs above me no merry bird sings;
The sigh of the wild winds—the rush of the floods—
Is the only sad music that wakens the woods.

In dreams, lovely England! my spirit still hails
Thy soft waving woodlands, thy green, daisied vales.
When my heart shall grow cold to the mother that bore me,
When my soul, dearest Nature! shall cease to adore thee,
And beauty and virtue no longer impart
Delight to my bosom, and warmth to my heart,
Then the love I have cherish'd, my country, for thee,
In the breast of thy daughter extinguish'd shall be.

CHAPTER V

OUR FIRST SETTLEMENT, AND THE BORROWING SYSTEM

To lend, or not to lend—is that the question?

"Those who go a-borrowing, go a-sorrowing," saith the old adage; and a wiser saw never came out of the mouth of experience. I have tested the truth of this proverb since my settlement in Canada, many, many times, to my cost; and what emigrant has not? So averse have I ever been to this practice, that I would at all times rather quietly submit to a temporary inconvenience than obtain anything I wanted in this manner. I verily believe that a demon of mischief presides over borrowed goods, and takes a wicked pleasure in playing off a thousand malicious pranks upon you the moment he enters your dwelling. Plates and dishes, that had been the pride and ornament of their own cupboard for years, no sooner enter upon foreign service than they are broken; wine-glasses and tumblers, that have been handled by a hundred careless wenches in safety, scarcely pass into the hands of your servants when they are sure to tumble upon the floor, and the accident turns out a compound fracture. If you borrow a garment of any kind, be sure that you will tear it; a watch, that you will break it; a jewel, that you will lose it; a book, that it will be stolen from you. There is no end to the trouble and

vexation arising out of this evil habit. If you borrow a horse, and he has the reputation of being the best-behaved animal in the district, you no sooner become responsible for his conduct than he loses his character. The moment that you attempt to drive him, he shows that he has a will of his own, by taking the reins into his own management, and running away in a contrary direction to the road that you wished him to travel. He never gives over his eccentric capers until he has broken his own knees, and the borrowed carriage and harness. So anxious are you about his safety, that you have not a moment to bestow upon your own. And why?—the beast is borrowed, and you are expected to return him in as good condition as he came to you.

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But of all evils, to borrow money is perhaps the worst. If of a friend, he ceases to be one the moment you feel that you are bound to him by the heavy clog of obligation. If of a usurer, the interest, in this country, soon doubles the original sum, and you owe an increasing debt, which in time swallows up all you possess.

When we first came to the colony, nothing surprised me more than the extent to which this pernicious custom was carried, both by the native Canadians, the European settlers, and the lower order of Americans. Many of the latter had spied out the goodness of the land, and *borrowed* various portions of it, without so much as asking leave of the absentee owners. Unfortunately, our new home was surrounded by these odious squatters, whom we found as ignorant as savages, without their courtesy and kindness.

The place we first occupied was purchased of Mr. B——, a merchant, who took it in payment of sundry large debts which the owner, a New England loyalist, had been unable to settle. Old Joe R——, the present occupant, had promised to quit it with his family, at the commencement of sleighing; and as the bargain was concluded in the month of September, and we were anxious to plough for fall wheat, it was necessary to be upon the spot. No house was to be found in the immediate neighbourhood, save a small dilapidated log tenement, on an adjoining farm (which was scarcely reclaimed from the bush) that had been some months without an owner. The merchant assured is that this could be made very comfortable until such time as it suited R—— to remove, and the owner was willing to let us have it for the moderate sum of four dollars a month.

Trusting to Mr. B——'s word, and being strangers in the land, we never took the precaution to examine this delightful summer residence before entering upon it, but thought ourselves very fortunate in obtaining a temporary home so near our own property, the distance not exceeding half a mile. The agreement was drawn up, and we were told that we could take possession whenever it suited us.

The few weeks that I had sojourned in the country had by no means prepossessed me in its favour. The home-sickness was sore upon me, and all my solitary hours were spent in tears. My whole soul yielded itself up to a strong and overpowering grief. One simple word dwelt for ever in my heart, and swelled it to bursting—"Home!" I repeated it waking a thousand times a day, and my last prayer before I sank to sleep was still "Home! Oh, that I could return, if only to die at home!" And nightly I did return; my feet again trod the daisied meadows of England; the song of her birds was in my ears; I wept with delight to find myself once more wandering beneath the fragrant shade of her green hedge-rows; and I awoke to weep in earnest when I found it but a dream. But this is all digression, and has nothing to do with our unseen dwelling. The reader must bear with me in my fits of melancholy, and take me as I am.

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It was the 22nd September that we left the Steam-boat Hotel, to take possession of our new abode. During the three weeks we had sojourned at ——, I had not seen a drop of rain, and I began to think that the fine weather would last for ever; but this eventful day arose in clouds. Moodie had hired a covered carriage to convey the baby, the servant-maid, and myself to the farm, as our driver prognosticated a wet day; while he followed with Tom Wilson and the teams that conveyed our luggage.

The scenery through which we were passing was so new to me, so unlike anything that I had ever beheld before, that in spite of its monotonous character, it won me from my melancholy, and I began to look about me with considerable interest. Not so my English servant, who declared that the woods were frightful to look upon; that it was a country only fit for wild beasts; that she hated it with all her heart and soul, and would go back as soon as she was able.

About a mile from the place of our destination the rain began to fall in torrents, and the air, which had been balmy as a spring morning, turned as chilly as that of a November day. Hannah shivered; the baby cried, and I drew my summer shawl as closely round as possible, to protect her from the sudden change in our hitherto delightful temperature. Just then, the carriage turned into a narrow, steep path, overhung with lofty woods, and after labouring up it with considerable difficulty, and at the risk of breaking our necks, it brought us at length to a rocky upland clearing, partially covered with a second growth of timber, and surrounded on all sides by the dark forest.

“I guess,” quoth our Yankee driver, “that at the bottom of this ’ere swell, you’ll find yourself to hum;” and plunging into a short path cut through the wood, he pointed to a miserable hut, at the bottom of a steep descent, and cracking his whip, exclaimed, “’Tis a smart location that. I wish you Britishers may enjoy it.”

I gazed upon the place in perfect dismay, for I had never seen such a shed called a house before. “You must be mistaken; that is not a house, but a cattle-shed, or pig-sty.”

The man turned his knowing, keen eye upon me, and smiled, half-humorously, half-maliciously, as he said—

“You were raised in the old country, I guess; you have much to learn, and more, perhaps, than you’ll like to know, before the winter is over.”

I was perfectly bewildered—I could only stare at the place, with my eyes swimming in tears; but as the horses plunged down into the broken hollow, my attention was drawn from my new residence to the perils which endangered life and limb at every step. The driver, however, was well used to such roads, and, steering us dexterously between the black stumps, at length drove up, not to the door, for there was none to the house, but to the open space from which that absent but very necessary appendage had been removed. Three young steers and two heifers,

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which the driver proceeded to drive out, were quietly reposing upon the floor. A few strokes of his whip, and a loud burst of gratuitous curses, soon effected an ejectment; and I dismounted, and took possession of this untenable tenement. Moodie was not yet in sight with the teams. I begged the man to stay until he arrived, as I felt terrified at being left alone in this wild, strange-looking place. He laughed, as well he might, at our fears, and said that he had a long way to go, and must be off; then, cracking his whip, and nodding to the girl, who was crying aloud, he went his way, and Hannah and myself were left standing in the middle of the dirty floor.

The prospect was indeed dreary. Without, pouring rain; within, a fireless hearth; a room with but one window, and that containing only one whole pane of glass; not an article of furniture to be seen, save an old painted pine-wood cradle, which had been left there by some freak of fortune. This, turned upon its side, served us for a seat, and there we impatiently awaited the arrival of Moodie, Wilson, and a man whom the former had hired that morning to assist on the farm. Where they were all to be stowed might have puzzled a more sagacious brain than mine. It is true there was a loft, but I could see no way of reaching it, for ladder there was none, so we amused ourselves, while waiting for the coming of our party, by abusing the place, the country, and our own dear selves for our folly in coming to it.

Now, when not only reconciled to Canada, but loving it, and feeling a deep interest in its present welfare, and the fair prospect of its future greatness, I often look back and laugh at the feelings with which I then regarded this noble country.

When things come to the worst, they generally mend. The males of our party no sooner arrived than they set about making things more comfortable. James, our servant, pulled up some of the decayed stumps, with which the small clearing that surrounded the shanty was thickly covered, and made a fire, and Hannah roused herself from the stupor of despair, and seized the corn-broom from the top of the loaded waggon, and began to sweep the house, raising such an intolerable cloud of dust that I was glad to throw my cloak over my head, and run out of doors, to avoid suffocation. Then commenced the awful bustle of unloading the two heavily-loaded waggons. The small space within the house was soon entirely blocked up with trunks and packages of all descriptions. There was scarcely room to move, without stumbling over some article of household stuff.

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The rain poured in at the open door, beat in at the shattered window, and dropped upon our heads from the holes in the roof. The wind blew keenly through a thousand apertures in the log walls; and nothing could exceed the uncomfortableness of our situation. For a long time the box which contained a hammer and nails was not to be found. At length Hannah discovered it, tied up with some bedding which she was opening out in order to dry. I fortunately spied the door lying among some old boards at the back of the house, and Moodie immediately commenced fitting it to its place. This, once accomplished, was a great addition to our comfort. We then nailed a piece of white cloth entirely over the broken window, which, without diminishing the light, kept out the rain. James constructed a ladder out of the old bits of boards, and Tom Wilson assisted him in stowing the luggage away in the loft.

But what has this picture of misery and discomfort to do with borrowing? Patience, my dear, good friends; I will tell you all about it by-and-by.

While we were all busily employed—even the poor baby, who was lying upon a pillow in the old cradle, trying the strength of her lungs, and not a little irritated that no one was at leisure to regard her laudable endeavours to make herself heard—the door was suddenly pushed open, and the apparition of a woman squeezed itself into the crowded room. I left off arranging the furniture of a bed, that had been just put up in a corner, to meet my unexpected, and at that moment, not very welcome guest. Her whole appearance was so extraordinary that I felt quite at a loss how to address her.

Imagine a girl of seventeen or eighteen years of age, with sharp, knowing-looking features, a forward, impudent carriage, and a pert, flippant voice, standing upon one of the trunks, and surveying all our proceedings in the most impertinent manner. The creature was dressed in a ragged, dirty purple stuff gown, cut very low in the neck, with an old red cotton handkerchief tied over her head; her uncombed, tangled locks falling over her thin, inquisitive face, in a state of perfect nature. Her legs and feet were bare, and, in her coarse, dirty red hands, she swung to and fro an empty glass decanter.

“What can she want?” I asked myself. “What a strange creature!”

And there she stood, staring at me in the most unceremonious manner, her keen black eyes glancing obliquely to every corner of the room, which she examined with critical exactness.

Before I could speak to her, she commenced the conversation by drawling through her nose, “Well, I guess you are fixing here.”

I thought she had come to offer her services; and I told her that I did not want a girl, for I had brought one out with me.

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“How!” responded the creature, “I hope you don’t take me for a help. I’d have you to know that I’m as good a lady as yourself. No; I just stepped over to see what was going on. I seed the teams pass our’n about noon, and I says to father, ’Them strangers are cum; I’ll go and look arter them.’ ‘Yes,’ says he, ’do—and take the decanter along. May be they’ll want one to put their whiskey in.’ ’I’m goin to,’ says I; so I cum across with it, an’ here it is. But, mind—don’t break it—’tis the only one we have to hum; and father says ’tis so mean to drink out of green glass.”

My surprise increased every minute. It seemed such an act of disinterested generosity thus to anticipate wants we had never thought of. I was regularly taken in.

“My good girl,” I began, “this is really very kind—but—”

“Now, don’t go to call me ’gall’—and pass off your English airs on us. We are *genuine* Yankees, and think ourselves as good—yes, a great deal better than you. I am a young lady.”

“Indeed!” said I, striving to repress my astonishment. “I am a stranger in the country, and my acquaintance with Canadian ladies and gentlemen is very small. I did not mean to offend you by using the term girl; I was going to assure you that we had no need of the decanter. We have bottles of our own—and we don’t drink whiskey.”

“How! Not drink whiskey? Why, you don’t say! How ignorant you must be! may be they have no whiskey in the old country?”

“Yes, we have; but it is not like the Canadian whiskey. But, pray take the decanter home again—I am afraid that it will get broken in this confusion.”

“No, no; father told me to leave it—and there it is;” and she planted it resolutely down on the trunk. “You will find a use for it till you have unpacked your own.”

Seeing that she was determined to leave the bottle, I said no more about it, but asked her to tell me where the well was to be found.

“The well!” she repeated after me, with a sneer. “Who thinks of digging wells when they can get plenty of water from the creek? There is a fine water privilege not a stone’s-throw from the door,” and, jumping off the box, she disappeared as abruptly as she had entered. We all looked at each other; Tom Wilson was highly amused, and laughed until he held his sides.

“What tempted her to bring this empty bottle here?” said Moodie. “It is all an excuse; the visit, Tom, was meant for you.”

“You’ll know more about it in a few days,” said James, looking up from his work. “That bottle is not brought here for nought.”

I could not unravel the mystery, and thought no more about it, until it was again brought to my recollection by the damsel herself.

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Our united efforts had effected a complete transformation in our uncouth dwelling. Sleeping-berths had been partitioned off for the men; shelves had been put up for the accommodation of books and crockery, a carpet covered the floor, and the chairs and tables we had brought from —— gave an air of comfort to the place, which, on the first view of it, I deemed impossible. My husband, Mr. Wilson, and James, had walked over to inspect the farm, and I was sitting at the table at work, the baby creeping upon the floor, and Hannah preparing dinner. The sun shone warm and bright, and the open door admitted a current of fresh air, which tempered the heat of the fire.

“Well, I guess you look smart,” said the Yankee damsel, presenting herself once more before me. “You old country folks are so stiff, you must have every thing nice, or you fret. But, then, you can easily do it; you have stacks of money; and you can fix everything right off with money.”

“Pray take a seat,” and I offered her a chair, “and be kind enough to tell me your name. I suppose you must live in the neighbourhood, although I cannot perceive any dwelling near us.”

“My name! So you want to know my name. I arn’t ashamed of my own; ’tis Emily S ——. I am eldest daughter to the *gentleman* who owns this house.”

“What must the father be,” thought I, “if he resembles the young *lady*, his daughter?”

Imagine a young lady, dressed in ragged petticoats, through whose yawning rents peeped forth, from time to time, her bare red knees, with uncombed elf-locks, and a face and hands that looked as if they had been unwashed for a month—who did not know A from B, and despised those who did. While these reflections, combined with a thousand ludicrous images, were flitting through my mind, my strange visitor suddenly exclaimed—

“Have you done with that ’ere decanter I brought across yesterday?”

“Oh, yes! I have no occasion for it.” I rose, took it from the shelf, and placed it in her hand.

“I guess you won’t return it empty; that would be mean, father says. He wants it filled with whiskey.”

The mystery was solved, the riddle made clear. I could contain my gravity no longer, but burst into a hearty fit of laughter, in which I was joined by Hannah. Our young lady was mortally offended; she tossed the decanter from hand to hand, and glared at us with her tiger-like eyes.

“You think yourselves smart! Why do you laugh in that way?”

“Excuse me—but you have such an odd way of borrowing that I cannot help it. This bottle, it seems, was brought over for your own convenience, not for mine. I am sorry to disappoint you, but I have no whiskey.”

“I guess spirits will do as well; I know there is some in that keg, for I smells it.”

“It contains rum for the workmen.”

“Better still. I calculate when you’ve been here a few months, you’ll be too knowing to give rum to your helps. But old country folks are all fools, and that’s the reason they get so easily sucked in, and be so soon wound-up. Cum, fill the bottle, and don’t be stingy. In this country we all live by borrowing. If you want anything, why just send and borrow from us.”

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Thinking that this might be the custom of the country, I hastened to fill the decanter, hoping that I might get a little new milk for the poor weanling child in return; but when I asked my liberal visitor if she kept cows, and would lend me a little new milk for the baby, she burst out into high disdain. “Milk! Lend milk? I guess milk in the fall is worth a York shilling a quart. I cannot sell you a drop under.”

This was a wicked piece of extortion, as the same article in the town, where, of course, it was in greater request, only brought three-pence the quart.

“If you’ll pay me for it, I’ll bring you some to-morrow. But mind—cash down.”

“And when do you mean to return the rum?” I said, with some asperity.

“When father goes to the creek.” This was the name given by my neighbours to the village of P——, distant about four miles.

Day after day I was tormented by this importunate creature; she borrowed of me tea, sugar, candles, starch, blueing, irons, pots, bowls—in short, every article in common domestic use—while it was with the utmost difficulty we could get them returned. Articles of food, such as tea and sugar, or of convenience, like candles, starch, and soap, she never dreamed of being required at her hands. This method of living upon their neighbours is a most convenient one to unprincipled people, as it does not involve the penalty of stealing; and they can keep the goods without the unpleasant necessity of returning them, or feeling the moral obligation of being grateful for their use. Living eight miles from ——, I found these constant encroachments a heavy burden on our poor purse; and being ignorant of the country, and residing in such a lonely, out-of-the-way place, surrounded by these savages, I was really afraid of denying their requests.

The very day our new plough came home, the father of this bright damsel, who went by the familiar and unenviable title of Old Satan, came over to borrow it (though we afterwards found out that he had a good one of his own). The land had never been broken up, and was full of rocks and stumps, and he was anxious to save his own from injury; the consequence was that the borrowed implement came home unfit for use, just at the very time that we wanted to plough for fall wheat. The same happened to a spade and trowel, bought in order to plaster the house. Satan asked the loan of them for *one* hour for the same purpose, and we never saw them again.

The daughter came one morning, as usual, on one of these swindling expeditions, and demanded of me the loan of some fine slack. Not knowing what she meant by fine slack, and weary of her importunities, I said I had none. She went away in a rage. Shortly after she came again for some pepper. I was at work, and my work-box was open upon the table, well stored with threads and spools of all descriptions. Miss Satan cast her hawk’s eye into it, and burst out in her usual rude manner—

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“I guess you told me a tarnation big lie the other day.”

Unaccustomed to such language, I rose from my seat, and pointing to the door, told her to walk out, as I did not choose to be insulted in my own house.

“Your house! I’m sure it’s father’s,” returned the incorrigible wretch. “You told me that you had no fine slack, and you have stacks of it.”

“What is fine slack?” said I, very pettishly.

“The stuff that’s wound upon these ’ere pieces of wood,” pouncing as she spoke upon one of my most serviceable spools.

“I cannot give you that; I want it myself.”

“I didn’t ask you to give it. I only wants to borrow it till father goes to the creek.”

“I wish he would make haste, then, as I want a number of things which you have borrowed of me, and which I cannot longer do without.”

She gave me a knowing look, and carried off my spool in triumph.

I happened to mention the manner in which I was constantly annoyed by these people, to a worthy English farmer who resided near us; and he fell a-laughing, and told me that I did not know the Canadian Yankees as well as he did, or I should not be troubled with them long.

“The best way,” says he, “to get rid of them, is to ask them sharply what they want; and if they give you no satisfactory answer, order them to leave the house; but I believe I can put you in a better way still. Buy some small article of them, and pay them a trifle over the price, and tell them to bring the change. I will lay my life upon it that it will be long before they trouble you again.”

I was impatient to test the efficacy of his scheme That very afternoon Miss Satan brought me a plate of butter for sale. The price was three and ninepence; twice the sum, by-the-bye, that it was worth.

“I have no change,” giving her a dollar; “but you can bring it me to-morrow.”

Oh, blessed experiment! for the value of one quarter dollar I got rid of this dishonest girl for ever; rather than pay me, she never entered the house again.

About a month after this, I was busy making an apple-pie in the kitchen. A cadaverous-looking woman, very long-faced and witch-like, popped her ill-looking visage into the door, and drawled through her nose—

“Do you want to buy a rooster?”

Now, the sucking-pigs with which we had been regaled every day for three weeks at the tavern, were called roasters; and not understanding the familiar phrases of the country, I thought she had a sucking-pig to sell.

“Is it a good one?”

“I guess ’tis.”

“What do you ask for it?”

“Two Yorkers.”

“That is very cheap, if it is any weight. I don’t like them under ten or twelve pounds.”

“Ten or twelve pounds! Why, woman, what do you mean? Would you expect a rooster to be bigger nor a turkey?”

We stared at each other. There was evidently some misconception on my part.

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“Bring the roaster up; and if I like it, I will buy it, though I must confess that I am not very fond of roast pig.”

“Do you call this a pig?” said my she-merchant, drawing a fine game-cock from under her cloak.

I laughed heartily at my mistake, as I paid her down the money for the bonny bird. This little matter settled, I thought she would take her departure; but that rooster proved the dearest fowl to me that ever was bought.

“Do you keep backy and snuff here?” says she, sideling close up to me.

“We make no use of those articles.”

“How! Not use backy and snuff? That’s oncommon.”

She paused, then added in a mysterious, confidential tone—

“I want to ask you how your tea-caddy stands?”

“It stands in the cupboard,” said I, wondering what all this might mean.

“I know that; but have you any tea to spare?”

I now began to suspect what sort of a customer the stranger was.

“Oh, you want to borrow some? I have none to spare.”

“You don’t say so. Well now, that’s stingy. I never asked anything of you before. I am poor, and you are rich; besides, I’m troubled so with the headache, and nothing does me any good but a cup of strong tea.”

“The money I have just given you will buy a quarter of a pound of the best.”

“I guess that isn’t mine. The fowl belonged to my neighbour. She’s sick; and I promised to sell it for her to buy some physic. Money!” she added, in a coaxing tone, “Where should I get money? Lord bless you! people in this country have no money; and those who come out with piles of it, soon lose it. But Emily S—— told me that you are tarnation rich, and draw your money from the old country. So I guess you can well afford to lend a neighbour a spoonful of tea.”

“Neighbour! Where do you live, and what is your name?”

“My name is Betty Fye—old Betty Fye; I live in the log shanty over the creek, at the back of your’n. The farm belongs to my eldest son. I’m a widow with twelve sons; and ’tis —— hard to scratch along.”

“Do you swear?”

“Swear! What harm? It eases one’s mind when one’s vexed. Everybody swears in this country. My boys all swear like Sam Hill; and I used to swear mighty big oaths till about a month ago, when the Methody parson told me that if I did not leave it off I should go to a tarnation bad place; so I dropped some of the worst of them.”

“You would do wisely to drop the rest; women never swear in my country.”

“Well, you don’t say! I always heer’d they were very ignorant. Will you lend me the tea?”

The woman was such an original that I gave her what she wanted. As she was going off, she took up one of the apples I was peeling.

“I guess you have a fine orchard?”

“They say the best in the district.”

“We have no orchard to hum, and I guess you’ll want sarce.”

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“Sarce! What is sarce?”

“Not know what sarce is? You are clever! Sarce is apples cut up and dried, to make into pies in the winter. Now do you comprehend?”

I nodded.

“Well, I was going to say that I have no apples, and that you have a tarnation big few of them; and if you’ll give me twenty bushels of your best apples, and find me with half a pound of coarse thread to string them upon, I will make you a barrel of sarce on shares —that is, give you one, and keep one for myself.”

I had plenty of apples, and I gladly accepted her offer, and Mrs.
Betty Fye departed, elated with the success of her expedition.

I found to my cost, that, once admitted into the house, there was no keeping her away. She borrowed everything that she could think of, without once dreaming of restitution. I tried all ways of affronting her, but without success. Winter came, and she was still at her old pranks. Whenever I saw her coming down the lane, I used involuntarily to exclaim, “Betty Fye! Betty Fye! Fye upon Betty Fye! The Lord deliver me from Betty Fye!” The last time I was honoured with a visit from this worthy, she meant to favour me with a very large order upon my goods and chattels.

“Well, Mrs. Fye, what do you want to-day?”

“So many things that I scarce know where to begin. Ah, what a thing ’tis to be poor! First, I want you to lend me ten pounds of flour to make some Johnnie cakes.”

“I thought they were made of Indian meal?”

“Yes, yes, when you’ve got the meal. I’m out of it, and this is a new fixing of my own invention. Lend me the flour, woman, and I’ll bring you one of the cakes to taste.”

This was said very coaxingly.

“Oh, pray don’t trouble yourself. What next?” I was anxious to see how far her impudence would go, and determined to affront her if possible.

“I want you to lend me a gown, and a pair of stockings. I have to go to Oswego to see my husband’s sister, and I’d like to look decent.”

“Mrs. Fye, I never lend my clothes to any one. If I lent them to you, I should never wear them again.”

“So much the better for me,” (with a knowing grin). “I guess if you won’t lend me the gown, you will let me have some black slack to quilt a stuff petticoat, a quarter of a pound of tea and some sugar; and I will bring them back as soon as I can.”

“I wonder when that will be. You owe me so many things that it will cost you more than you imagine to repay me.”

“Sure you’re not going to mention what’s past, I can’t owe you much. But I will let you off the tea and the sugar, if you will lend me a five-dollar bill.” This was too much for my patience longer to endure, and I answered sharply—

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“Mrs. Fye, it surprises me that such proud people as you Americans should condescend to the meanness of borrowing from those whom you affect to despise. Besides, as you never repay us for what you pretend to borrow, I look upon it as a system of robbery. If strangers unfortunately settle among you, their good-nature is taxed to supply your domestic wants, at a ruinous expense, besides the mortification of finding that they have been deceived and tricked out of their property. If you would come honestly to me and say, ’I want these things, I am too poor to buy them myself, and would be obliged to you to give them to me,’ I should then acknowledge you as a common beggar, and treat you accordingly; give or not give, as it suited my convenience. But in the way in which you obtain these articles from me, you are spared even a debt of gratitude; for you well know that the many things which you have borrowed from me will be a debt owing to the Day of Judgment.”

“S’pose they are,” quoth Betty, not in the least abashed at my lecture on honesty, “you know what the Scripture saith, ’It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

“Ay, there is an answer to that in the same book, which doubtless you may have heard,” said I, disgusted with her hypocrisy, “’The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.’”

Never shall I forget the furious passion into which this too apt quotation threw my unprincipled applicant. She lifted up her voice and cursed me, using some of the big oaths temporarily discarded for conscience sake. And so she left me, and I never looked upon her face again.

When I removed to our own house, the history of which, and its former owner, I will give by-and-by, we had a bony, red-headed, ruffianly American squatter, who had “left his country for his country’s good,” for an opposite neighbour. I had scarcely time to put my house in order before his family commenced borrowing, or stealing from me. It is even worse than stealing, the things procured from you being obtained on false pretences—-adding lying to theft. Not having either an oven or a cooking stove, which at that period were not so cheap or so common as they are now, I had provided myself with a large bake-kettle as a substitute. In this kettle we always cooked hot cakes for breakfast, preferring that to the trouble of thawing the frozen bread. This man’s wife was in the habit of sending over for my kettle whenever she wanted to bake, which, as she had a large family, happened nearly every day, and I found her importunity a great nuisance.

I told the impudent lad so, who was generally sent for it; and asked him what they did to bake their bread before I came.

“I guess we had to eat cakes in the pan; but now we can borrow this kettle of your’n, mother can fix bread.”

I told him that he could have the kettle this time; but I must decline letting his mother have it in future, for I wanted it for the same purpose.

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The next day passed over. The night was intensely cold, and I did not rise so early as usual in the morning. My servant was away at a quilting bee, and we were still in bed, when I heard the latch of the kitchen-door lifted up, and a step crossed the floor. I jumped out of bed, and began to dress as fast as I could, when Philander called out, in his well-known nasal twang—

“Missus! I’m come for the kettle.”

I (through the partition): “You can’t have it this morning. We cannot get our breakfast without it.”

Philander: “Nor more can the old woman to hum,” and, snatching up the kettle, which had been left to warm on the hearth, he rushed out of the house, singing, at the top of his voice—

“Hurrah for the Yankee Boys!”

When James came home for his breakfast, I sent him across to demand the kettle, and the dame very coolly told him that when she had done with it I *might* have it, but she defied him to take it out of her house with her bread in it.

One word more about this lad, Philander, before we part with him. Without the least intimation that his company would be agreeable, or even tolerated, he favoured us with it at all hours of the day, opening the door and walking in and out whenever he felt inclined. I had given him many broad hints that his presence was not required, but he paid not the slightest attention to what I said. One morning he marched in with his hat on, and threw himself down in the rocking-chair, just as I was going to dress my baby.

“Philander, I want to attend to the child; I cannot do it with you here. Will you oblige me by going into the kitchen?”

No answer. He seldom spoke during these visits, but wandered about the room, turning over our books and papers, looking at and handling everything. Nay, I have even known him to take a lid off from the pot on the fire, to examine its contents.

I repeated my request.

Philander: “Well, I guess I shan’t hurt the young ’un. You can dress her.”

I: “But not with you here.”

Philander: “Why not? *We* never do anything that we are ashamed of.”

I: “So it seems. But I want to sweep the room—you had better get out of the dust.”

I took the broom from the corner, and began to sweep; still my visitor did not stir. The dust rose in clouds; he rubbed his eyes, and moved a little nearer to the door. Another sweep, and, to escape its inflictions, he mounted the threshold. I had him now at a fair advantage, and fairly swept him out, and shut the door in his face.

Philander (looking through the window): "Well, I guess you did me then; but 'tis deuced hard to outwit a Yankee."

This freed me from his company, and he, too, never repeated his visit; so I found by experience, that once smartly rebuked, they did not like to try their strength with you a second time.

When a sufficient time had elapsed for the drying of my twenty bushels of apples, I sent a Cornish lad, in our employ, to Betty Fye's, to inquire if they were ready, and when I should send the cart for them.

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Dan returned with a yellow, smoke-dried string of pieces, dangling from his arm. Thinking that these were a specimen of the whole, I inquired when we were to send the barrel for the rest.

“Lord, ma’am, this is all there be.”

“Impossible! All out of twenty bushels of apples!”

“Yes,” said the boy, with a grin. “The old witch told me that this was all that was left of your share; that when they were fixed enough, she put them under her bed for safety, and the mice and the children had eaten them all up but this string.”

This ended my dealings with Betty Fye.

I had another incorrigible borrower in the person of old Betty B——. This Betty was unlike the rest of my Yankee borrowers; she was handsome in her person, and remarkably civil, and she asked for the loan of everything in such a frank, pleasant manner, that for some time I hardly knew how to refuse her. After I had been a loser to a considerable extent, and declined lending her any more, she refrained from coming to the house herself, but sent in her name the most beautiful boy in the world; a perfect cherub, with regular features, blue, smiling eyes, rosy cheeks, and lovely curling auburn hair, who said, in the softest tones imaginable, that mammy had sent him, with her compliments, to the English lady to ask the loan of a little sugar or tea. I could easily have refused the mother, but I could not find it in my heart to say nay to her sweet boy.

There was something original about Betty B——, and I must give a slight sketch of her.

She lived in a lone shanty in the woods, which had been erected by lumberers some years before, and which was destitute of a single acre of clearing; yet Betty had plenty of potatoes, without the trouble of planting, or the expense of buying; she never kept a cow, yet she sold butter and milk; but she had a fashion, and it proved a convenient one to her, of making pets of the cattle of her neighbours. If our cows strayed from their pastures, they were always found near Betty’s shanty, for she regularly supplied them with salt, which formed a sort of bond of union between them; and, in return for these little attentions, they suffered themselves to be milked before they returned to their respective owners. Her mode of obtaining eggs and fowls was on the same economical plan, and we all looked upon Betty as a sort of freebooter, living upon the property of others. She had had three husbands, and he with whom she now lived was not her husband, although the father of the splendid child whose beauty so won upon my woman’s heart. Her first husband was still living (a thing by no means uncommon among persons of her class in Canada), and though they had quarrelled and parted years ago, he occasionally visited his wife to see her eldest daughter, Betty the younger, who was his child. She was now a fine girl of sixteen, as beautiful as her little brother. Betty’s second husband had been killed in one of our fields by a tree falling upon him

while ploughing under it. He was buried upon the spot, part of the blackened stump forming his monument. In truth, Betty's character was none of the best, and many of the respectable farmers' wives regarded her with a jealous eye.

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“I am so jealous of that nasty Betty B——,” said the wife of an Irish captain in the army, and our near neighbour, to me, one day as we were sitting at work together. She was a West Indian, and a negro by the mother’s side, but an uncommonly fine-looking mulatto, very passionate, and very watchful over the conduct of her husband. “Are you not afraid of letting Captain Moodie go near her shanty?”

“No, indeed; and if I were so foolish as to be jealous, it would not be of old Betty, but of the beautiful young Betty, her daughter.” Perhaps this was rather mischievous on my part, for the poor dark lady went off in a frantic fit of jealousy, but this time it was not of old Betty.

Another American squatter was always sending over to borrow a small-tooth comb, which she called a vermin destroyer; and once the same person asked the loan of a towel, as a friend had come from the States to visit her, and the only one she had, had been made into a best “pinny” for the child; she likewise begged a sight in the looking-glass, as she wanted to try on a new cap, to see if it were fixed to her mind. This woman must have been a mirror of neatness when compared with her dirty neighbours.

One night I was roused up from my bed for the loan of a pair of “steelyards.” For what purpose think you, gentle reader? To weigh a new-born infant. The process was performed by tying the poor squalling thing up in a small shawl, and suspending it to one of the hooks. The child was a fine boy, and weighed ten pounds, greatly to the delight of the Yankee father.

One of the drollest instances of borrowing I have ever heard of was told me by a friend. A maid-servant asked her mistress to go out on a particular afternoon, as she was going to have a party of her friends, and wanted the loan of the drawing-room.

It would be endless to enumerate our losses in this way; but, fortunately for us, the arrival of an English family in our immediate vicinity drew off the attention of our neighbours in that direction, and left us time to recover a little from their persecutions.

This system of borrowing is not wholly confined to the poor and ignorant; it pervades every class of society. If a party is given in any of the small villages, a boy is sent round from house to house, to collect all the plates and dishes, knives and forks, teaspoons and candlesticks, that are presentable, for the use of the company.

During my stay at the hotel, I took a dress out of my trunk, and hung it up upon a peg in my chamber, in order to remove the creases it had received from close packing. Returning from a walk in the afternoon, I found a note upon my dressing table, inviting us to spend the evening with a clergyman’s family in the village; and as it was nearly time to dress, I went to the peg to take down my gown. Was it a dream?—the gown was gone. I re-opened the trunk, to see if I had replaced it; I searched every corner of the room, but all in vain; nowhere could I discover the thing I sought. What had become

of it? The question was a delicate one, which I did not like to put to the young ladies of the truly respectable establishment; still, the loss was great, and at that moment very inconvenient. While I was deliberating on what course to pursue, Miss S—— entered the room.

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“I guess you missed your dress,” she said, with a smile.

“Do you know where it is?”

“Oh, sure. Miss L——, the dressmaker, came in just after you left. She is a very particular friend of mine, and I showed her your dress. She admired it above all things, and borrowed it, to get the pattern for Miss R——’s wedding dress. She promised to return it to-morrow.”

“Provoking! I wanted it to-night. Who ever heard of borrowing a person’s dress without the leave of the owner? Truly, this is a free-and-easy country!”

One very severe winter night, a neighbour borrowed of me a blanket—it was one of my best—for the use of a stranger who was passing the night at her house. I could not well refuse; but at that time, the world pressed me sore, and I could ill spare it. Two years elapsed, and I saw no more of my blanket; at length I sent a note to the lady, requesting it to be returned. I got a very short answer back, and the blanket, alas! worn threadbare; the borrower stating that she had sent the article, but really she did not know what to do without it, as she wanted it to cover the children’s bed. She certainly forgot that I, too, had children, who wanted covering as well as her own. But I have said so much of the ill results of others’ borrowing, that I will close this sketch by relating my own experience in this way.

After removing to the bush, many misfortunes befel us, which deprived us of our income, and reduced us to great poverty. In fact we were strangers, and the knowing ones took us in; and for many years we struggled with hardships which would have broken stouter hearts than ours, had not our trust been placed in the Almighty, who among all our troubles never wholly deserted us.

While my husband was absent on the frontier during the rebellion, my youngest boy fell very sick, and required my utmost care, both by night and day. To attend to him properly, a candle burning during the night was necessary. The last candle was burnt out; I had no money to buy another, and no fat from which I could make one. I hated borrowing; but, for the dear child’s sake, I overcame my scruples, and succeeded in procuring a candle from a good neighbour, but with strict injunctions (for it was *her last*), that I must return it if I did not require it during the night.

I went home quite grateful with my prize. It was a clear moonlight night—the dear boy was better, so I told old Jenny, my Irish servant, to go to bed, as I would lie down in my clothes by the child, and if he were worse I would get up and light the candle. It happened that a pane of glass was broken out of the window frame, and I had supplied its place by fitting in a shingle; my friend Emilia S—— had a large Tom-cat, who, when his mistress was absent, often paid me a predatory or borrowing visit; and Tom had a practice of pushing in this wooden pane, in order to pursue his lawless depredations. I

had forgotten all this, and never dreaming that Tom would appropriate such light food, I left the candle lying in the middle of the table, just under the window.

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Between sleeping and waking, I heard the pane gently pushed in. The thought instantly struck me that it was Tom, and that, for lack of something better, he might steal my precious candle.

I sprang up from the bed, just in time to see him dart through the broken window, dragging the long white candle after him. I flew to the door, and pursued him half over the field, but all to no purpose. I can see him now, as I saw him then, scampering away for dear life, with his prize trailing behind him, gleaming like a silver tail in the bright light of the moon.

Ah! never did I feel more acutely the truth of the proverb, “Those that go a-borrowing go a-sorrowing,” than I did that night. My poor boy awoke ill and feverish, and I had no light to assist him, or even to look into his sweet face, to see how far I dared hope that the light of day would find him better.

OH CANADA! THY GLOOMY WOODS

A song

Oh Canada! thy gloomy woods
Will never cheer the heart;
The murmur of thy mighty floods
But cause fresh tears to start
From those whose fondest wishes rest
Beyond the distant main;
Who, ’mid the forests of the West,
Sigh for their homes again.

I, too, have felt the chilling blight
Their shadows cast on me,
My thought by day—my dream by night—
Was of my own country.
But independent souls will brave
All hardships to be free;
No more I weep to cross the wave,
My native land to see.

But ever as a thought most bless’d,
Her distant shores will rise,
In all their spring-tide beauty dress’d.
To cheer my mental eyes.
And treasured in my inmost heart,
The friends I left behind;

But reason's voice, that bade us part,
  Now bids me be resign'd.

I see my children round me play,
  My husband's smiles approve;
I dash regretful tears away,
  And lift my thoughts above:
In humble gratitude to bless
  The Almighty hand that spread
Our table in the wilderness,
  And gave my infants bread.

CHAPTER VI

OLD SATAN AND TOM WILSON'S NOSE

"A nose, kind sir! Sure mother Nature,
With all her freaks, ne'er formed this feature.
If such were mine, I'd try and trade it,
And swear the gods had never made it."

After reducing the log cabin into some sort of order, we contrived, with the aid of a few boards, to make a bed-closet for poor Tom Wilson, who continued to shake every day with the pitiless ague. There was no way of admitting light and air into this domicile, which opened into the general apartment, but through a square hole cut in one of the planks, just wide enough to admit a man's head through the aperture. Here we made Tom a comfortable bed on the floor, and did the best we could to nurse him through his sickness. His long, thin face, emaciated with disease, and surrounded by huge black whiskers, and a beard of a week's growth, looked perfectly unearthly. He had only to stare at the baby to frighten her almost out of her wits.

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“How fond that young one is of me,” he would say; “she cries for joy at the sight of me.”

Among his curiosities, and he had many, he held in great esteem a huge nose, made hollow to fit his face, which his father, a being almost as eccentric as himself, had carved out of boxwood. When he slipped this nose over his own (which was no beautiful classical specimen of a nasal organ), it made a most perfect and hideous disguise. The mother who bore him never would have recognised her accomplished son.

Numberless were the tricks he played off with this nose. Once he walked through the streets of ——, with this proboscis attached to his face. “What a nose! Look at the man with the nose!” cried all the boys in the street. A party of Irish emigrants passed at the moment. The men, with the courtesy natural to their nation, forbore to laugh in the gentleman’s face; but after they had passed, Tom looked back, and saw them bent half double in convulsions of mirth. Tom made the party a low bow, gravely took off his nose, and put it in his pocket.

The day after this frolic, he had a very severe fit of the ague, and looked so ill that I really entertained fears for his life. The hot fit had just left him, and he lay upon his bed bedewed with a cold perspiration, in a state of complete exhaustion.

“Poor Tom,” said I, “he has passed a horrible day, but the worst is over, and I will make him a cup of coffee.” While preparing it, Old Satan came in and began to talk to my husband. He happened to sit directly opposite the aperture which gave light and air to Tom’s berth. This man was disgustingly ugly. He had lost one eye in a quarrel. It had been gouged out in the barbarous conflict, and the side of his face presented a succession of horrible scars inflicted by the teeth of his savage adversary. The nickname he had acquired through the country sufficiently testified to the respectability of his character, and dreadful tales were told of him in the neighbourhood, where he was alike feared and hated.

The rude fellow, with his accustomed insolence, began abusing the old country folks.

The English were great bullies, he said; they thought no one could fight but themselves; but the Yankees had whipped them, and would whip them again. He was not afear’d of them, he never was afear’d in his life.

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when a horrible apparition presented itself to his view. Slowly rising from his bed, and putting on the fictitious nose, while he drew his white nightcap over his ghastly and livid brow, Tom thrust his face through the aperture, and uttered a diabolical cry; then sank down upon his unseen couch as noiselessly as he had arisen. The cry was like nothing human, and it was echoed by an involuntary scream from the lips of our maid-servant and myself.

“Good God! what’s that?” cried Satan, falling back in his chair, and pointing to the vacant aperture. “Did you hear it? did you see it? It beats the universe. I never saw a ghost or the devil before!”

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Moodie, who had recognised the ghost, and greatly enjoyed the fun, pretended profound ignorance, and coolly insinuated that Old Satan had lost his senses. The man was bewildered; he stared at the vacant aperture, then at us in turn, as if he doubted the accuracy of his own vision. "'Tis tarnation odd," he said; "but the women heard it too."

"I heard a sound," I said, "a dreadful sound, but I saw no ghost."

"Sure an' 'twas himsel'," said my lowland Scotch girl, who now perceived the joke; "he was a-seeken' to gie us puir bodies a wee fricht."

"How long have you been subject to these sort of fits?" said I. "You had better speak to the doctor about them. Such fancies, if they are not attended to, often end in madness."

"Mad!" (very indignantly) "I guess I'm not mad, but as wide awake as you are. Did I not see it with my own eyes? And then the noise—I could not make such a tarnation outcry to save my life. But be it man or devil, I don't care, I'm not afear'd," doubling his fist very undecidedly at the hole. Again the ghastly head was protruded—the dreadful eyes rolled wildly in their hollow sockets, and a yell more appalling than the former rang through the room. The man sprang from his chair, which he overturned in his fright, and stood for an instant with his one-eyeball starting from his head, and glaring upon the spectre; his cheeks deadly pale; the cold perspiration streaming from his face; his lips dissevered, and his teeth chattering in his head.

"There—there—there. Look—look, it comes again!—the devil!—the devil!"

Here Tom, who still kept his eyes fixed upon his victim, gave a knowing wink, and thrust his tongue out of his mouth.

"He is coming!—he is coming!" cried the affrighted wretch; and clearing the open doorway with one leap, he fled across the field at full speed. The stream intercepted his path—he passed it at a bound, plunged into the forest, and was out of sight.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled poor Tom, sinking down exhausted on his bed. "Oh that I had strength to follow up my advantage, I would lead Old Satan such a chase that he should think his namesake was in truth behind him."

During the six weeks that we inhabited that wretched cabin, we never were troubled by Old Satan again.

As Tom slowly recovered, and began to regain his appetite, his soul sickened over the salt beef and pork, which, owing to our distance from ——, formed our principal fare. He positively refused to touch the sad bread, as my Yankee neighbours very appropriately termed the unleavened cakes in the pan; and it was no easy matter to send a man on horseback eight miles to fetch a loaf of bread.

“Do, my dear Mrs. Moodie, like a good Christian as you are, give me a morsel of the baby’s biscuit, and try and make us some decent bread. The stuff your servant gives us is uneatable,” said Wilson to me, in most imploring accents.

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“Most willingly. But I have no yeast; and I never baked in one of those strange kettles in my life.”

“I’ll go to old Joe’s wife and borrow some,” said he; “they are always borrowing of you.” Away he went across the field, but soon returned. I looked into his jug—it was empty. “No luck,” said he; “those stingy wretches had just baked a fine batch of bread, and they would neither lend nor sell a loaf; but they told me how to make their milk-emptyings.”

“Well, discuss the same;” but I much doubted if he could remember the recipe.

“You are to take an old tin pan,” said he, sitting down on the stool, and poking the fire with a stick.

“Must it be an old one?” said I, laughing.

“Of course; they said so.”

“And what am I to put into it?”

“Patience; let me begin at the beginning. Some flour and some milk—but, by George! I’ve forgot all about it. I was wondering as I came across the field why they called the yeast *milk*-emptyings, and that put the way to make it quite out of my head. But never mind; it is only ten o’clock by my watch. I having nothing to do; I will go again.”

He went. Would I had been there to hear the colloquy between him and Mrs. Joe; he described it something to this effect:—

Mrs. Joe: “Well, stranger, what do you want now?”

Tom: “I have forgotten the way you told me how to make the bread.”

Mrs. Joe: “I never told you how to make bread. I guess you are a fool. People have to raise bread before they can bake it. Pray who sent you to make game of me? I guess somebody as wise as yourself.”

Tom: “The lady at whose house I am staying.”

Mrs. Joe: “Lady! I can tell you that we have no ladies here. So the old woman who lives in the old log shanty in the hollow don’t know how to make bread. A clever wife that! Are you her husband?” (Tom shakes his head.)—“Her brother?”—(Another shake.)—“Her son? Do you hear? or are you deaf?” (Going quite close up to him.)

Tom (moving back): “Mistress, I’m not deaf; and who or what I am is nothing to you. Will you oblige me by telling me how to make the mill-emptyings; and this time I’ll put it down in my pocket-book.”

Mrs. Joe (with a strong sneer): “Mill-emptyings! Milk, I told you. So you expect me to answer your questions, and give back nothing in return. Get you gone; I’ll tell you no more about it.”

Tom (bowing very low): “Thank you for your civility. Is the old woman who lives in the little shanty near the apple-trees more obliging?”

Mrs. Joe: “That’s my husband’s mother. You may try. I guess she’ll give you an answer.” (Exit, slamming the door in his face.)

“And what did you do then ?” said I.

“Oh, went of course. The door was open, and I reconnoitred the premises before I ventured in. I liked the phiz of the old woman a deal better than that of her daughter-in-law, although it was cunning and inquisitive, and as sharp as a needle. She was busy shelling cobs of Indian corn into a barrel. I rapped at the door. She told me to come in, and in I stepped. She asked me if I wanted her. I told her my errand, at which she laughed heartily.”

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Old woman: “You are from the old country, I guess, or you would know how to make milk-emptyings. Now, I always prefer bran-emptyings. They make the best bread. The milk, I opine, gives it a sourish taste, and the bran is the least trouble.”

Tom: “Then let us have the bran, by all means. How do you make it?”

Old woman: “I put a double handful of bran into a small pot, or kettle, but a jug will do, and a teaspoonful of salt; but mind you don’t kill it with salt, for if you do, it won’t rise. I then add as much warm water, at blood-heat, as will mix it into a stiff batter. I then put the jug into a pan of warm water, and set it on the hearth near the fire, and keep it at the same heat until it rises, which it generally will do, if you attend to it, in two or three hours’ time. When the bran cracks at the top, and you see white bubbles rising through it, you may strain it into your flour, and lay your bread. It makes good bread.”

Tom: “My good woman, I am greatly obliged to you. We have no bran; can you give me a small quantity?”

Old woman: “I never give anything. You Englishers, who come out with stacks of money, can afford to buy.”

Tom: “Sell me a small quantity.”

Old woman: “I guess I will.” (Edging quite close, and fixing her sharp eyes on him.) “You must be very rich to buy bran.”

Tom (quizzically): “Oh, very rich.”

Old woman: “How do you get your money?”

Tom (sarcastically): “I don’t steal it.”

Old woman: “Pr’aps not. I guess you’ll soon let others do that for you, if you don’t take care. Are the people you live with related to you?”

Tom (hardly able to keep his gravity): “On Eve’s side. They are my friends.”

Old woman (in surprise): “And do they keep you for nothing, or do you work for your meat?”

Tom (impatiently): “Is that bran ready?” (The old woman goes to the binn, and measures out a quart of bran.) “What am I to pay you?”

Old woman: “A York shilling.”

Tom (wishing to test her honesty): “Is there any difference between a York shilling and a shilling of British currency?”

Old woman (evasively): “I guess not. Is there not a place in England called York?” (Looking up and leering knowingly in his face.)

Tom (laughing): “You are not going to come York over me in that way, or Yankee either. There is threepence for your pound of bran; you are enormously paid.”

Old woman (calling after him): “But the recipe; do you allow nothing for the recipe?”

Tom: “It is included in the price of the bran.”

“And so,” said he, “I came laughing away, rejoicing in my sleeve that I had disappointed the avaricious old cheat.”

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The next thing to be done was to set the bran rising. By the help of Tom's recipe, it was duly mixed in the coffee-pot, and placed within a tin pan, full of hot water, by the side of the fire. I have often heard it said that a watched pot never boils; and there certainly was no lack of watchers in this case. Tom sat for hours regarding it with his large heavy eyes, the maid inspected it from time to time, and scarce ten minutes were suffered to elapse without my testing the heat of the water, and the state of the emptyings; but the day slipped slowly away, and night drew on, and yet the watched pot gave no signs of vitality. Tom sighed deeply when we sat down to tea with the old fare.

"Never mind," said he, "we shall get some good bread in the morning; it must get up by that time. I will wait till then. I could almost starve before I could touch these leaden cakes."

The tea-things were removed. Tom took up his flute, and commenced a series of the wildest voluntary airs that ever were breathed forth by human lungs. Mad jigs, to which the gravest of mankind might have cut eccentric capers. We were all convulsed with laughter. In the midst of one of these droll movements, Tom suddenly hopped like a kangaroo (which feat he performed by raising himself upon tip-toes, then flinging himself forward with a stooping jerk), towards the hearth, and squinting down into the coffee-pot in the most quizzical manner, exclaimed, "Miserable chaff! If that does not make you rise nothing will."

I left the bran all night by the fire. Early in the morning I had the satisfaction of finding that it had risen high above the rim of the pot, and was surrounded by a fine crown of bubbles.

"Better late than never," thought I, as I emptied the emptyings into my flour. "Tom is not up yet. I will make him so happy with a loaf of new bread, nice home-baked bread, for his breakfast." It was my first Canadian loaf. I felt quite proud of it, as I placed it in the odd machine in which it was to be baked. I did not understand the method of baking in these ovens; or that my bread should have remained in the kettle for half an hour, until it had risen the second time, before I applied the fire to it, in order that the bread should be light. It not only required experience to know when it was in a fit state for baking, but the oven should have been brought to a proper temperature to receive the bread. Ignorant of all this, I put my unrisen bread into a cold kettle, and heaped a large quantity of hot ashes above and below it. The first intimation I had of the result of my experiment was the disagreeable odour of burning bread filling the house.

"What is this horrid smell?" cried Tom, issuing from his domicile, in his shirt sleeves. "Do open the door, Bell (to the maid); I feel quite sick."

"It is the bread," said I, taking the lid of the oven with the tongs. "Dear me, it is all burnt!"

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“And smells as sour as vinegar,” says he. “The black bread of Sparta!”

Alas! for my maiden loaf! With a rueful face I placed it on the breakfast table. “I hoped to have given you a treat, but I fear you will find it worse than the cakes in the pan.”

“You may be sure of that,” said Tom, as he stuck his knife into the loaf, and drew it forth covered with raw dough. “Oh, Mrs. Moodie! I hope you make better books than bread.”

We were all sadly disappointed. The others submitted to my failure good-naturedly, and made it the subject of many droll, but not unkindly, witicisms. For myself, I could have borne the severest infliction from the pen of the most formidable critic with more fortitude than I bore the cutting up of my first loaf of bread.

After breakfast, Moodie and Wilson rode into the town; and when they returned at night brought several long letters for me. Ah! those first kind letters from home! Never shall I forget the rapture with which I grasped them—the eager, trembling haste with which I tore them open, while the blinding tears which filled my eyes hindered me for some minutes from reading a word which they contained. Sixteen years have slowly passed away—it appears half a century—but never, never can home letters give me the intense joy those letters did. After seven years’ exile, the hope of return grows feeble, the means are still less in our power, and our friends give up all hope of our return; their letters grow fewer and colder, their expressions of attachment are less vivid; the heart has formed new ties, and the poor emigrant is nearly forgotten. Double those years, and it is as if the grave had closed over you, and the hearts that once knew and loved you know you no more.

Tom, too, had a large packet of letters, which he read with great glee. After re-perusing them, he declared his intention of setting off on his return home the next day. We tried to persuade him to stay until the following spring, and make a fair trial of the country. Arguments were thrown away upon him; the next morning our eccentric friend was ready to start.

“Good-bye!” quoth he, shaking me by the hand as if he meant to sever it from the wrist. “When next we meet it will be in New South Wales, and I hope by that time you will know how to make better bread.” And thus ended Tom Wilson’s emigration to Canada. He brought out three hundred pounds, British currency; he remained in the country just four months, and returned to England with barely enough to pay his passage home.

THE BACKWOODSMAN

Son of the isles! rave not to me
Of the old world’s pride and luxury;
Why did you cross the western deep,

Thus like a love-lorn maid to weep
O’er comforts gone and pleasures fled,
’Mid forests wild to earn your bread?

Did you expect that Art would vie
With Nature here, to please the eye;
That stately tower, and fancy cot,
Would grace each rude concession lot;
That, independent of your hearth,
Men would admit your claims to birth?

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No tyrant’s fetter binds the soul,
The mind of man’s above control;
Necessity, that makes the slave,
Has taught the free a course more brave;
With bold, determined heart to dare
The ills that all are born to share.

Believe me, youth, the truly great
Stoop not to mourn o’er fallen state;
They make their wants and wishes less,
And rise superior to distress;
The glebe they break—the sheaf they bind—
But elevates a noble mind.

Contented in my rugged cot,
Your lordly towers I envy not;
Though rude our clime and coarse our cheer,
True independence greets you here;
Amid these forests, dark and wild,
Dwells honest labour’s hardy child.

His happy lot I gladly share,
And breathe a purer, freer air;
No more by wealthy upstart spurn’d,
The bread is sweet by labour earn’d;
Indulgent heaven has bless’d the soil,
And plenty crowns the woodman’s toil.

Beneath his axe, the forest yields
Its thorny maze to fertile fields;
This goodly breadth of well-till’d land,
Well-purchased by his own right hand,
With conscience clear, he can bequeath
His children, when he sleeps in death.

CHAPTER VII

UNCLE JOE AND HIS FAMILY

“Ay, your rogue is a laughing rogue, and not a whit the less dangerous for the smile on his lip, which comes not from an honest heart, which reflects the light of the soul through the eye. All is hollow and dark within; and the contortion of the lip, like the phosophoric glow upon decayed timber, only serves to point out the rotteness within.”

Uncle Joe! I see him now before me, with his jolly red face, twinkling black eyes, and rubicund nose. No thin, weasel-faced Yankee was he, looking as if he had lived upon 'cute ideas and speculations all his life; yet Yankee he was by birth, ay, and in mind, too; for a more knowing fellow at a bargain never crossed the lakes to abuse British institutions and locate himself comfortably among despised Britishers. But, then, he had such a good-natured, fat face, such a mischievous, mirth-loving smile, and such a merry, roguish expression in those small, jet-black, glittering eyes, that you suffered yourself to be taken in by him, without offering the least resistance to his impositions.

Uncle Joe's father had been a New England loyalist, and his doubtful attachment to the British government had been repaid by a grant of land in the township of H——. He was the first settler in that township, and chose his location in a remote spot, for the sake of a beautiful natural spring, which bubbled up in a small stone basin in the green bank at the back of the house.

"Father might have had the pick of the township," quoth Uncle Joe; "but the old coon preferred that sup of good water to the site of a town. Well, I guess it's seldom I trouble the spring; and whenever I step that way to water the horses, I think what a tarnation fool the old one was, to throw away such a chance of making his fortune, for such cold lap."

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“Your father was a temperance man?”

“Temperance!—He had been fond enough of the whiskey bottle in his day. He drank up a good farm in the United States, and then he thought he could not do better than turn loyal, and get one here for nothing. He did not care a cent, not he, for the King of England. He thought himself as good, any how. But he found that he would have to work hard here to scratch along, and he was mightily plagued with the rheumatics, and some old woman told him that good spring water was the best cure for that; so he chose this poor, light, stony land on account of the spring, and took to hard work and drinking cold water in his old age.”

“How did the change agree with him?”

“I guess better than could have been expected. He planted that fine orchard, and cleared his hundred acres, and we got along slick enough as long as the old fellow lived.”

“And what happened after his death, that obliged you to part with your land?”

“Bad times—bad crops,” said Uncle Joe, lifting his shoulders. “I had not my father’s way of scraping money together. I made some deuced clever speculations, but they all failed. I married young, and got a large family; and the women critters ran up heavy bills at the stores, and the crops did not yield enough to pay them; and from bad we got to worse, and Mr. C—— put in an execution, and seized upon the whole concern. He sold it to your man for double what it cost him; and you got all that my father toiled for during the last twenty years of his life for less than half the cash he laid out upon clearing it.”

“And had the whiskey nothing to do with this change?” said I, looking him in the face suspiciously.

“Not a bit! When a man gets into difficulties, it is the only thing to keep him from sinking outright. When your husband has had as many troubles as I have had, he will know how to value the whiskey bottle.”

This conversation was interrupted by a queer-looking urchin of five years old, dressed in a long-tailed coat and trousers, popping his black shock head in at the door, and calling out,

“Uncle Joe!—You’re wanted to hum.”

“Is that your nephew?”

“No! I guess ’tis my woman’s eldest son,” said Uncle Joe, rising, “but they call me Uncle Joe. ’Tis a spry chap that—as cunning as a fox. I tell you what it is—he will make a smart man. Go home, Ammon, and tell your ma that I am coming.”

“I won’t,” said the boy; “you may go hum and tell her yourself. She has wanted wood cut this hour, and you’ll catch it!”

Away ran the dutiful son, but not before he had applied his forefinger significantly to the side of his nose, and, with a knowing wink, pointed in the direction of home.

Uncle Joe obeyed the signal, drily remarking that he could not leave the barn door without the old hen clucking him back.

At this period we were still living in Old Satan’s log house, and anxiously looking out for the first snow to put us in possession of the good substantial log dwelling occupied by Uncle Joe and his family, which consisted of a brown brood of seven girls, and the highly-prized boy who rejoiced in the extraordinary name of Ammon.

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Strange names are to be found in this free country. What think you, gentle reader, of Solomon Sly, Reynard Fox, and Hiram Dolittle and Prudence Fidget; all veritable names, and belonging to substantial yeomen? After Ammon and Ichabod, I should not be at all surprised to meet with Judas Iscariot, Pilate, and Herod. And then the female appellations! But the subject is a delicate one and I will forbear to touch upon it. I have enjoyed many a hearty laugh over the strange affectations which people designate here very handsome names. I prefer the old homely Jewish names, such as that which it pleased my godfather and godmothers to bestow upon me, to one of those high-sounding christianities, the Minervas, Cinderellas, and Almerias of Canada. The love of singular names is here carried to a marvellous extent. It is only yesterday that, in passing through one busy village, I stopped in astonishment before a tombstone headed thus: "Sacred to the memory of Silence Sharman, the beloved wife of Asa Sharman." Was the woman deaf and dumb, or did her friends hope by bestowing upon her such an impossible name to still the voice of Nature, and check, by an admonitory appellative, the active spirit that lives in the tongue of woman? Truly, Asa Sharman, if thy wife was silent by name as well as by nature, thou wert a fortunate man!

But to return to Uncle Joe. He made many fair promises of leaving the residence we had bought, the moment he had sold his crops and could remove his family. We could see no interest which could be served by his deceiving us, and therefore we believed him, striving to make ourselves as comfortable as we could in the meantime in our present wretched abode. But matters are never so bad but that they may be worse. One day when we were at dinner, a waggon drove up to the door, and Mr. —— alighted, accompanied by a fine-looking, middle-aged man, who proved to be Captain S——, who had just arrived from Demarara with his wife and family. Mr. ——, who had purchased the farm of Old Satan, had brought Captain S—— over to inspect the land, as he wished to buy a farm, and settle in that neighbourhood. With some difficulty I contrived to accommodate the visitors with seats, and provide them with a tolerable dinner. Fortunately, Moodie had brought in a brace of fine fat partridges that morning; these the servant transferred to a pot of boiling water, in which she immersed them for the space of a minute—a novel but very expeditious way of removing the feathers, which then come off at the least touch. In less than ten minutes they were stuffed, trussed, and in the bake-kettle; and before the gentlemen returned from walking over the farm, the dinner was on the table.

To our utter consternation, Captain S—— agreed to purchase, and asked if we could give him possession in a week!

"Good heavens!" cried I, glancing reproachfully at Mr. ——, who was discussing his partridge with stoical indifference. "What will become of us? Where are we to go?"

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“Oh, make yourself easy; I will force that old witch, Joe’s mother, to clear out.”

“But ’tis impossible to stow ourselves into that pig-sty.”

“It will only be for a week or two, at farthest. This is October; Joe will be sure to be off by the first of sleighing.”

“But if she refuses to give up the place?”

“Oh, leave her to me. I’ll talk her over,” said the knowing land speculator. “Let it come to the worst,” he said, turning to my husband, “she will go out for the sake of a few dollars. By-the-by, she refused to bar the dower when I bought the place; we must cajole her out of that. It is a fine afternoon; suppose we walk over the hill, and try our luck with the old nigger?”

I felt so anxious about the result of the negotiation, that, throwing my cloak over my shoulders, and tying on my bonnet without the assistance of a glass, I took my husband’s arm, and we walked forth.

It was a bright, clear afternoon, the first week in October, and the fading woods, not yet denuded of their gorgeous foliage, glowed in a mellow, golden light. A soft purple haze rested on the bold outline of the Haldimand hills, and in the rugged beauty of the wild landscape I soon forgot the purport of our visit to the old woman’s log hut.

On reaching the ridge of the hill, the lovely valley in which our future home lay smiled peacefully upoon us from amidst its fruitful orchards, still loaded with their rich, ripe fruit.

“What a pretty place it is!” thought I, for the first time feeling something like a local interest in the spot, springing up in my heart. “How I wish those odious people would give us possession of the home which for some time has been our own.”

The log hut that we were approaching, and in which the old woman, R——, resided by herself—having quarrelled years ago with her son’s wife—was of the smallest dimensions, only containing one room, which served the old dame for kitchen, and bed-room, and all. The open door, and a few glazed panes, supplied it with light and air; while a huge hearth, on which crackled two enormous logs—which are technically termed a front and a back stick—took up nearly half the domicile; and the old woman’s bed, which was covered with an unexceptionally clean patched quilt, nearly the other half, leaving just room for a small home-made deal table, of the rudest workmanship, two basswood-bottomed chairs, stained red, one of which was a rocking-chair, appropiated solely to the old woman’s use, and a spinning wheel. Amidst this muddle of things—for small as was the quantum of furniture, it was all crowded into such a tiny space that you had to squeeze your way through it in the best manner you could—we found the old woman, with a red cotton handkerchief tied over her grey locks, hood-

fashion, shelling white bush-beans into a wooden bowl. Without rising from her seat, she pointed to the only remaining chair. “I guess, miss, you can sit there; and if the others can’t stand, they can make a seat of my bed.”

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The gentlemen assured her that they were not tired, and could dispense with seats. Mr. —— then went up to the old woman, and proffering his hand, asked after her health in his blandest manner.

"I'm none the better for seeing you, or the like of you," was the ungracious reply. "You have cheated my poor boy out of his good farm; and I hope it may prove a bad bargain to you and yours."

"Mrs. R——," returned the land speculator, nothing ruffled by her unceremonious greeting, "I could not help your son giving way to drink, and getting into my debt. If people will be so imprudent, they cannot be so stupid as to imagine that others can suffer for their folly."

"Suffer!" repeated the old woman, flashing her small, keen black eyes upon him with a glance of withering scorn. "You suffer! I wonder what the widows and orphans you have cheated would say to that? My son was a poor, weak, silly fool, to be sucked in by the like of you. For a debt of eight hundred dollars—the goods never cost you four hundred—you take from us our good farm; and these, I s'pose," pointing to my husband and me, "are the folk you sold it to. Pray, miss," turning quickly to me, "what might your man give for the place?"

"Three hundred pounds in cash."

"Poor sufferer!" again sneered the hag. "Four hundred dollars is a very *small* profit in as many weeks. Well, I guess, you beat the Yankees hollow. And pray, what brought you here to-day, scenting about you like a carrion-crow? We have no more land for you to seize from us."

Moodie now stepped forward, and briefly explained our situation, offering the old woman anything in reason to give up the cottage and reside with her son until he removed from the premises; which, he added, must be in a very short time.

The old dame regarded him with a sarcastic smile. "I guess, Joe will take his own time. The house is not built which is to receive him; and he is not a man to turn his back upon a warm hearth to camp in the wilderness. You were *green* when you bought a farm of that man, without getting along with it the right of possession."

"But, Mrs. R——, your son promised to go out the first of sleighing."

"Wheugh!" said the old woman. "Would you have a man give away his hat and leave his own head bare? It's neither the first snow nor the last frost that will turn Joe out of his comfortable home. I tell you all that he will stay here, if it is only to plague you."

Threats and remonstrances were alike useless, the old woman remained inexorable; and we were just turning to leave the house, when the cunning old fox exclaimed, “And now, what will you give me to leave my place?”

“Twelve dollars, if you give us possession next Monday,” said my husband.

“Twelve dollars! I guess you won’t get me out for that.”

“The rent would not be worth more than a dollar a month,” said Mr. ——, pointing with his cane to the dilapidated walls. “Mr. Moodie has offered you a year’s rent for the place.”

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“It may not be worth a cent,” returned the woman; “for it will give everybody the rheumatism that stays a week in it—but it is worth that to me, and more nor double that just now to him. But I will not be hard with him,” continued she, rocking herself to and fro. “Say twenty dollars, and I will turn out on Monday.”

“I dare say you will,” said Mr. ——, “and who do you think would be fool enough to give you such an exorbitant sum for a ruined old shed like this?”

“Mind your own business, and make your own bargains,” returned the old woman, tartly. “The devil himself could not deal with you, for I guess he would have the worst of it. What do you say, sir?” and she fixed her keen eyes upon my husband, as if she would read his thoughts. “Will you agree to my price?”

“It is a very high one, Mrs. R——; but as I cannot help myself, and you take advantage of that, I suppose I must give it.”

“’Tis a bargain,” cried the old crone, holding out her hard, bony hand. “Come, cash down!”

“Not until you give me possession on Monday next; or you might serve me as your son has done.”

“Ha!” said the old woman, laughing and rubbing her hands together; “you begin to see daylight, do you? In a few months, with the help of him,” pointing to Mr. ——, “you will be able to go alone; but have a care of your teacher, for it’s no good that you will learn from him. But will you really stand to your word, mister?” she added, in a coaxing tone, “if I go out on Monday?”

“To be sure I will; I never break my word.”

“Well, I guess you are not so clever as our people, for they only keep it as long as it suits them. You have an honest look; I will trust you; but I will not trust him,” nodding to Mr. ——, “he can buy and sell his word as fast as a horse can trot. So on Monday I will turn out my traps. I have lived here six-and-thirty years; ’tis a pretty place and it vexes me to leave it,” continued the poor creature, as a touch of natural feeling softened and agitated her world-hardened heart. “There is not an acre in cultivation but I helped to clear it, nor a tree in yonder orchard but I held it while my poor man, who is dead and gone, planted it; and I have watched the trees bud from year to year, until their boughs overshadowed the hut, where all my children, but Joe, were born. Yes, I came here young, and in my prime; and I must leave it in age and poverty. My children and husband are dead, and their bones rest beneath the turf in the burying-ground on the side of the hill. Of all that once gathered about my knees, Joe and his young ones alone remain. And it is hard, very hard, that I must leave their graves to be turned by the plough of a stranger.”

I felt for the desolate old creature—the tears rushed to my eyes; but there was no moisture in hers. No rain from the heart could filter through that iron soil.

“Be assured, Mrs. R——,” said Moodie, “that the dead will be held sacred; the place will never be disturbed by me.”

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“Perhaps not; but it is not long that you will remain here. I have seen a good deal in my time; but I never saw a gentleman from the old country make a good Canadian farmer. The work is rough and hard, and they get out of humour with it, and leave it to their hired helps, and then all goes wrong. They are cheated on all sides, and in despair take to the whiskey bottle, and that fixes them. I tell you what it is, mister—I give you just three years to spend your money and ruin yourself; and then you will become a confirmed drunkard, like the rest.”

The first part of her prophecy was only too true. Thank God! the last has never been fulfilled, and never can be.

Perceiving that the old woman was not a little elated with her bargain, Mr. —— urged upon her the propriety of barring the dower. At first, she was outrageous, and very abusive, and rejected all his proposals with contempt; vowing that she would meet him in a certain place below, before she would sign away her right to the property.

“Listen to reason, Mrs. R——,” said the land speculator. “If you will sign the papers before the proper authorities, the next time your son drives you to C——, I will give you a silk gown.”

“Pshaw! Buy a shroud for yourself; you will need it before I want a silk gown,” was the ungracious reply.

“Consider woman; a black silk of the best quality.”

“To mourn in for my sins, or for the loss of the farm?”

“Twelve yards,” continued Mr. ——, without noticing her rejoinder, “at a dollar a yard. Think what a nice church-going gown it will make.”

“To the devil with you! I never go to church.”

“I thought as much,” said Mr. ——, winking to us. “Well, my dear madam, what will satisfy you?”

“I’ll do it for twenty dollars,” returned the old woman, rocking herself to and fro in her chair; her eyes twinkling, and her hands moving convulsively, as if she already grasped the money so dear to her soul.

“Agreed,” said the land speculator. “When will you be in town?”

“On Tuesday, if I be alive. But, remember, I’ll not sign till I have my hand on the money.”

“Never fear,” said Mr. ——, as we quitted the house; then, turning to me, he added, with a peculiar smile,” That’s a devilish smart woman. She would have made a clever lawyer.”

Monday came, and with it all the bustle of moving, and, as is generally the case on such occasions, it turned out a very wet day. I left Old Satan’s hut without regret, glad, at any rate, to be in a place of my own, however humble. Our new habitation, though small, had a decided advantage over the one we were leaving. It stood on a gentle slope; and a narrow but lovely stream, full of pretty speckled trout, ran murmuring under the little window; the house, also, was surrounded by fine fruit trees.

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I know not how it was, but the sound of that tinkling brook, for ever rolling by, filled my heart with a strange melancholy, which for many nights deprived me of rest. I loved it, too. The voice of waters, in the stillness of night, always had an extraordinary effect upon my mind. Their ceaseless motion and perpetual sound convey to me the idea of life—eternal life; and looking upon them, glancing and flashing on, now in sunshine, now in shade, now hoarsely chiding with the opposing rock, now leaping triumphantly over it, creates within me a feeling of mysterious awe of which I never could wholly divest myself.

A portion of my own spirit seemed to pass into that little stream. In its deep wailings and fretful sighs, I fancied myself lamenting for the land I had left for ever; and its restless and impetuous rushings against the stones which choked its passage, were mournful types of my own mental struggles against the destiny which hemmed me in. Through the day the stream still moaned and travelled on,—but, engaged in my novel and distasteful occupations, I heard it not; but whenever my winged thoughts flew homeward, then the voice of the brook spoke deeply and sadly to my heart, and my tears flowed unchecked to its plaintive and harmonious music.

In a few hours I had my new abode more comfortably arranged than the old, although its dimensions were much smaller. The location was beautiful, and I was greatly consoled by this circumstance. The aspect of Nature ever did, and I hope ever will continue—

“To shoot marvellous strength into my heart.”

As long as we remain true to the Divine Mother, so long will she remain faithful to her suffering children.

At that period my love for Canada was a feeling very nearly allied to that which the condemned criminal entertains for his cell—his only hope of escape being through the portals of the grave.

The fall rains had commenced. In a few days the cold wintry showers swept all the gorgeous crimson from the trees; and a bleak and desolate waste presented itself to the shuddering spectator. But, in spite of wind and rain, my little tenement was never free from the intrusion of Uncle Joe’s wife and children. Their house stood about a stone’s-throw from the hut we occupied, in the same meadow, and they seemed to look upon it still as their own, although we had literally paid for it twice over. Fine strapping girls they were, from five years old to fourteen, but rude and unnurtured as so many bears. They would come in without the least ceremony, and, young as they were, ask me a thousand impertinent questions; and when I civilly requested them to leave the room, they would range themselves upon the door-step, watching my motions, with their black eyes gleaming upon me through their tangled, uncombed locks. Their company was a great annoyance, for it obliged me to put a painful restraint upon the thoughtfulness in which it

was so delightful to me to indulge. Their visits were not visits of love, but of mere idle curiosity, not unmingled with malicious pleasure at my awkward attempts at Canadian house-wifieries.

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The simplicity, the fond, confiding faith of childhood is unknown in Canada. There are no children here. The boy is a miniature man—knowing, keen, and wide awake; as able to drive a bargain and take an advantage of his juvenile companion as the grown-up, world-hardened man. The girl, a gossipping flirt, full of vanity and affectation, with a premature love of finery, and an acute perception of the advantages to be derived from wealth, and from keeping up a certain appearance in the world.

The flowers, the green grass, the glorious sunshine, the birds of the air, and the young lambs gambolling down the verdant slopes, which fill the heart of a British child with a fond ecstacy, bathing the young spirit in Elysium, would float unnoticed before the vision of a Canadian child; while the sight of a dollar, or a new dress, or a gay bonnet, would swell its proud bosom with self-importance and delight. The glorious blush of modest diffidence, the tear of gentle sympathy, are so rare on the cheek, or in the eye of the young, that their appearance creates a feeling of surprise. Such perfect self-reliance in beings so new to the world is painful to a thinking mind. It betrays a great want of sensibility and mental culture, and a melancholy knowledge of the arts of life.

For a week I was alone, my good Scotch girl having left me to visit her father. Some small baby-articles were needed to be washed, and after making a great preparation, I determined to try my unskilled hand upon the operation. The fact is, I knew nothing about the task I had imposed upon myself, and in a few minutes rubbed the skin off my wrists, without getting the clothes clean.

The door was open, as it generally was, even during the coldest winter days, in order to let in more light, and let out the smoke, which otherwise would have enveloped us like a cloud. I was so busy that I did not perceive that I was watched by the cold, heavy, dark eyes of Mrs. Joe, who, with a sneering laugh, exclaimed—

“Well, thank God! I am glad to see you brought to work at last. I hope you may have to work as hard as I have. I don’t see, not I, why you, who are no better than me, should sit still all day, like a lady!”

“Mrs. R——,” said I, not a little annoyed at her presence, “what concern is it of yours whether I work or sit still? I never interfere with you. If you took it into your head to lie in bed all day, I should never trouble myself about it.”

“Ah, I guess you don’t look upon us as fellow-critters, you are so proud and grand. I s’pose you Britishers are not made of flesh and blood like us. You don’t choose to sit down at meat with your helps. Now, I calculate, we think them a great deal better nor you.”

“Of course,” said I, “they are more suited to you than we are; they are uneducated, and so are you. This is no fault in either; but it might teach you to pay a little more respect to those who are possessed of superior advantages. But, Mrs. R——, my helps, as you

call them, are civil and obliging, and never make unprovoked and malicious speeches. If they could so far forget themselves, I should order them to leave the house."

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“Oh, I see what you are up to,” replied the insolent dame; “you mean to say that if I were your help you would turn me out of your house; but I’m a free-born American, and I won’t go at your bidding. Don’t think I came here out of regard to you. No, I hate you all; and I rejoice to see you at the wash-tub, and I wish that you may be brought down upon your knees to scrub the floors.”

This speech only caused a smile, and yet I felt hurt and astonished that a woman whom I had never done anything to offend should be so gratuitously spiteful.

In the evening she sent two of her brood over to borrow my “long iron,” as she called an Italian iron. I was just getting my baby to sleep, sitting upon a low stool by the fire. I pointed to the iron upon the shelf, and told the girl to take it. She did so, but stood beside me, holding it carelessly in her hand, and staring at the baby, who had just sunk to sleep upon my lap.

The next moment the heavy iron fell from her relaxed grasp, giving me a severe blow upon my knee and foot; and glanced so near the child’s head that it drew from me a cry of terror.

“I guess that was nigh braining the child,” quoth Miss Amanda, with the greatest coolness, and without making the least apology. Master Ammon burst into a loud laugh. “If it had, Mandy, I guess we’d have cotched it.” Provoked at their insolence, I told them to leave the house. The tears were in my eyes, for I felt that had they injured the child, it would not have caused them the least regret.

The next day, as we were standing at the door, my husband was greatly amused by seeing fat Uncle Joe chasing the rebellious Ammon over the meadow in front of the house. Joe was out of breath, panting and puffing like a small steam-engine, and his face flushed to deep red with excitement and passion. “You —– young scoundrel!” he cried, half choked with fury, “If I catch up to you, I’ll take the skin off you!”

“You —– old scoundrel, you may have my skin if you can get at me,” retorted the precocious child, as he jumped up upon the top of the high fence, and doubled his fist in a menacing manner at his father.

“That boy is growing too bad,” said Uncle Joe, coming up to us out of breath, the perspiration streaming down his face. “It is time to break him in, or he’ll get the master of us all.”

“You should have begun that before,” said Moodie. “He seems a hopeful pupil.”

“Oh, as to that, a little swearing is manly,” returned the father; “I swear myself, I know, and as the old cock crows, so crows the young one. It is not his swearing that I care a pin for, but he will not do a thing I tell him to.”

“Swearing is a dreadful vice,” said I, “and, wicked as it is in the mouth of a grown-up person, it is perfectly shocking in a child; it painfully tells he has been brought up without the fear of God.”

“Pooh! pooh! that’s all cant; there is no harm in a few oaths, and I cannot drive oxen and horses without swearing. I dare say that you can swear too when you are riled, but you are too cunning to let us hear you.”

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I could not help laughing outright at this supposition, but replied very quietly, “Those who practice such iniquities never take any pains to conceal them. The concealment would infer a feeling of shame; and when people are conscious of the guilt, they are in the road to improvement.” The man walked whistling away, and the wicked child returned unpunished to his home.

The next minute the old woman came in. “I guess you can give me a piece of silk for a hood,” said she, “the weather is growing considerable cold.”

“Surely it cannot well be colder than it is at present,” said I, giving her the rocking-chair by the fire.

“Wait a while; you know nothing of a Canadian winter. This is only November; after the Christmas thaw, you’ll know something about the cold. It is seven-and-thirty years ago since I and my man left the U-ni-ted States. It was called the year of the great winter. I tell you, woman, that the snow lay so deep on the earth, that it blocked up all the roads, and we could drive a sleigh whither we pleased, right over the snake fences. All the cleared land was one wide white level plain; it was a year of scarcity, and we were half starved; but the severe cold was far worse nor the want of provisions. A long and bitter journey we had of it; but I was young then, and pretty well used to trouble and fatigue; my man stuck to the British government. More fool he! I was an American born, and my heart was with the true cause. But his father was English, and, says he, ’I’ll live and die under their flag.’ So he dragged me from my comfortable fireside to seek a home in the far Canadian wilderness. Trouble! I guess you think you have your troubles; but what are they to mine?” She paused, took a pinch of snuff, offered me the box, sighed painfully, pushed the red handkerchief from her high, narrow, wrinkled brow, and continued: “Joe was a baby then, and I had another helpless critter in my lap—an adopted child. My sister had died from it, and I was nursing it at the same breast with my boy. Well, we had to perform a journey of four hundred miles in an ox-cart, which carried, besides me and the children, all our household stuff. Our way lay chiefly through the forest, and we made but slow progress. Oh! what a bitter cold night it was when we reached the swampy woods where the city of Rochester now stands. The oxen were covered with icicles, and their breath sent up clouds of steam. ‘Nathan,’ says I to my man, ’you must stop and kindle a fire; I am dead with cold, and I fear the babes will be frozen.’ We began looking about for a good spot to camp in, when I spied a light through the trees. It was a lone shanty, occupied by two French lumberers. The men were kind; they rubbed our frozen limbs with snow, and shared with us their supper and buffalo skins. On that very spot where we camped that night, where we heard nothing but the wind soughing amongst the trees, and the rushing of the river, now stands the great city of Rochester. I went there two years ago, to the funeral of a brother. It seemed to me like a dream. Where we foddered our beasts by the shanty fire now stands the largest hotel in the city; and my husband left this fine growing country to starve here.”

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I was so much interested in the old woman's narrative—for she was really possessed of no ordinary capacity, and, though rude and uneducated might have been a very superior person under different circumstances—that I rummaged among my store, and soon found a piece of black silk, which I gave her for the hood she required.

The old woman examined it carefully over, smiled to herself, but, like all her people, was too proud to return a word of thanks. One gift to the family always involved another.

"Have you any cotton-batting, or black sewing-silk, to give me, to quilt it with?"

"No."

"Humph!" returned the old dame, in a tone which seemed to contradict my assertion. She then settled herself in her chair, and, after shaking her foot awhile, and fixing her piercing eyes upon me for some minutes, she commenced the following list of interrogatories:—

"Is your father alive?"

"No; he died many years ago, when I was a young girl."

"Is your mother alive?"

"Yes."

"What is her name?" I satisfied her on this point.

"Did she ever marry again?"

"She might have done so, but she loved her husband too well, and preferred living single."

"Humph! We have no such notions here. What was your father?"

"A gentleman, who lived upon his own estate."

"Did he die rich?"

"He lost the greater part of his property from being surety for another."

"That's a foolish business. My man burnt his fingers with that. And what brought you out to this poor country—you, who are no more fit for it than I am to be a fine lady?"

"The promise of a large grant of land, and the false statements we heard regarding it."

"Do you like the country?"

“No; and I fear I never shall.”

“I thought not; for the drop is always on your cheek, the children tell me; and those young ones have keen eyes. Now, take my advice: return while your money lasts; the longer you remain in Canada the less you will like it; and when your money is all spent, you will be like a bird in a cage; you may beat your wings against the bars, but you can’t get out.” There was a long pause. I hoped that my guest had sufficiently gratified her curiosity, when she again commenced:—

“How do you get your money? Do you draw it from the old country, or have you it with you in cash?”

Provoked by her pertinacity, and seeing no end to her cross-questioning, I replied, very impatiently, “Mrs. R——, is it the custom in your country to catechise strangers whenever you meet with them?”

“What do you mean?” she said, colouring, I believe, for the first time in her life.

“I mean,” quoth I, “an evil habit of asking impertinent questions.”

The old woman got up, and left the house without speaking another word.

THE SLEIGH-BELLS

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’Tis merry to hear, at evening time,
By the blazing hearth the sleigh-bells chime;
To know the bounding steeds bring near
The loved one to our bosom dear.
Ah, lightly we spring the fire to raise,
Till the rafters glow with the ruddy blaze;
Those merry sleigh-bells, our hearts keep time
Responsive to their fairy chime.
Ding-dong, ding-dong, o’er vale and hill,
Their welcome notes are trembling still.

’Tis he, and blithely the gay bells sound,
As glides his sleigh o’er the frozen ground;
Hark! he has pass’d the dark pine wood,
He crosses now the ice-bound flood,
And hails the light at the open door
That tells his toilsome journey’s o’er.
The merry sleigh-bells! My fond heart swells
And throbs to hear the welcome bells;
Ding-dong, ding-dong, o’er ice and snow,
A voice of gladness, on they go.

Our hut is small, and rude our cheer,
But love has spread the banquet here;
And childhood springs to be caress’d
By our beloved and welcome guest.
With a smiling brow, his tale he tells,
The urchins ring the merry sleigh-bells;
The merry sleigh-bells, with shout and song
They drag the noisy string along;
Ding-dong, ding-dong, the father’s come
The gay bells ring his welcome home.

From the cedar-swamp the gaunt wolves howl,
From the oak loud whoops the felon owl;
The snow-storm sweeps in thunder past,
The forest creaks beneath the blast;
No more I list, with boding fear,
The sleigh-bells’ distant chime to hear.
The merry sleigh-bells, with soothing power
Shed gladness on the evening hour.
Ding-dong, ding-dong, what rapture swells
The music of those joyous bells.

[Many versions have been given of this song, and it has been set to music in the States. I here give the original copy, written whilst leaning on the open door of my shanty, and watching for the return of my husband.]

CHAPTER VIII

JOHN MONAGHAN

"Dear mother Nature! on thy ample breast
Hast thou not room for thy neglected son?
A stern necessity has driven him forth
Alone and friendless. He has naught but thee,
And the strong hand and stronger heart thou gavest,
To win with patient toil his daily bread."

A few days after the old woman's visit to the cottage, our servant James absented himself for a week, without asking leave, or giving any intimation of his intention. He had under his care a fine pair of horses, a yoke of oxen, three cows, and a numerous family of pigs, besides having to chop all the firewood required for our use. His unexpected departure caused no small trouble in the family; and when the truant at last made his appearance, Moodie discharged him altogether.

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The winter had now fairly set in—the iron winter of 1833. The snow was unusually deep, and it being our first winter in Canada, and passed in such a miserable dwelling, we felt it very severely. In spite of all my boasted fortitude—and I think my powers of endurance have been tried to the uttermost since my sojourn in this country—the rigour of the climate subdued my proud, independent English spirit, and I actually shamed my womanhood and cried with the cold. Yes, I ought to blush at evincing such unpardonable weakness; but I was foolish and inexperienced, and unaccustomed to the yoke.

My husband did not much relish performing the menial duties of a servant in such weather, but he did not complain, and in the meantime commenced an active inquiry for a man to supply the place of the one we had lost; but at that season of the year no one was to be had.

It was a bitter, freezing night. A sharp wind howled without, and drove the fine snow through the chinks in the door, almost to the hearth-stone, on which two immense blocks of maple shed forth a cheering glow, brightening the narrow window-panes, and making the blackened rafters ruddy with the heart-invigorating blaze.

The toils of the day were over, the supper things cleared away, and the door closed for the night. Moodie had taken up his flute, the sweet companion of happier days, at the earnest request of our homesick Scotch servant-girl, to cheer her drooping spirits by playing some of the touching national airs of the glorious mountain land, the land of chivalry and song, the heroic North. Before retiring to rest, Bell, who had an exquisite ear for music, kept time with foot and hand, while large tears gathered in her soft blue eyes.

“Ay, ‘tis bonnie thae songs; but they mak’ me greet, an’ my puir heart is sair, sair when I think on the bonnie braes and the days o’lang syne.”

Poor Bell! Her heart was among the hills, and mine had wandered far, far away to the green groves and meadows of my own fair land. The music and our reveries were alike abruptly banished by a sharp blow upon the door. Bell rose and opened it, when a strange, wild-looking lad, barefooted, and with no other covering to his head than the thick, matted locks of raven blackness that hung like a cloud over his swarthy, sunburnt visage, burst into the room.

“Guidness defend us! Wha ha’e we here?” screamed Bell, retreating into a corner. “The puir callant’s no cannie.”

My husband turned hastily round to meet the intruder, and I raised the candle from the table the better to distinguish his face; while Bell, from her hiding-place, regarded him with unequivocal glances of fear and mistrust, waving her hands to me, and pointing

significantly to the open door, as if silently beseeching me to tell her master to turn him out.

“Shut the door, man,” said Moodie, whose long scrutiny of the strange being before us seemed upon the whole satisfactory; “we shall be frozen.”

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“Thin faith, sir, that’s what I am,” said the lad, in a rich brogue, which told, without asking, the country to which he belonged. Then stretching his bare hands to the fire, he continued, “By Jove, sir, I was never so near gone in my life!”

“Where do you come from, and what is your business here? You must be aware that this is a very late hour to take a house by storm in this way.”

“Thrue for you, sir. But necessity knows no law; and the condition you see me in must plade for me. First, thin, sir, I come from the township of D——, and want a masther; and next to that, bedad! I want something to ate. As I’m alive, and ’tis a thousand pities that I’m alive at all at all, for shure God Almighty never made sich a misfortunate crather afore nor since; I have had nothing to put in my head since I ran away from my ould masther, Mr. F——, yesterday at noon. Money I have none, sir; the divil a cent. I have neither a shoe to my foot nor a hat to my head, and if you refuse to shelter me the night, I must be contint to perish in the snow, for I have not a frind in the wide wurld.”

The lad covered his face with his hands, and sobbed aloud.

“Bell,” I whispered; “go to the cupboard and get the poor fellow something to eat. The boy is starving.”

“Dinna heed him, mistress, dinna credit his lees. He is ane o’ those wicked Papists wha ha’ just stepped in to rob and murder us.”

“Nonsense! Do as I bid you.”

“I winna be fashed aboot him. An’ if he bides here, I’ll e’en flit by the first blink o’ the morn.”

“Isabel, for shame! Is this acting like a Christian, or doing as you would be done by?”

Bell was as obstinate as a rock, not only refusing to put down any food for the famished lad, but reiterating her threat of leaving the house if he were suffered to remain. My husband, no longer able to endure her selfish and absurd conduct, got angry in good earnest, and told her that she might please herself; that he did not mean to ask her leave as to whom he received into his house. I, for my part, had no idea that she would realise her threat. She was an excellent servant, clean, honest, and industrious, and loved the dear baby.

“You will think better of it in the morning,” said I, as I rose and placed before the lad some cold beef and bread, and a bowl of milk, to which the runaway did ample justice.

“Why did you quit your master, my lad?” said Moodie.

“Because I could live wid him no longer. You see, sir, I’m a poor foundling from the Belfast Asylum, shoved out by the mother that bore me, upon the wide wurld, long before I knew that I was in it. As I was too young to spake for myself intirely, she put me into a basket, wid a label round my neck, to tell the folks that my name was John Monaghan. This was all I ever got from my parents; and who or what they were, I never knew, not I, for they never claimed me; bad cess to them! But I’ve

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no doubt it's a fine illigant gintleman he was, and herself a handsome rich young lady, who dared not own me for fear of affronting the rich jintry, her father and mother. Poor folk, sir, are never ashamed of their children; 'tis all the threasure they have, sir; but my parents were ashamed of me, and they thrust me out to the stranger and the hard bread of depindence." The poor lad signed deeply, and I began to feel a growing interest in his sad history.

"Have you been in the country long?"

"Four years, madam. You know my masther, Mr. F——; he brought me out wid him as his apprentice, and during the voyage he trated me well. But the young men, his sons, are tyrants, and full of durty pride; and I could not agree wid them at all at all. Yesterday, I forgot to take the oxen out of the yoke, and Musther William tied me up to a stump, and bate me with the raw hide. Shure the marks are on me showlthers yet. I left the oxen and the yoke, and turned my back upon them all, for the hot blood was bilin' widin me; and I felt that if I stayed it would be him that would get the worst of it. No one had ever cared for me since I was born, so I thought it was high time to take care of myself. I had heard your name, sir, and I thought I would find you out; and if you want a lad, I will work for you for my kape, and a few dacent clothes."

A bargain was soon made. Moodie agreed to give Monaghan six dollars a month, which he thankfully accepted; and I told Bell to prepare his bed in a corner of the kitchen. But mistress Bell thought fit to rebel. Having been guilty of one act of insubordination, she determined to be consistent, and throw off the yoke altogether. She declared that she would do no such thing; that her life and that all our lives were in danger; and that she would never stay another night under the same roof with that Papist vagabond.

"Papist!" cried the indignant lad, his dark eyes flashing fire, "I'm no Papist, but a Protestant like yourself; and I hope a deuced dale better Christian. You take me for a thief; yet shure a thief would have waited till you were all in bed and asleep, and not stepped in forenint you all in this fashion."

There was both truth and nature in the lad's argument; but Bell, like an obstinate woman as she was, chose to adhere to her own opinion. Nay, she even carried her absurd prejudices so far that she brought her mattress and laid it down on the floor in my room, for fear that the Irish vagabond should murder her during the night. By the break of day she was off; leaving me for the rest of the winter without a servant. Monaghan did all in his power to supply her place; he lighted the fires, swept the house, milked the cows, nursed the baby, and often cooked the dinner for me, and endeavoured by a thousand little attentions to show the gratitude he really felt for our kindness. To little Katie he attached himself in an extraordinary manner. All his spare

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time he spent in making little sleighs and toys for her, or in dragging her in the said sleighs up and down the steep hills in front of the house, wrapped up in a blanket. Of a night, he cooked her mess of bread and milk, as she sat by the fire, and his greatest delight was to feed her himself. After this operation was over, he would carry her round the floor on his back, and sing her songs in native Irish. Katie always greeted his return from the woods with a scream of joy, holding up her fair arms to clasp the neck of her dark favourite.

"Now the Lord love you for a darlint!" he would cry, as he caught her to his heart. "Shure you are the only one of the crathers he ever made who can love poor John Monaghan. Brothers and sisters I have none—I stand alone in the wurld, and your bonny wee face is the sweetest thing it contains for me. Och, jewil! I could lay down my life for you, and be proud to do that same."

Though careless and reckless about everything that concerned himself, John was honest and true. He loved us for the compassion we had shown him; and he would have resented any injury offered to our persons with his best blood.

But if we were pleased with our new servant, Uncle Joe and his family were not, and they commenced a series of petty persecutions that annoyed him greatly, and kindled into a flame all the fiery particles of his irritable nature.

Moodie had purchased several tons of hay of a neighbouring farmer, for the use of his cattle, and it had to be stowed into the same barn with some flax and straw that belonged to Uncle Joe. Going early one morning to fodder the cattle, John found Uncle Joe feeding his cows with his master's hay, and as it had diminished greatly in a very short time, he accused him in no measured terms of being the thief. The other very coolly replied that he had taken a little of the hay in order to repay himself for his flax, that Monaghan had stolen for the oxen. "Now by the powers!" quoth John, kindling into wrath, "that is adding a big lie to a dirthy petty larceny. I take your flax, you ould villain! Shure I know that flax is grown to make linen wid, not to feed oxen. God Almighty has given the crathers a good warm coat of their own; they neither require shifts nor shirts."

"I saw you take it, you ragged Irish vagabond, with my own eyes."

"Thin yer two eyes showed you a wicked illusion. You had betther shut up yer head, or I'll give you that for an eye-salve that shall make you see thrue for the time to come."

Relying upon his great size, and thinking that the slight stripling, who, by-the-bye, was all bones and sinews, was no match for him, Uncle Joe struck Monaghan over the head with the pitchfork. In a moment the active lad was upon him like a wild cat, and in spite

of the difference of his age and weight, gave the big man such a thorough dressing that he was fain to roar aloud for mercy.

“Own that you are a thief and a liar, or I’ll murther you!”

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“I’ll own to anything whilst your knee is pressing me into a pancake. Come now—-there’s a good lad—let me get up.” Monaghan felt irresolute, but after extorting from Uncle Joe a promise never to purloin any of the hay again, he let him rise.

“For shure,” he said, “he began to turn so black in the face, I thought he’d burst intirely.”

The fat man neither forgot nor forgave this injury; and though he dared not attack John personally, he set the children to insult and affront him upon all occasions. The boy was without socks, and I sent him to old Mrs. R——, to inquire of her what she would charge for knitting him two pairs of socks. The reply was, a dollar. This was agreed to, and dear enough they were; but the weather was very cold, and the lad was barefooted, and there was no other alternative than either to accept her offer, or for him to go without.

In a few days, Monaghan brought them home; but I found upon inspecting them that they were old socks new-footed. This was rather too glaring a cheat, and I sent the lad back with them, and told him to inform Mrs. R—— that as he had agreed to give the price for new socks, he expected them to be new altogether.

The avaricious old woman did not deny the fact, but she fell to cursing and swearing in an awful manner, and wished so much evil to the lad, that, with the superstitious fear so common to the natives of his country, he left her under the impression that she was gifted with the evil eye, and was an “owld witch.” He never went out of the yard with the waggon and horses, but she rushed to the door, and cursed him for a bare-heeled Irish blackguard, and wished that he might overturn the waggon, kill the horses, and break his own worthless neck.

“Ma’am,” said John to me one day, after returning from C—— with the team, “it would be betther for me to lave the masther intirely; for shure if I do not, some mischief will befall me or the crathers. That wicked owld wretch! I cannot thole her curses. Shure it’s in purgatory I am all the while.”

“Nonsense, Monaghan! you are not a Catholic, and need not fear purgatory. The next time the old woman commences her reprobate conduct, tell her to hold her tongue, and mind her own business, for curses, like chickens come home to roost.”

The boy laughed heartily at the old Turkish proverb, but did not reckon much on its efficacy to still the clamorous tongue of the ill-natured old jade. The next day he had to pass her door with the horses. No sooner did she hear the sound of the wheels, than out she hobbled, and commenced her usual anathemas.

“Bad luck to yer croaking, yer ill-conditioned owld raven. It is not me you are desthroying shure, but yer own poor miserable sinful sowl. The owld one has the grief of ye already, for ’curses, like chickens, come home to roost’; so get in wid ye, and hatch them to yerself in the chimley corner. They’ll all be roosting wid ye by-and-by;

and a nice warm nest they'll make for you, considering the brave brood that belongs to you."

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Whether the old woman was as superstitious as John, I know not; or whether she was impressed with the moral truth of the proverb—for, as I have before stated, she was no fool—is difficult to tell; but she shrunk back into her den, and never attacked the lad again.

Poor John bore no malice in his heart, not he; for, in spite of all the ill-natured things he had to endure from Uncle Joe and his family, he never attempted to return evil for evil. In proof of this, he was one day chopping firewood in the bush, at some distance from Joe, who was engaged in the same employment with another man. A tree in falling caught upon another, which, although a very large maple, was hollow and very much decayed, and liable to be blown down by the least shock of the wind. The tree hung directly over the path that Uncle Joe was obliged to traverse daily with his team. He looked up, and perceived, from the situation it occupied, that it was necessary for his own safety to cut it down; but he lacked courage to undertake so hazardous a job, which might be attended, if the supporting tree gave way during the operation, with very serious consequences. In a careless tone, he called to his companion to cut down the tree.

“Do it yourself, H——,” said the axe man, with a grin. “My wife and children want their man as much as your Hannah wants you.”

“I’ll not put axe to it,” quoth Joe. Then, making signs to his comrade to hold his tongue, he shouted to Monaghan, “Hollo, boy! you’re wanted here to cut down this tree. Don’t you see that your master’s cattle might be killed if they should happen to pass under it, and it should fall upon them.”

“Thrue for you, Masther Joe; but your own cattle would have the first chance. Why should I risk my life and limbs, by cutting down the tree, when it was yerself that threw it so awkwardly over the other?”

“Oh, but you are a boy, and have no wife and children to depend upon you for bread,” said Joe, gravely. “We are both family men. Don’t you see that ’tis your duty to cut down the tree?”

The lad swung the axe to and fro in his hand, eyeing Joe and the tree alternately; but the natural kind-heartedness of the creature, and his reckless courage, overcame all idea of self-preservation, and raising aloft his slender but muscular arm, he cried out, “If it’s a life that must be sacrificed, why not mine as well as another? Here goes! and the Lord have mercy on my sinful sowl!”

The tree fell, and, contrary to their expectations, without any injury to John. The knowing Yankee burst into a loud laugh. “Well, if you arn’t a tarnation soft fool, I never saw one.”

“What do you mane?” exclaimed John, his dark eyes flashing fire. “If ’tis to insult me for doing that which neither of you dared to do, you had better not thry that same. You have just seen the strength of my spirit. You had better not thry again the strength of my arm, or, may be, you and the tree would chance to share the same fate;” and, shouldering his axe, the boy strode down the hill, to get scolded by me for his foolhardiness.

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The first week of March, all the people were busy making maple sugar. “Did you ever taste any maple sugar, ma’am?” asked Monaghan, as he sat feeding Katie one evening by the fire.

“No, John.”

“Well, then, you’ve a thrate to come; and it’s myself that will make Miss Katie, the darlint, an illigant lump of that same.”

Early in the morning John was up, hard at work, making troughs for the sap. By noon he had completed a dozen, which he showed me with great pride of heart. I felt a little curious about this far-famed maple sugar, and asked a thousand questions about the use to which the troughs were to be applied; how the trees were to be tapped, the sugar made, and if it were really good when made?

To all my queries, John responded, “Och! ’tis illigant. It bates all the sugar that ever was made in Jamaky. But you’ll see before to-morrow night.”

Moodie was away at P——, and the prospect of the maple sugar relieved the dulness occasioned by his absence. I reckoned on showing him a piece of sugar of our own making when he came home, and never dreamt of the possibility of disappointment.

John tapped his trees after the most approved fashion, and set his troughts to catch the sap; but Miss Amanda and Master Ammon upset them as fast as they filled, and spilt all the sap. With great difficulty, Monaghan saved the contents of one large iron pot. This he brought in about nightfall, and made up a roaring fire, in order to boil in down into sugar. Hour after hour passed away, and the sugar-maker looked as hot and black as the stoker in a steam-boat. Many times I peeped into the large pot, but the sap never seemed to diminish.

“This is a tedious piece of business,” thought I, but seeing the lad so anxious, I said nothing. About twelve o’clock he asked me, very mysteriously, for a piece of pork to hang over the sugar.

“Pork!” said I, looking into the pot, which was half full of a very black-looking liquid; “what do you want with pork?”

“Shure an’ ’tis to keep the sugar from burning.”

“But, John, I see no sugar!”

“Och, but ’tis all sugar, only ’tis molasses jist now. See how it sticks to the ladle. Aha! But Miss Katie will have the fine lumps of sugar when she awakes in the morning.”

I grew so tired and sleepy that I left John to finish his job, went to bed, and soon forgot all about the maple sugar. At breakfast I observed a small plate upon the table, placed in a very conspicuous manner on the tea-tray, the bottom covered with a hard, black substance, which very much resembled pitch. “What is that dirty-looking stuff, John?”

“Shure an ’tis the maple sugar.”

“Can people eat that?”

“By dad, an’ they can; only thry it, ma’arm.”

“Why, ’tis so hard, I cannot cut it.”

With some difficulty, and not without cutting his finger, John broke a piece off, and stuffed it into the baby’s mouth. The poor child made a horrible face, and rejected it as if it had been poison. For my own part, I never tasted anything more nauseous. It tasted like a compound of pork grease and tobacco juice. “Well, Monaghan, if this be maple sugar, I never wish to taste any again.”

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“Och, bad luck to it!” said the lad, flinging it away, plate and all. “It would have been first-rate but for the dirthy pot, and the blackguard cinders, and its burning to the bottom of the pot. That owld hag, Mrs. R——, bewitched it with her evil eye.”

“She is not so clever as you think, John,” said I, laughing. “You have forgotten how to make the sugar since you left D——; but let us forget the maple sugar, and think of something else. Had you not better get old Mrs. R—— to mend that jacket for you; it is too ragged.”

“Ay, dad! an it’s mysel’ is the illigant tailor. Wasn’t I brought up to the thrade in the Foundling Hospital?”

“And why did you quit it?”

“Because it’s a low, mane thrade for a jintleman’s son.”

“But, John, who told you that you were a gentleman’s son?”

“Och! but I’m shure of it, thin. All my propensities are gintale. I love horses, and dogs, and fine clothes, and money. Och! that I was but a jintleman! I’d show them what life is intirely, and I’d challenge Masther William, and have my revenge out of him for the blows he gave me.”

“You had better mend your trousers,” said I, giving him a tailor’s needle, a pair of scissors, and some strong thread.

“Shure, an’ I’ll do that same in a brace of shakes,” and sitting down upon a ricketty three-legged stool of his own manufacturing, he commenced his tailoring by tearing off a piece of his trousers to patch the elbows of his jacket. And this trifling act, simple as it may appear, was a perfect type of the boy’s general conduct, and marked his progress through life. The present for him was everything; he had no future. While he supplied stuff from the trousers to repair the fractures in the jacket, he never reflected that both would be required on the morrow. Poor John! in his brief and reckless career, how often have I recalled that foolish act of his. It now appears to me that his whole life was spent in tearing his trousers to repair his jacket.

In the evening John asked me for a piece of soap.

“What do you want with soap, John?”

“To wash my shirt, ma’am. Shure an’ I’m a baste to be seen, as black as the pots. Sorra a shirt have I but the one, an’ it has stuck on my back so long that I can thole it no longer.”

I looked at the wrists and collar of the condemned garment, which was all of it that John allowed to be visible. They were much in need of soap and water.

“Well, John, I will leave you the soap, but can you wash?”

“Och, shure, an’ I can thry. If I soap it enough, and rub long enough, the shirt must come clane at last.”

I thought the matter rather doubtful; but when I went to bed I left what he required, and soon saw through the chinks in the boards a roaring fire, and heard John whistling over the tub. He whistled and rubbed, and washed and scrubbed, but as there seemed no end to the job, and he was a long washing this one garment as Bell would have been performing the same operation on fifty, I laughed to myself, and thought of my own abortive attempts in that way, and went fast asleep. In the morning John came to his breakfast, with his jacket buttoned up to his throat.

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“Could you not dry your shirt by the fire, John? You will get cold wanting it.”

“Aha, by dad! it’s dhry enough now. The divil has made tinder of it long afore this.”

“Why, what has happened to it? I heard you washing all night.”

“Washing! Faith, an’ I did scrub it till my hands were all ruined intirely, and thin I took the brush to it; but sorra a bit of the dirth could I get out of it. The more I rubbed the blacker it got, until I had used up all the soap, and the perspiration was pouring off me like rain. ‘You dirthy owld bit of a blackguard of a rag,’ says I, in an exthremity of rage, ’You’re not fit for the back of a dacent lad an’ a jintleman. The divil may take ye to cover one of his imps;’ an’ wid that I sthirred up the fire, and sent it plump into the middle of the blaze.”

“And what will you do for a shirt?”

“Faith, do as many a betther man has done afore me, go widout.”

I looked up two old shirts of my husband’s, which John received with an ecstacy of delight. He retired instantly to the stable, but soon returned, with as much of the linen breast of the garment displayed as his waistcoat would allow. No peacock was ever prouder of his tail than the wild Irish lad was of the old shirt.

John had been treated very much like a spoiled child, and, like most spoiled children, he was rather fond of having his own way. Moodie had set him to do something which was rather contrary to his own inclinations; he did not object to the task in words, for he was rarely saucy to his employers, but he left the following stave upon the table, written in pencil upon a scrap of paper torn from the back of an old letter:—

“A man alive, an ox may drive
  Unto a springing well;
To make him drink, as he may think,
  No man can him compel.

“*John Monaghan*.”

THE EMIGRANT’S BRIDE

A Canadian ballad

The waves that girt my native isle,
  The parting sunbeams tinged with red;
And far to seaward, many a mile,
  A line of dazzling glory shed.
But, ah, upon that glowing track,

No glance my aching eyeballs threw;
As I my little bark steer’d back
To bid my love a last adieu.

Upon the shores of that lone bay,
With folded arms the maiden stood;
And watch’d the white sails wing their way
Across the gently heaving flood.
The summer breeze her raven hair
Swept lightly from her snowy brow;
And there she stood, as pale and fair
As the white foam that kiss’d my prow.

My throbbing heart with grief swell’d high,
A heavy tale was mine to tell;
For once I shunn’d the beauteous eye,
Whose glance on mine so fondly fell.
My hopeless message soon was sped,
My father’s voice my suit denied;
And I had promised not to wed,
Against his wish, my island bride.

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She did not weep, though her pale face
  The trace of recent sorrow wore;
But, with a melancholy grace,
  She waved my shallop from the shore.
She did not weep; but oh! that smile
  Was sadder than the briny tear
That trembled on my cheek the while
  I bade adieu to one so dear.

She did not speak—no accents fell
  From lips that breathed the balm of May;
In broken words I strove to tell
  All that my broken heart would say.
She did not speak—but to my eyes
  She raised the deep light of her own.
As breaks the sun through cloudy skies,
  My spirit caught a brighter tone.

“Dear girl!” I cried, “we ne’er can part,
  My angry father’s wrath I’ll brave;
He shall not tear thee from my heart.
  Fly, fly with me across the wave!”
My hand convulsively she press’d,
  Her tears were mingling fast with mine;
And, sinking trembling on my breast,
  She murmur’d out, “For ever thine!”

CHAPTER IX

PHOEBE R—–, AND OUR SECOND MOVING

“She died in early womanhood,
Sweet scion of a stem so rude;
A child of Nature, free from art,
With candid brow and open heart;
The flowers she loved now gently wave
Above her low and nameless grave.”

It was during the month of March that Uncle Joe’s eldest daughter, Phoebe, a very handsome girl, and the best of the family, fell sick. I went over to see her. The poor girl was very depressed, and stood but a slight chance for her life, being under medical treatment of three or four old women, who all recommended different treatment and administered different nostrums. Seeing that the poor girl was dangerously ill, I took her

mother aside, and begged her to lose no time in procuring proper medical advice. Mrs. Joe listened to me very sullenly, and said there was no danger; that Phoebe had caught a violent cold by going hot from the wash-tub to fetch a pail of water from the spring; that the neighbours knew the nature of her complaint, and would soon cure her.

The invalid turned upon me her fine dark eyes, in which the light of fever painfully burned, and motioned me to come near her. I sat down by her, and took her burning hand in mine.

“I am dying, Mrs. Moodie, but they won’t believe me. I wish you would talk to mother to send for the doctor.”

“I will. Is there anything I can do for you?—anything I can make for you, that you would like to take?”

She shook her head. “I can’t eat. But I want to ask you one thing, which I wish very much to know.” She grasped my hand tightly between her own. Her eyes looked darker, and her feverish cheek paled. “What becomes of people when they die?”

“Good heavens!” I exclaimed involuntarily; “can you be ignorant of a future state?”

“What is a future state?”

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I endeavoured, as well as I was able, to explain to her the nature of the soul, its endless duration, and responsibility to God for the actions done in the flesh; its natural depravity and need of a Saviour; urging her, in the gentlest manner, to lose no time in obtaining forgiveness of her sins, through the atoning blood of Christ.

The poor girl looked at me with surprise and horror. These things were all new to her. She sat like one in a dream; yet the truth seemed to flash upon her at once.

“How can I speak to God, who never knew Him? How can I ask Him to forgive me?”

“You must pray to him.”

“Pray! I don’t know how to pray. I never said a prayer in my life. Mother; can you teach me how to pray?”

“Nonsense!” said Mrs. Joe, hurrying forward. “Why should you trouble yourself about such things? Mrs. Moodie, I desire you not to put such thoughts into my daughter’s head. We don’t want to know anything about Jesus Christ here.”

“Oh, mother, don’t speak so to the lady! Do Mrs. Moodie, tell me more about God and my soul. I never knew until now that I had a soul.”

Deeply compassionating the ignorance of the poor girl, in spite of the menaces of the heathen mother—for she was no better, but rather worse, seeing that the heathen worships in ignorance a false God, while this woman lived without acknowledging a God at all, and therefore considered herself free from all moral restraint—I bid Phoebe good-bye, and promised to bring my bible, and read to her the next day.

The gratitude manifested by this sick girl was such a contrast to the rudeness and brutality of the rest of the family, that I soon felt a powerful interest in her fate.

The mother did not actually forbid me the house, because she saw that my visits raised the drooping spirits of her child, whom she fiercely loved, and, to save her life, would cheerfully have sacrificed her own. But she never failed to make all the noise she could to disturb my reading and conversation with Phoebe. She could not be persuaded that her daughter was really in any danger, until the doctor told her that her case was hopeless; then the grief of the mother burst forth, and she gave way to the most frantic and impious complainings.

The rigour of the winter began to abate. The beams of the sun during the day were warm and penetrating, and a soft wind blew from the south. I watched, from day to day, the snow disappearing from the earth, with indescribable pleasure, and at length it wholly vanished; not even a solitary patch lingered under the shade of the forest trees; but Uncle Joe gave no sign of removing his family.

“Does he mean to stay all the summer?” thought I. “Perhaps he never intends going at all. I will ask him, the next time he comes to borrow whiskey.”

In the afternoon he walked in to light his pipe, and, with some anxiety, I made the inquiry.

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“Well, I guess we can’t be moving afore the end of May. My missus expects to be confined the fore part of the month, and I shan’t move till she be quite smart agin.”

“You are not using us well, in keeping us out of the house so long.”

“Oh, I don’t care a curse about any of you. It is my house as long as I choose to remain in it, and you may put up with it the best way you can,” and, humming a Yankee tune, he departed.

I had borne patiently the odious, cribbed-up place during the winter, but now the hot weather was coming, it seemed almost insupportable, as we were obliged to have a fire in the close room, in order to cook our provisions. I consoled myself as well as I could by roaming about the fields and woods, and making acquaintance with every wild flower as it blossomed, and in writing long letters to home friends, in which I abused one of the finest countries in the world as the worst that God ever called out of chaos. I can recall to memory, at this moment, the few lines of a poem which commenced in this strain; nor am I sorry that the rest of it has passed into oblivion:—

Oh! land of waters, how my spirit tires,
  In the dark prison of thy boundless woods;
No rural charm poetic thought inspires,
  No music murmurs in thy mighty floods;
Though vast the features that compose thy frame,
Turn where we will, the landscape’s still the same.

The swampy margin of thy inland seas,
  The eternal forest girdling either shore,
Its belt of dark pines sighing in the breeze,
  And rugged fields, with rude huts dotted o’er,
Show cultivation unimproved by art,
That sheds a barren chillness on the heart.

How many home-sick emigrants, during their first winter in Canada, will respond to this gloomy picture! Let them wait a few years; the sun of hope will arise and beautify the landscape, and they will proclaim the country one of the finest in the world.

The middle of May at length arrived, and, by the number of long, lean women, with handkerchiefs of all colours tied over their heads, who passed my door, and swarmed into Mrs. Joe’s house, I rightly concluded that another young one had been added to the tribe; and shortly after, Uncle Joe himself announced the important fact, by putting his jolly red face in at the door, and telling me, that “his missus had got a chopping boy; and he was right glad of it, for he was tired of so many gals, and that he should move in a fortnight, if his woman did kindly.”

I had been so often disappointed that I paid very little heed to him, but this time he kept his word.

The *last* day of May, they went, bag and baggage, the poor sick Phoebe, who still lingered on, and the new-born infant; and right joyfully I sent a Scotch girl (another Bell, whom I had hired in lieu of her I had lost), and Monaghan, to clean out the Augean stable. In a few minutes John returned, panting his indignation.

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“The house,” he said, “was more filthy than a pig-sty.” But that was not the worst of it, Uncle Joe, before he went, had undermined the brick chimney, and let all the water into the house. “Oh, but if he comes here agin,” he continued, grinding his teeth and doubling his fist, “I’ll thrash him for it. And thin, ma’am, he has girdled round all the best graft apple-trees, the murtherin’ owld villain, as if it could spile his digestion our ating them.”

“It would require a strong stomach to digest apple-trees, John; but never mind, it can’t be helped, and we may be very thankful that these people are gone at last.”

John and Bell scrubbed at the house all day, and in the evening they carried over the furniture, and I went to inspect our new dwelling.

It looked beautifully clean and neat. Bell had whitewashed all the black, smoky walls and boarded ceilings, and scrubbed the dirty window-frames, and polished the fly-spotted panes of glass, until they actually admitted a glimpse of the clear air and the blue sky. Snow-white fringed curtains, and a bed, with furniture to correspond, a carpeted floor, and a large pot of green boughs on the hearthstone, gave an air of comfort and cleanliness to a room which, only a few hours before, had been a loathsome den of filth and impurity.

This change would have been very gratifying, had not a strong, disagreeable odour almost deprived me of my breath as I entered the room. It was unlike anything I had ever smelt before, and turned me so sick and faint that I had to cling to the door-post for support.

“Where does this dreadful smell come from?”

“The guidness knows, ma’am; John and I have searched the house from the loft to the cellar, but we canna find out the cause of thae stink.”

“It must be in the room, Bell; and it is impossible to remain here, or live in this house, until it is removed.”

Glancing my eyes all round the place, I spied what seemed to me a little cupboard, over the mantel-shelf, and I told John to see if I was right. The lad mounted upon a chair, and pulled open a small door, but almost fell to the ground with the dreadful stench which seemed to rush from the closet.

“What is it, John?” I cried from the open door.

“A skunk! ma’am, a skunk! Shure, I thought the divil had scorched his tail, and left the grizzled hair behind him. What a strong perfume it has!” he continued, holding up the beautiful but odious little creature by the tail.

“By dad! I know all about it now. I saw Ned Layton, only two days ago, crossing the field with Uncle Joe, with his gun on his shoulder, and this wee bit baste in his hand. They were both laughing like sixty. ’Well, if this does not stink the Scotchman out of the house,’ said Joe, ’I’ll be contint to be tarred and feathered;’ and thin they both laughed until they stopped to draw breath.”

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I could hardly help laughing myself; but I begged Monaghan to convey the horrid creature away, and putting some salt and sulphur into a tin plate, and setting fire to it, I placed it on the floor in the middle of the room, and closed all the doors for an hour, which greatly assisted in purifying the house from the skunkification. Bell then washed out the closet with strong ley, and in a short time no vestige remained of the malicious trick that Uncle Joe had played off upon us.

The next day, we took possession of our new mansion, and no one was better pleased with the change than little Katie. She was now fifteen months old, and could just begin to prattle, but she dared not venture to step alone, although she would stand by a chair all day, and even climb upon it. She crept from room to room, feeling and admiring everything, and talking to it in her baby language. So fond was the dear child of flowers, that her father used to hold her up to the apple-trees, then rich in their full spring beauty, that she might kiss the blossoms. She would pat them with her soft white hands, murmuring like a bee among the branches. To keep her quiet whilst I was busy, I had only to give her a bunch of wild flowers. She would sit as still as a lamb, looking first at one and then another, pressing them to her little breast in a sort of ecstacy, as if she comprehended the worth of this most beautiful of God's gifts to man.

She was a sweet, lovely flower herself, and her charming infant graces reconciled me, more than aught else, to a weary lot. Was she not purely British? Did not her soft blue eyes, and sunny curls, and bright rosy cheeks for ever remind me of her Saxon origin, and bring before me dear forms and faces I could never hope to behold again?

The first night we slept in the new house, a demon of unrest had taken possession of it in the shape of a countless swarm of mice. They scampered over our pillows, and jumped upon our faces, squeaking and cutting a thousand capers over the floor. I never could realise the true value of Whittington's invaluable cat until that night. At first we laughed until our sides ached, but in reality it was no laughing matter. Moodie remembered that we had left a mouse-trap in the old house; he went and brought it over, baited it, and set it on the table near the bed. During the night no less than fourteen of the provoking vermin were captured; and for several succeeding nights the trap did equal execution. How Uncle Joe's family could have allowed such a nuisance to exist astonished me; to sleep with these creatures continually running over us was impossible; and they were not the only evils in the shape of vermin we had to contend with. The old logs which composed the walls of the house were full of bugs and large black ants; and the place, owing to the number of dogs that always had slept under the beds with the children, was infested with fleas. It required the utmost care to rid the place of these noisome and disgusting tenants.

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Arriving in the country in the autumn, we had never experienced any inconvenience from the mosquitoes, but after the first moist, warm spring days, particularly after the showers, these tormenting insects annoyed us greatly. The farm, lying in a valley cut up with little streams in every direction, made us more liable to their inflictions. The hands, arms, and face of the poor babe were covered every morning with red inflamed bumps, which often threw out blisters.

The banks of the little streams abounded with wild strawberries, which, although small, were of a delicious flavour. Thither Bell and I, and the baby, daily repaired to gather the bright red berries of Nature's own providing. Katie, young as she was, was very expert at helping herself, and we used to seat her in the middle of a fine bed, whilst we gathered farther on. Hearing her talking very lovingly to something in the grass, which she tried to clutch between her white hands, calling it "Pitty, pitty;" I ran to the spot, and found that it was a large garter-snake that she was so affectionately courting to her embrace. Not then aware that this formidable-looking reptile was perfectly harmless, I snatched the child up in my arms, and ran with her home; never stopping until I gained the house, and saw her safely seated in her cradle.

It had been a very late, cold spring, but the trees had fully expanded into leaf, and the forest world was glorious in its beauty. Every patch of cleared land presented a vivid green to the eye; the brook brawled in the gay sunshine, and the warm air was filled with soft murmurs. Gorgeous butterflies floated about like winged flowers, and feelings allied to poetry and gladness once more pervaded my heart. In the evening we wandered through the woodland paths, beneath the glowing Canadian sunset, and gathered rare specimens of strange plants and flowers. Every object that met my eyes was new to me, and produced that peculiar excitement which has its origin in a thirst for knowledge, and a love of variety.

We had commenced gardening, too, and my vegetables did great credit to my skill and care; and, when once the warm weather sets in, the rapid advance of vegetation in Canada is astonishing.

Not understanding much about farming, especially in a climate like Canada, Moodie was advised by a neighbouring settler to farm his farm upon shares. This advice seemed very reasonable; and had it been given disinterestedly, and had the persons recommended (a man and his wife) been worthy or honest people, we might have done very well. But the farmer had found out their encroaching ways, was anxious to get rid of them himself, and saw no better way of doing so than by palming them upon us.

From our engagement with these people commenced that long series of losses and troubles to which their conduct formed the prelude. They were to live in the little shanty that we had just left, and work the farm. Moodie was to find them the land, the use of his implements and cattle, and all the seed for the crops; and to share with them the returns. Besides this, they unfortunately were allowed to keep their own cows, pigs,

and poultry. The produce of the orchard, with which they had nothing to do, was reserved for our own use.

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For the first few weeks, they were civil and obliging enough; and had the man been left to himself, I believe we should have done pretty well; but the wife was a coarse-minded, bold woman, who instigated him to every mischief. They took advantage of us in every way they could, and were constantly committing petty depredations.

From our own experience of this mode of farming, I would strenuously advise all new settlers never to embrace any such offer, without they are well acquainted with the parties, and can thoroughly rely upon their honesty; or else, like Mrs. O——, they may impudently tell you that they can cheat you as they please, and defy you to help yourself. All the money we expended upon the farm was entirely for these people's benefit, for by their joint contrivances very little of the crops fell to our share; and when any division was made, it was always when Moodie was absent from home; and there was no person present to see fair play. They sold what apples and potatoes they pleased, and fed their hogs ad libitum. But even their roguery was more tolerable than the irksome restraint which their near vicinity, and constantly having to come in contact with them, imposed. We had no longer any privacy, our servants were cross-questioned, and our family affairs canvassed by these gossiping people, who spread about a thousand falsehoods regarding us. I was so much disgusted with this shareship, that I would gladly have given them all the proceeds of the farm to get rid of them, but the bargain was for twelve months, and bad as it was, we could not break our engagement.

One little trick of this woman's will serve to illustrate her general conduct. A neighbouring farmer's wife had presented me with some very pretty hens, who followed to the call of old Betty Fye's handsome game-cock. I was always fond of fowls, and the innocent Katie delighted in her chicks, and would call them round her to the sill of the door to feed from her hand. Mrs. O—— had the same number as I had, and I often admired them when marshalled forth by her splendid black rooster. One morning I saw her eldest son chop off the head of the fine bird; and I asked his mother why she had allowed him to kill the beautiful creature. She laughed, and merely replied that she wanted it for the pot. The next day my sultan walked over to the widowed hens, and took all his seraglio with him. From that hour I never gathered a single egg; the hens deposited all their eggs in Mrs. O——'s hen-house. She used to boast of this as an excellent joke among her neighbours.

On the 9th of June, my dear little Agnes was born. A few days after this joyful event, I heard a great bustle in the room adjoining to mine, and old Dolly Rowe, my Cornish nurse, informed me that it was occasioned by the people who came to attend the funeral of Phoebe R——. She only survived the removal of the family a week; and at her own request had been brought all the way from the —— lake plains to be interred in the burying ground on the hill which overlooked the stream.

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As I lay upon my pillow I could distinctly see the spot, and mark the long funeral procession, as it wound along the banks of the brook. It was a solemn and imposing spectacle, that humble funeral. When the waggons reached the rude enclosure, the coffin was carefully lifted to the ground, the door in the lid opened, and old and young approached, one after another, to take a last look at the dead, before consigning her to the oblivion of the grave.

Poor Phoebe! Gentle child, of coarse, unfeeling parents, few shed more sincerely a tear for thy early fate than the stranger whom they hated and despised. Often have I stood beside that humble mound, when the song of the lark was above me, and the bee murmuring at my feet, and thought that it was well for thee that God opened the eyes of thy soul, and called thee out of the darkness of ignorance and sin to glory in His marvellous light. Sixteen years have passed away since I heard anything of the family, or what had become of them, when I was told by a neighbour of theirs, whom I accidentally met last winter, that the old woman, who now nearly numbers a hundred years, is still living, and inhabits a corner of her son's barn, as she still quarrels too much with his wife to reside with Joe; that the girls are all married and gone; and that Joe himself, although he does not know a letter, has commenced travelling preacher. After this, who can doubt the existence of miracles in the nineteenth century?

THE FAITHFUL HEART THAT LOVES THEE STILL

I kneel beside the cold grey stone
That tells me, dearest, thou art gone
To realms more bless'd—and left me still
To struggle with this world of ill.
But oft from out the silent mound
Delusive fancy breathes a sound;
My pent-up heart within me burns,
And all the blessed past returns.
Thy form is present to mine eye,
  Thy voice is whispering in mine ear,
The love that spake in days gone by;
  And rapture checks the starting tear.
Thy deathless spirit wakes to fill
The faithful heart that loves thee still.

For thee the day's bright glow is o'er,
And summer's roses bloom no more;
The song of birds in twilight bowers,
The breath of spring's delicious flowers,
The towering wood and mountain height,
The glorious pageantry of night;

Which fill'd thy soul with musings high,
And lighted up thy speaking eye;
The mournful music of the wave
Can never reach thy lonely grave.
Thou dost but sleep! It cannot be
  That ardent heart is silent now—
That death's dark door has closed on thee;
  And made thee cold to all below.
Ah, no! the flame death could not chill,
Thy tender love survives thee still.

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That love within my breast enshrined,
In death alone shall be resign'd;
And when the eve, thou lovest so well,
Pours on my soul its soothing spell,
I leave the city's busy scene
To seek thy dwelling, cold and green,—
In quiet sadness here to shed
Love's sacred tribute o'er the dead—
To dream again of days gone by,
  And hold sweet converse here with thee;
In the soft air to feel thy sigh,
  Whilst winds and waters answer me.
Yes!—though resign'd to Heaven's high will,
My joy shall be to love thee still!

CHAPTER X

BRIAN, THE STILL-HUNTER

"O'er memory's glass I see his shadow flit,
Though he was gathered to the silent dust
Long years ago. A strange and wayward man,
That shunn'd companionship, and lived apart;
The leafy covert of the dark brown woods,
The gleamy lakes, hid in their gloomy depths,
Whose still, deep waters never knew the stroke
Of cleaving oar, or echoed to the sound
Of social life, contained for him the sum
Of human happiness. With dog and gun,
Day after day he track'd the nimble deer
Through all the tangled mazes of the forest."

It was early day. I was alone in the old shanty, preparing breakfast, and now and then stirring the cradle with my foot, when a tall, thin, middle-aged man walked into the house, followed by two large, strong dogs.

Placing the rifle he had carried on his shoulder, in a corner of the room, he advanced to the hearth, and without speaking, or seemingly looking at me, lighted his pipe and commenced smoking. The dogs, after growling and snapping at the cat, who had not given the strangers a very courteous reception, sat down on the hearth-stone on either side of their taciturn master, eyeing him from time to time, as if long habit had made them understand all his motions. There was a great contrast between the dogs. The one was a brindled bulldog of the largest size, a most formidable and powerful brute;

the other a staghound, tawny, deep-chested, and strong-limbed. I regarded the man and his hairy companions with silent curiosity.

He was between forty and fifty years of age; his head, nearly bald, was studded at the sides with strong, coarse, black curling hair. His features were high, his complexion brightly dark, and his eyes, in size, shape, and colour, greatly resembled the eyes of a hawk. The face itself was sorrowful and taciturn; and his thin, compressed lips looked as if they were not much accustomed to smile, or often to unclose to hold social communion with any one. He stood at the side of the huge hearth, silently smoking, his eyes bent on the fire, and now and then he patted the heads of his dogs, reproving their exuberant expression of attachment, with—“Down, Music; down, Chance!”

“A cold, clear morning,” said I, in order to attract his attention and draw him into conversation.

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A nod, without raising his head, or withdrawing his eyes from the fire, was his only answer; and, turning from my unsociable guest, I took up the baby, who just then awoke, sat down on a low stool by the table, and began feeding her. During this operation, I once or twice caught the stranger's hawk-eye fixed upon me and the child, but word spoke he none; and presently, after whistling to his dogs, he resumed his gun, and strode out.

When Moodie and Monaghan came in to breakfast, I told them what a strange visitor I had had; and Moodie laughed at my vain attempt to induce him to talk.

"He is a strange being," I said; "I must find out who and what he is."

In the afternoon an old soldier, called Layton, who had served during the American war, and got a grant of land about a mile in the rear of our location, came in to trade for a cow. Now, this Layton was a perfect ruffian; a man whom no one liked, and whom all feared. He was a deep drinker, a great swearer, in short, a perfect reprobate; who never cultivated his land, but went jobbing about from farm to farm, trading horses and cattle, and cheating in a pettifogging way. Uncle Joe had employed him to sell Moodie a young heifer, and he had brought her over for him to look at. When he came in to be paid, I described the stranger of the morning; and as I knew that he was familiar with every one in the neighbourhood, I asked if he knew him.

"No one should know him better than myself," he said; "'tis old Brian B——, the still-hunter, and a near neighbour of your'n. A sour, morose, queer chap he is, and as mad as a March hare! He's from Lancashire, in England, and came to this country some twenty years ago, with his wife, who was a pretty young lass in those days, and slim enough then, though she's so awful fleshy now. He had lots of money, too, and he bought four hundred acres of land, just at the corner of the concession line, where it meets the main road. And excellent land it is; and a better farmer, while he stuck to his business, never went into the bush, for it was all bush here then. He was a dashing, handsome fellow, too, and did not hoard the money, either; he loved his pipe and his pot too well; and at last he left off farming, and gave himself to them altogether. Many a jolly booze he and I have had, I can tell you. Brian was an awful passionate man, and, when the liquor was in, and the wit was out, as savage and as quarrelsome as a bear. At such times there was no one but Ned Layton dared go near him. We once had a pitched battle, in which I was conqueror; and ever arter he yielded a sort of sulky obedience to all I said to him. Arter being on the spree for a week or two, he would take fits of remorse, and return home to his wife; would fall down at her knees, and ask her forgiveness, and cry like a child. At other times he would hide himself up in the woods, and steal home at night, and get what he wanted out of the pantry, without speaking a word to any one. He went on with these pranks for some years, till he took a fit of the blue devils.

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“‘Come away, Ned, to the —— lake, with me,’ said he; ’I am weary of my life, and I want a change.’

“‘Shall we take the fishing-tackle?’ says I. ’The black bass are in prime season, and F —— will lend us the old canoe. He’s got some capital rum up from Kingston. We’ll fish all day, and have a spree at night.’

“‘It’s not to fish I’m going,’ says he.

“‘To shoot, then? I’ve bought Rockwood’s new rifle.’

“‘It’s neither to fish nor to shoot, Ned: it’s a new game I’m going to try; so come along.’

“Well, to the —— lake we went. The day was very hot, and our path lay through the woods, and over those scorching plains, for eight long miles. I thought I should have dropped by the way; but during our long walk my companion never opened his lips. He strode on before me, at a half-run, never once turning his head.

“‘The man must be the devil!’ says I, ’and accustomed to a warmer place, or he must feel this. Hollo, Brian! Stop there! Do you mean to kill me?’

“‘Take it easy,’ says he; ’you’ll see another day arter this—I’ve business on hand, and cannot wait.’

“Well, on we went, at the same awful rate, and it was mid-day when we got to the little tavern on the lake shore, kept by one F——, who had a boat for the convenience of strangers who came to visit the place. Here we got our dinner, and a glass of rum to wash it down. But Brian was moody, and to all my jokes he only returned a sort of grunt; and while I was talking with F——, he steps out, and a few minutes arter we saw him crossing the lake in the old canoe.

“‘What’s the matter with Brian?’ says F——; ’all does not seem right with him, Ned. You had better take the boat, and look arter him.’

“‘Pooh!’ says I; ’he’s often so, and grows so glum nowadays that I will cut his acquaintance altogether if he does not improve.’

“‘He drinks awful hard,’ says F——; ’may be he’s got a fit of the delirium-tremulous. There is no telling what he may be up to at this minute.’

“My mind misgave me, too, so I e’en takes the oars, and pushes out, right upon Brian’s track; and, by the Lord Harry! if I did not find him, upon my landing on the opposite shore, lying wallowing in his blood with his throat cut. ‘Is that you, Brian?’ says I, giving him a kick with my foot, to see if he was alive or dead. ’What on earth tempted you to play me and F—— such a dirty, mean trick, as to go and stick yourself like a pig, bringing

such a discredit upon the house?—and you so far from home and those who should nurse you?'

"I was so mad with him, that (saving your presence, ma'am) I swore awfully, and called him names that would be ondacent to repeat here; but he only answered with groans and a horrid gurgling in his throat. 'It's a choking you are,' said I, 'but you shan't have your own way, and die so easily, either, if I can punish you by keeping you alive.' So I just turned him upon his stomach, with his head down the steep bank; but he still kept choking and growing black in the face."

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Layton then detailed some particulars of his surgical practice which it is not necessary to repeat. He continued—

“I bound up his throat with my handkerchief, and took him neck and heels, and threw him into the bottom of the boat. Presently he came to himself a little, and sat up in the boat; and—would you believe it?—made several attempts to throw himself in the water. ’This will not do,’ says I; ’you’ve done mischief enough already by cutting your weasand! If you dare to try that again, I will kill you with the oar.’ I held it up to threaten him; he was scared, and lay down as quiet as a lamb. I put my foot upon his breast. ’Lie still, now! or you’ll catch it.’ He looked piteously at me; he could not speak, but his eyes seemed to say, ‘Have pity upon me, Ned; don’t kill me.’

“Yes, ma’am; this man, who had just cut his throat, and twice arter that tried to drown himself, was afraid that I should knock him on the head and kill him. Ha! ha! I shall never forget the work that F—— and I had with him arter I got him up to the house.

“The doctor came, and sewed up his throat; and his wife—poor crittur!—came to nurse him. Bad as he was, she was mortal fond of him! He lay there, sick and unable to leave his bed, for three months, and did nothing but pray to God to forgive him, for he thought the devil would surely have him for cutting his own throat; and when he got about again, which is now twelve years ago, he left off drinking entirely, and wanders about the woods with his dogs, hunting. He seldom speaks to any one, and his wife’s brother carries on the farm for the family. He is so shy of strangers that ’tis a wonder he came in here. The old wives are afraid of him; but you need not heed him—his troubles are to himself, he harms no one.”

Layton departed, and left me brooding over the sad tale which he had told in such an absurd and jesting manner. It was evident from the account he had given of Brian’s attempt at suicide, that the hapless hunter was not wholly answerable for his conduct—-that he was a harmless maniac.

The next morning, at the very same hour, Brian again made his appearance; but instead of the rifle across his shoulder, a large stone jar occupied the place, suspended by a stout leather thong. Without saying a word, but with a truly benevolent smile, that flitted slowly over his stern features, and lighted them up, like a sunbeam breaking from beneath a stormy cloud, he advanced to the table, and unslinging the jar, set it down before me, and in a low and gruff, but by no means an unfriendly voice, said, “Milk, for the child,” and vanished.

“How good it was of him! How kind!” I exclaimed, as I poured the precious gift of four quarts of pure new milk out into a deep pan. I had not asked him—had never said that the poor weanling wanted milk. It was the courtesy of a gentleman—of a man of benevolence and refinement.

For weeks did my strange, silent friend steal in, take up the empty jar, and supply its place with another replenished with milk. The baby knew his step, and would hold out her hands to him and cry, “Milk!” and Brian would stoop down and kiss her, and his two great dogs lick her face.

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“Have you any children, Mr. B——?”

“Yes, five; but none like this.”

“My little girl is greatly indebted to you for your kindness.”

“She’s welcome, or she would not get it. You are strangers; but I like you all. You look kind, and I would like to know more about you.”

Moodie shook hands with the old hunter, and assured him that we should always be glad to see him. After this invitation, Brian became a frequent guest. He would sit and listen with delight to Moodie while he described to him elephant-hunting at the Cape; grasping his rifle in a determined manner, and whistling an encouraging air to his dogs. I asked him one evening what made him so fond of hunting.

“’Tis the excitement,” he said; “it drowns thought, and I love to be alone. I am sorry for the creatures, too, for they are free and happy; yet I am led by an instinct I cannot restrain to kill them. Sometimes the sight of their dying agonies recalls painful feelings; and then I lay aside the gun, and do not hunt for days. But ’tis fine to be alone with God in the great woods—to watch the sunbeams stealing through the thick branches, the blue sky breaking in upon you in patches, and to know that all is bright and shiny above you, in spite of the gloom that surrounds you.”

After a long pause, he continued, with much solemn feeling in his look and tone—

“I lived a life of folly for years, for I was respectably born and educated, and had seen something of the world, perhaps more than was good, before I left home for the woods; and from the teaching I had received from kind relatives and parents I should have known how to have conducted myself better. But, madam, if we associate long with the depraved and ignorant, we learn to become even worse than they are. I felt deeply my degradation—felt that I had become the slave to low vice; and in order to emancipate myself from the hateful tyranny of evil passions, I did a very rash and foolish thing. I need not mention the manner in which I transgressed God’s holy laws; all the neighbours know it, and must have told you long ago. I could have borne reproof, but they turned my sorrow into indecent jests, and, unable to bear their coarse ridicule, I made companions of my dogs and gun, and went forth into the wilderness. Hunting became a habit. I could no longer live without it, and it supplies the stimulant which I lost when I renounced the cursed whiskey bottle.

“I remember the first hunting excursion I took alone in the forest. How sad and gloomy I felt! I thought that there was no creature in the world so miserable as myself. I was tired and hungry, and I sat down upon a fallen tree to rest. All was still as death around me, and I was fast sinking to sleep, when my attention was aroused by a long, wild cry.

My dog, for I had not Chance then, and he’s no hunter, pricked up his ears, but instead of answering with a bark of defiance, he crouched

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down, trembling, at my feet. 'What does this mean?' I cried, and I cocked my rifle and sprang upon the log. The sound came nearer upon the wind. It was like the deep baying of a pack of hounds in full cry. Presently a noble deer rushed past me, and fast upon his trail—I see them now, like so many black devils—swept by a pack of ten or fifteen large, fierce wolves, with fiery eyes and bristling hair, and paws that seemed hardly to touch the ground in their eager haste. I thought not of danger, for, with their prey in view, I was safe; but I felt every nerve within me tremble for the fate of the poor deer. The wolves gained upon him at every bound. A close thicket intercepted his path, and, rendered desperate, he turned at bay. His nostrils were dilated, and his eyes seemed to send forth long streams of light. It was wonderful to witness the courage of the beast. How bravely he repelled the attacks of his deadly enemies, how gallantly he tossed them to the right and left, and spurned them from beneath his hoofs; yet all his struggles were useless, and he was quickly overcome and torn to pieces by his ravenous foes. At that moment he seemed more unfortunate than even myself, for I could not see in what manner he had deserved his fate. All his speed and energy, his courage and fortitude, had been exerted in vain. I had tried to destroy myself; but he, with every effort vigorously made for self-preservation, was doomed to meet the fate he dreaded! Is God just to his creatures?"

With this sentence on his lips, he started abruptly from his seat, and left the house.

One day he found me painting some wild flowers, and was greatly interested in watching the progress I made in the group. Late in the afternoon of the following day he brought me a large bunch of splendid spring flowers.

"Draw these," said he; "I have been all the way to the —— lake plains to find them for you."

Little Katie, grasping them one by one, with infantile joy, kissed every lovely blossom.

"These are God's pictures," said the hunter, "and the child, who is all nature, understands them in a minute. Is it not strange that these beautiful things are hid away in the wilderness, where no eyes but the birds of the air, and the wild beasts of the wood, and the insects that live upon them, ever see them? Does God provide, for the pleasure of such creatures, these flowers? Is His benevolence gratified by the admiration of animals whom we have been taught to consider as having neither thought nor reflection? When I am alone in the forest, these thoughts puzzle me."

Knowing that to argue with Brian was only to call into action the slumbering fires of his fatal malady, I turned the conversation by asking him why he called his favourite dog Chance?

“I found him,” he said, “forty miles back in the bush. He was a mere skeleton. At first I took him for a wolf, but the shape of his head undeceived me. I opened my wallet, and called him to me. He came slowly, stopping and wagging his tail at every step, and looking me wistfully in the face. I offered him a bit of dried venison, and he soon became friendly, and followed me home, and has never left me since. I called him Chance, after the manner I happened with him; and I would not part with him for twenty dollars.”

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Alas, for poor Chance! he had, unknown to his master, contracted a private liking for fresh mutton, and one night he killed no less than eight sheep that belonged to Mr. D ——, on the front road; the culprit, who had been long suspected, was caught in the very act, and this mischance cost him his life. Brian was sad and gloomy for many weeks after his favourite's death.

"I would have restored the sheep fourfold," he said, "if he would but have spared the life of my dog."

My recollections of Brian seemed more particularly to concentrate in the adventures of one night, when I happened to be left alone, for the first time since my arrival in Canada. I cannot now imagine how I could have been such a fool as to give way for four-and-twenty hours to such childish fears; but so it was, and I will not disguise my weakness from my indulgent reader.

Moodie had bought a very fine cow of a black man, named Mollineux, for which he was to give twenty-seven dollars. The man lived twelve miles back in the woods; and one fine, frosty spring day—(don't smile at the term frosty, thus connected with the genial season of the year; the term is perfectly correct when applied to the Canadian spring, which, until the middle of May, is the most dismal season of the year)—he and John Monaghan took a rope, and the dog, and sallied forth to fetch the cow home. Moodie said that they should be back by six o'clock in the evening, and charged me to have something cooked for supper when they returned, as he doubted not their long walk in the sharp air would give them a good appetite. This was during the time that I was without a servant, and living in old Mrs. ——'s shanty.

The day was so bright and clear, and Katie was so full of frolic and play, rolling upon the floor, or toddling from chair to chair, that the day passed on without my feeling remarkably lonely. At length the evening drew nigh, and I began to expect my husband's return, and to think of the supper that I was to prepare for his reception. The red heifer that we had bought of Layton, came lowing to the door to be milked; but I did not know how to milk in those days, and, besides this, I was terribly afraid of cattle. Yet, as I knew that milk would be required for the tea, I ran across the meadow to Mrs. Joe, and begged that one of her girls would be so kind as to milk for me. My request was greeted with a rude burst of laughter from the whole set.

"If you can't milk," said Mrs. Joe, "it's high time you should learn. My girls are above being helps."

"I would not ask you but as a great favour; I am afraid of cows."

"Afraid of cows! Lord bless the woman! A farmer's wife, and afraid of cows!"

Here followed another laugh at my expense; and, indignant at the refusal of my first and last request, when they had all borrowed so much from me, I shut the inhospitable door, and returned home.

After many ineffectual attempts, I succeeded at last, and bore my half-pail of milk in triumph to the house. Yes! I felt prouder of that milk than many an author of the best thing he ever wrote, whether in verse or prose; and it was doubly sweet when I considered that I had procured it without being under any obligation to my ill-natured neighbours. I had learned a useful lesson of independence, to which, in after-years, I had often again to refer.

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I fed little Katie and put her to bed, made the hot cakes for tea, boiled the potatoes, and laid the ham, cut in nice slices, in the pan, ready to cook the moment I saw the men enter the meadow, and arranged the little room with scrupulous care and neatness. A glorious fire was blazing on the hearth, and everything was ready for their supper; and I began to look out anxiously for their arrival.

The night had closed in cold and foggy, and I could no longer distinguish any object at more than a few yards from the door. Bringing in as much wood as I thought would last me for several hours, I closed the door; and for the first time in my life I found myself at night in a house entirely alone. Then I began to ask myself a thousand torturing questions as to the reason of their unusual absence. Had they lost their way in the woods? Could they have fallen in with wolves (one of my early bugbears)? Could any fatal accident have befallen them? I started up, opened the door, held my breath, and listened. The little brook lifted up its voice in loud, hoarse wailing, or mocked, in its babbling to the stones, the sound of human voices. As it became later, my fears increased in proportion. I grew too superstitious and nervous to keep the door open. I not only closed it, but dragged a heavy box in front, for bolt there was none. Several ill-looking men had, during the day, asked their way to Toronto. I felt alarmed, lest such rude wayfarers should come to-night and demand a lodging, and find me alone and unprotected. Once I thought of running across to Mrs. Joe, and asking her to let one of the girls stay with me until Moodie returned; but the way in which I had been repulsed in the evening prevented me from making a second appeal to their charity.

Hour after hour wore away, and the crowing of the cocks proclaimed midnight, and yet they came not. I had burnt out all my wood, and I dared not open the door to fetch in more. The candle was expiring in the socket, and I had not courage to go up into the loft and procure another before it went finally out. Cold, heart-weary, and faint, I sat and cried. Every now and then the furious barking of the dogs at the neighbouring farms, and the loud cackling of the geese upon our own, made me hope that they were coming; and then I listened till the beating of my own heart excluded all other sounds. Oh, that unwearied brook! how it sobbed and moaned like a fretful child;—what unreal terrors and fanciful illusions my too active mind conjured up, whilst listening to its mysterious tones!

Just as the moon rose, the howling of a pack of wolves, from the great swamp in our rear, filled the whole air. Their yells were answered by the barking of all the dogs in the vicinity, and the geese, unwilling to be behind-hand in the general confusion, set up the most discordant screams. I had often heard, and even been amused, during the winter, particularly on thaw nights, with hearing the howls of these formidable

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wild beasts; but I had never before heard them alone, and when one dear to me was abroad amid their haunts. They were directly in the track that Moodie and Monaghan must have taken; and I now made no doubt that they had been attacked and killed on their return through the woods with the cow, and I wept and sobbed until the cold grey dawn peered in upon me through the small dim window. I have passed many a long cheerless night, when my dear husband was away from me during the rebellion, and I was left in my forest home with five little children, and only an old Irish woman to draw and cut wood for my fire, and attend to the wants of the family, but that was the saddest and longest night I ever remember.

Just as the day broke, my friends the wolves set up a parting benediction, so loud, and wild, and near to the house, that I was afraid lest they should break through the frail window, or come down the low wide chimney, and rob me of my child. But their detestable howls died away in the distance, and the bright sun rose up and dispersed the wild horrors of the night, and I looked once more timidly around me. The sight of the table spread, and the uneaten supper, renewed my grief, for I could not divest myself of the idea that Moodie was dead. I opened the door, and stepped forth into the pure air of the early day. A solemn and beautiful repose still hung like a veil over the face of Nature. The mists of night still rested upon the majestic woods, and not a sound but the flowing of the waters went up in the vast stillness. The earth had not yet raised her matin hymn to the throne of the Creator. Sad at heart, and weary and worn in spirit, I went down to the spring and washed my face and head, and drank a deep draught of its icy waters. On returning to the house I met, near the door, old Brian the hunter, with a large fox dangling across his shoulder, and the dogs following at his heels.

“Good God! Mrs. Moodie, what is the matter? You are early abroad this morning, and look dreadful ill. Is anything wrong at home? Is the baby or your husband sick?”

“Oh!” I cried, bursting into tears, “I fear he is killed by the wolves.”

The man stared at me, as if he doubted the evidence of his senses, and well he might; but this one idea had taken such strong possession of my mind that I could admit no other. I then told him, as well as I could find words, the cause of my alarm, to which he listened very kindly and patiently.

“Set your heart at rest; your husband is safe. It is a long journey on foot to Mollineux, to one unacquainted with a blazed path in a bush road. They have stayed all night at the black man’s shanty, and you will see them back at noon.”

I shook my head and continued to weep.

“Well, now, in order to satisfy you, I will saddle my mare, and ride over to the nigger’s, and bring you word as fast as I can.”

I thanked him sincerely for his kindness, and returned, in somewhat better spirits, to the house. At ten o’clock my good messenger returned with the glad tidings that all was well.

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The day before, when half the journey had been accomplished, John Monaghan let go the rope by which he led the cow, and she had broken away through the woods, and returned to her old master; and when they again reached his place, night had set in, and they were obliged to wait until the return of day. Moodie laughed heartily at all my fears; but indeed I found them no joke.

Brian's eldest son, a lad of fourteen, was not exactly an idiot, but what, in the old country, is very expressively termed by the poor people a "natural." He could feed and assist himself, had been taught imperfectly to read and write, and could go to and from the town on errands, and carry a message from one farm-house to another; but he was a strange, wayward creature, and evidently inherited, in no small degree, his father's malady.

During the summer months he lived entirely in the woods, near his father's dwelling, only returning to obtain food, which was generally left for him in an outhouse. In the winter, driven home by the severity of the weather, he would sit for days together moping in the chimney-corner, without taking the least notice of what was passing around him. Brian never mentioned this boy—who had a strong, active figure; a handsome, but very inexpressive face—without a deep sigh; and I feel certain that half his own dejection was occasioned by the mental aberration of his child.

One day he sent the lad with a note to our house, to know if Moodie would purchase the half of an ox that he was going to kill. There happened to stand in the corner of the room an open wood box, into which several bushels of fine apples had been thrown; and, while Moodie was writing an answer to the note, the eyes of the idiot were fastened, as if by some magnetic influence, upon the apples. Knowing that Brian had a very fine orchard, I did not offer the boy any of the fruit. When the note was finished, I handed it to him. The lad grasped it mechanically, without removing his fixed gaze from the apples.

"Give that to your father, Tom."

The boy answered not—his ears, his eyes, his whole soul, were concentrated in the apples. Ten minutes elapsed, but he stood motionless, like a pointer at dead set.

"My good boy, you can go."

He did not stir.

"Is there anything you want?"

"I want," said the lad, without moving his eyes from the objects of his intense desire, and speaking in a slow, pointed manner, which ought to have been heard to be fully appreciated, "I want ap-ples!"

“Oh, if that’s all, take what you like.”

The permission once obtained, the boy flung himself upon the box with the rapacity of a hawk upon its prey, after being long poised in the air, to fix its certain aim; thrusting his hands to the right and left, in order to secure the finest specimens of the coveted fruit, scarcely allowing himself time to breathe until he had filled his old straw hat, and all his pockets, with apples. To help laughing was impossible; while this new Tom o’ Bedlam darted from the house, and scampered across the field for dear life, as if afraid that we should pursue him, to rob him of his prize.

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It was during this winter that our friend Brian was left a fortune of three hundred pounds per annum; but it was necessary for him to return to his native country, in order to take possession of the property. This he positively refused to do; and when we remonstrated with him on the apparent imbecility of this resolution, he declared that he would not risk his life, in crossing the Atlantic twice for twenty times that sum. What strange inconsistency was this, in a being who had three times attempted to take away that which he dreaded so much to lose accidentally!

I was much amused with an account which he gave me, in his quaint way, of an excursion he went upon with a botanist, to collect specimens of the plants and flowers of Upper Canada.

“It was a fine spring day, some ten years ago, and I was yoking my oxen to drag in some oats I had just sown, when a little, fat, punchy man, with a broad, red, good-natured face, and carrying a small black leathern wallet across his shoulder, called to me over the fence, and asked me if my name was Brian B——? I said, ’Yes; what of that?’

“’Only you are the man I want to see. They tell me that you are better acquainted with the woods than any person in these parts; and I will pay you anything in reason if you will be my guide for a few days.’

“‘Where do you want to go?’ said I.

“‘Nowhere in particular,’ says he. ’I want to go here and there, in all directions, to collect plants and flowers.’

“That is still-hunting with a vengeance, thought I. ’To-day I must drag in my oats. If to-morrow will suit, we will be off.’

“‘And your charge?’ said he. ‘I like to be certain of that.’

“’A dollar a day. My time and labour upon my farm, at this busy season, is worth more than that.’

“‘True,’ said he. ’Well, I’ll give you what you ask. At what time will you be ready to start?’

“‘By daybreak, if you wish it.’

“Away he went; and by daylight next morning he was at my door, mounted upon a stout French pony. ’What are you going to do with that beast?’ said I. ’Horses are of no use on the road that you and I are to travel. You had better leave him in my stable.’

“‘I want him to carry my traps,’ said he; ’it may be some days that we shall be absent.’

“I assured him that he must be his own beast of burthen, and carry his axe, and blanket, and wallet of food upon his own back. The little body did not much relish this arrangement; but as there was no help for it, he very good-naturedly complied. Off we set, and soon climbed the steep ridge at the back of your farm, and got upon —— lake plains. The woods were flush with flowers; and the little man grew into such an ecstacy, that at every fresh specimen he uttered a yell of joy, cut a caper in the air, and flung himself down upon them, as if he was drunk with delight. ’Oh, what treasures! what treasures!’ he cried. ‘I shall make my fortune!’

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“It is seldom I laugh,” quoth Brian, “but I could not help laughing at this odd little man; for it was not the beautiful blossoms, such as you delight to paint, that drew forth these exclamations, but the queer little plants, which he had rummaged for at the roots of old trees, among the moss and long grass. He sat upon a decayed trunk, which lay in our path, I do believe for a long hour, making an oration over some greyish things, spotted with red, that grew upon it, which looked more like mould than plants, declaring himself repaid for all the trouble and expense he had been at, if it were only to obtain a sight of them. I gathered him a beautiful blossom of the lady’s slipper; but he pushed it back when I presented it to him, saying, ’Yes, yes; ’tis very fine. I have seen that often before; but these lichens are splendid.’

“The man had so little taste that I thought him a fool, and so I left him to talk to his dear plants, while I shot partridges for our supper. We spent six days in the woods, and the little man filled his black wallet with all sorts of rubbish, as if he wilfully shut his eyes to the beautiful flowers, and chose only to admire ugly, insignificant plants that everybody else passes by without noticing, and which, often as I had been in the woods, I never had observed before. I never pursued a deer with such earnestness as he continued his hunt for what he called ‘specimens.’

“When we came to the Cold Creek, which is pretty deep in places, he was in such a hurry to get at some plants that grew under the water, that in reaching after them he lost his balance and fell head over heels into the stream. He got a thorough ducking, and was in a terrible fright; but he held on to the flowers which had caused the trouble, and thanked his stars that he had saved them as well as his life. Well, he was an innocent man,” continued Brian; “a very little made him happy, and at night he would sing and amuse himself like a child. He gave me ten dollars for my trouble, and I never saw him again; but I often think of him, when hunting in the woods that we wandered through together, and I pluck the wee plants that he used to admire, and wonder why he preferred them to the fine flowers.”

When our resolution was formed to sell our farm, and take up our grant of land in the backwoods, no one was so earnest in trying to persuade us to give up this ruinous scheme as our friend Brian B——, who became quite eloquent in his description of the trials and sorrows that awaited us. During the last week of our stay in the township of H ——, he visited us every evening, and never bade us good-night without a tear moistening his cheek. We parted with the hunter as with an old friend; and we never met again. His fate was a sad one. After we left that part of the country, he fell into a moping melancholy, which ended in self-destruction. But a kinder, warmer-hearted man, while he enjoyed the light of reason, has seldom crossed our path.

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THE DYING HUNTER TO HIS DOG

Lie down, lie down, my noble hound!
  That joyful bark give o’er;
It wakes the lonely echoes round,
  But rouses me no more.
Thy lifted ears, thy swelling chest,
  Thine eye so keenly bright,
No longer kindle in my breast
  The thrill of fierce delight;
As following thee, on foaming steed,
My eager soul outstripp’d thy speed.

Lie down, lie down, my faithful hound!
  And watch this night with me.
For thee again the horn shall sound,
  By mountain, stream, and tree;
And thou, along the forest glade,
  Shall track the flying deer
When, cold and silent, I am laid
  In chill oblivion here.
Another voice shall cheer thee on,
And glory when the chase is won.

Lie down, lie down, my gallant hound!
  Thy master’s life is sped;
And, couch’d upon the dewy ground,
  ’Tis thine to watch the dead.
But when the blush of early day
  Is kindling in the sky,
Then speed thee, faithful friend, away,
  And to my Agnes hie;
And guide her to this lonely spot,
Though my closed eyes behold her not.

Lie down, lie down, my trusty hound!
  Death comes, and now we part.
In my dull ear strange murmurs sound—
  More faintly throbs my heart;
The many twinkling lights of Heaven
  Scarce glimmer in the blue—
Chill round me falls the breath of even,
  Cold on my brow the dew;

Earth, stars, and heavens are lost to sight—
The chase is o’er!—brave friend, good-night!

CHAPTER XI

THE CHARIVARI

Our fate is seal’d! ’Tis now in vain to sigh
  For home, or friends, or country left behind.
Come, dry those tears, and lift the downcast eye
  To the high heaven of hope, and be resign’d;
Wisdom and time will justify the deed,
The eye will cease to weep, the heart to bleed.

Love’s thrilling sympathies, affections pure,
  All that endear’d and hallow’d your lost home,
Shall on a broad foundation, firm and sure,
  Establish peace; the wilderness become,
Dear as the distant land you fondly prize,
Or dearer visions that in memory rise.

The moan of the wind tells of the coming rain that it bears upon its wings; the deep stillness of the woods, and the lengthened shadows they cast upon the stream, silently but surely foreshow the bursting of the thunder-cloud; and who that has lived for any time upon the coast, can mistake the language of the waves; that deep prophetic surging that ushers in the terrible gale? So it is with the human heart—it has its mysterious warnings, its fits of sunshine and shade, of storm and calm, now elevated with anticipations of joy, now depressed by dark presentiments of ill.

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All who have ever trodden this earth, possessed of the powers of thought and reflection, of tracing effects back to their causes, have listened to these voices of the soul, and secretly acknowledged their power; but few, very few, have had courage boldly to declare their belief in them: the wisest and the best have given credence to them, and the experience of every day proves their truth; yea, the proverbs of past ages abound with allusions to the same subject, and though the worldly may sneer, and the good man reprobate the belief in a theory which he considers dangerous, yet the former, when he appears led by an irresistible impulse to enter into some fortunate, but until then unthought-of speculation; and the latter, when he devoutly exclaims that God has met him in prayer, unconsciously acknowledge the same spiritual agency. For my own part, I have no doubts upon the subject, and have found many times, and at different periods of my life, that the voice in the soul speaks truly; that if we gave stricter heed to its mysterious warnings, we should be saved much after-sorrow.

Well do I remember how sternly and solemnly this inward monitor warned me of approaching ill, the last night I spent at home; how it strove to draw me back as from a fearful abyss, beseeching me not to leave England and emigrate to Canada, and how gladly would I have obeyed the injunction had it still been in my power. I had bowed to a superior mandate, the command of duty; for my husband's sake, for the sake of the infant, whose little bosom heaved against my swelling heart, I had consented to bid adieu for ever to my native shores, and it seemed both useless and sinful to draw back.

Yet, by what stern necessity were we driven forth to seek a new home amid the western wilds? We were not compelled to emigrate. Bound to England by a thousand holy and endearing ties, surrounded by a circle of chosen friends, and happy in each other's love, we possessed all that the world can bestow of good—but *wealth*. The half-pay of a subaltern officer, managed with the most rigid economy, is too small to supply the wants of a family; and if of a good family, not enough to maintain his original standing in society. True, it may find his children bread, it may clothe them indifferently, but it leaves nothing for the indispensable requirements of education, or the painful contingencies of sickness and misfortune. In such a case, it is both wise and right to emigrate; Nature points it out as the only safe remedy for the evils arising out of an over-dense population, and her advice is always founded upon justice and truth.

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Up to the period of which I now speak, we had not experienced much inconvenience from our very limited means. Our wants were few, and we enjoyed many of the comforts and even some of the luxuries of life; and all had gone on smoothly and lovingly with us until the birth of our first child. It was then that prudence whispered to the father, “you are happy and contented now, but this cannot always last; the birth of that child whom you have hailed with as much rapture as though she were born to inherit a noble estate, is to you the beginning of care. Your family may increase, and your wants will increase in proportion; out of what fund can you satisfy their demands? Some provision must be made for the future, and made quickly, while youth and health enable you to combat successfully with the ills of life. When you married for inclination, you knew that emigration must be the result of such an act of imprudence in over-populated England. Up and be doing, while you still possess the means of transporting yourself to a land where the industrious can never lack bread, and where there is a chance that wealth and independence may reward virtuous toil.”

Alas! that truth should ever whisper such unpleasant realities to the lover of ease—to the poet, the author, the musician, the man of books, of refined taste and gentlemanly habits. Yet he took the hint, and began to bestir himself with the spirit and energy so characteristic of the glorious North, from whence he sprung.

“The sacrifice,” he said, “must be made, and the sooner the better. My dear wife, I feel confident that you will respond to the call of duty, and, hand-in-hand and heart-in-heart we will go forth to meet difficulties, and, by the help of God, to subdue them.”

Dear husband! I take shame to myself that my purpose was less firm, that my heart lingered so far behind yours in preparing for this great epoch in our lives; that, like Lot’s wife, I still turned and looked back, and clung with all my strength to the land I was leaving. It was not the hardships of an emigrant’s life I dreaded. I could bear mere physical privations philosophically enough; it was the loss of the society in which I had moved, the want of congenial minds, of persons engaged in congenial pursuits, that made me so reluctant to respond to my husband’s call.

I was the youngest in a family remarkable for their literary attainments; and, while yet a child, I had seen riches melt away from our once prosperous home, as the Canadian snows dissolve before the first warm days of spring, leaving the verdureless earth naked and bare.

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There was, however, a spirit in my family that rose superior to the crushing influences of adversity. Poverty, which so often degrades the weak mind, became their best teacher, the stern but fruitful parent of high resolve and ennobling thought. The very misfortunes that overwhelmed, became the source from whence they derived both energy and strength, as the inundation of some mighty river fertilises the shores over which it first spreads ruin and desolation. Without losing aught of their former position in society, they dared to be poor; to place mind above matter, and make the talents with which the great Father had liberally endowed them, work out their appointed end. The world sneered, and summer friends forsook them; they turned their backs upon the world, and upon the ephemeral tribes that live but in its smiles.

From out of the solitude in which they dwelt, their names went forth through the crowded cities of that cold, sneering world, and their names were mentioned with respect by the wise and good; and what they lost in wealth, they more than regained in well-earned reputation.

Brought up in this school of self-denial, it would have been strange indeed if all its wise and holy precepts had brought forth no corresponding fruit. I endeavoured to reconcile myself to the change that awaited me, to accommodate my mind and pursuits to the new position in which I found myself placed.

Many a hard battle had we to fight with old prejudices, and many proud swellings of the heart to subdue, before we could feel the least interest in the land of our adoption, or look upon it as our home.

All was new, strange, and distasteful to us; we shrank from the rude, coarse familiarity of the uneducated people among whom we were thrown; and they in return viewed us as innovators, who wished to curtail their independence, by expecting from them the kindly civilities and gentle courtesies of a more refined community. They considered us proud and shy, when we were only anxious not to give offense. The semi-barbarous Yankee squatters, who had “left their country for their country’s good,” and by whom we were surrounded in our first settlement, detested us, and with them we could have no feeling in common. We could neither lie nor cheat in our dealings with them; and they despised us for our ignorance in trading and our want of smartness.

The utter want of that common courtesy with which a well-brought-up European addresses the poorest of his brethren, is severely felt at first by settlers in Canada. At the period of which I am now speaking, the titles of “sir” or “madam” were very rarely applied by inferiors. They entered your house without knocking; and while boasting of their freedom, violated one of its dearest laws, which considers even the cottage of the poorest labourer his castle, and his privacy sacred.

“Is your man to hum?”—“Is the woman within?” were the general inquiries made to me by such guests, while my bare-legged, ragged Irish servants were always spoken to, as “sir” and “mem,” as if to make the distinction more pointed.

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Why they treated our claims to their respect with marked insult and rudeness, I never could satisfactorily determine, in any way that could reflect honour on the species, or even plead an excuse for its brutality, until I found that this insolence was more generally practised by the low, uneducated emigrants from Britain, who better understood your claims to their civility, than by the natives themselves. Then I discovered the secret.

The unnatural restraint which society imposes upon these people at home forces them to treat their more fortunate brethren with a servile deference which is repugnant to their feelings, and is thrust upon them by the dependent circumstances in which they are placed. This homage to rank and education is not sincere. Hatred and envy lie rankling at their heart, although hidden by outward obsequiousness. Necessity compels their obedience; they fawn, and cringe, and flatter the wealth on which they depend for bread. But let them once emigrate, the clog which fettered them is suddenly removed; they are free; and the dearest privilege of this freedom is to wreak upon their superiors the long-locked-up hatred of their hearts. They think they can debase you to their level by disallowing all your claims to distinction; while they hope to exalt themselves and their fellows into ladies and gentlemen by sinking you back to the only title you received from Nature—plain “man” and “woman.” Oh, how much more honourable than their vulgar pretensions!

I never knew the real dignity of these simple epithets until they were insultingly thrust upon us by the working-classes of Canada.

But from this folly the native-born Canadian is exempt; it is only practised by the low-born Yankee, or the Yankeefied British peasantry and mechanics. It originates in the enormous reaction springing out of a sudden emancipation from a state of utter dependence to one of unrestrained liberty. As such, I not only excuse, but forgive it, for the principle is founded in nature; and, however disgusting and distasteful to those accustomed to different treatment from their inferiors, it is better than a hollow profession of duty and attachment urged upon us by a false and unnatural position. Still it is very irksome until you think more deeply upon it; and then it serves to amuse rather than to irritate.

And here I would observe, before quitting this subject, that of all follies, that of taking out servants from the old country is one of the greatest, and is sure to end in the loss of the money expended in their passage, and to become the cause of deep disappointment and mortification to yourself.

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They no sooner set foot upon the Canadian shores then they become possessed with this ultra-republican spirit. All respect for their employers, all subordination, is at an end; the very air of Canada severs the tie of mutual obligation which bound you together. They fancy themselves not only equal to you in rank, but that ignorance and vulgarity give them superior claims to notice. They demand in terms the highest wages, and grumble at doing half the work, in return, which they cheerfully performed at home. They demand to eat at your table, and to sit in your company; and if you refuse to listen to their dishonest and extravagant claims, they tell you that “they are free; that no contract signed in the old country is binding in ‘Meriky’; that you may look out for another person to fill their place as soon as you like; and that you may get the money expended in their passage and outfit in the best manner you can.”

I was unfortunately persuaded to take out a woman with me as a nurse for my child during the voyage, as I was in very poor health; and her conduct, and the trouble and expense she occasioned, were a perfect illustration of what I have described.

When we consider the different position in which servants are placed in the old and new world, this conduct, ungrateful as it then appeared to me, ought not to create the least surprise. In Britain, for instance, they are too often dependent upon the caprice of their employers for bread. Their wages are low; their moral condition still lower. They are brought up in the most servile fear of the higher classes, and they feel most keenly their hopeless degradation, for no effort on their part can better their condition. They know that if once they get a bad character, they must starve or steal; and to this conviction we are indebted for a great deal of their seeming fidelity and long and laborious service in our families, which we owe less to any moral perception on their part of the superior kindness or excellence of their employers, than to the mere feeling of assurance, that as long as they do their work well, and are cheerful and obedient, they will be punctually paid their wages, and well housed and fed.

Happy is it for them and their masters when even this selfish bond of union exists between them!

But in Canada the state of things in this respect is wholly reversed. The serving class, comparatively speaking, is small, and admits of little competition. Servants that understand the work of the country are not easily procured, and such always can command the highest wages. The possession of a good servant is such an addition to comfort, that they are persons of no small consequence, for the dread of starving no longer frightens them into servile obedience. They can live without you, and they well know that you cannot do without them. If you attempt to practise upon them that common vice of English mistresses, to scold them for any slight omission or offence,

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you rouse into active operation all their new-found spirit of freedom and opposition. They turn upon you with a torrent of abuse; they demand their wages, and declare their intention of quitting you instantly. The more inconvenient the time for you, the more bitter become their insulting remarks. They tell you, with a high hand, that “they are as good as you; that they can get twenty better places by the morrow, and that they don’t care a snap for your anger.” And away they bounce, leaving you to finish a large wash, or a heavy job of ironing, in the best way you can.

When we look upon such conduct as the reaction arising out of their former state, we cannot so much blame them, and are obliged to own that it is the natural result of a sudden emancipation from former restraint. With all their insolent airs of independence, I must confess that I prefer the Canadian to the European servant. If they turn out good and faithful, it springs more from real respect and affection, and you possess in your domestic a valuable assistant and friend; but this will never be the case with a servant brought out with you from the old country, for the reasons before assigned. The happy independence enjoyed in this highly-favoured land is nowhere better illustrated than in the fact that no domestic can be treated with cruelty or insolence by an unbenevolent or arrogant master.

Forty years has made as great a difference in the state of society in Canada as it has in its commercial and political importance. When we came to the Canadas, society was composed of elements which did not always amalgamate in the best possible manner.

We were reckoned no addition to the society of C——. Authors and literary people they held in supreme detestation; and I was told by a lady, the very first time I appeared in company, that “she heard that I wrote books, but she could tell me that they did not want a Mrs. Trollope in Canada.”

I had not then read Mrs. Trollope’s work on America, or I should have comprehended at once the cause of her indignation; for she was just such a person as would have drawn forth the keen satire of that far-seeing observer of the absurdities of our nature, whose witty exposure of American affectation has done more towards producing a reform in that respect, than would have resulted from a thousand grave animadversions soberly written.

Another of my self-constituted advisers informed me, with great asperity in her look and tone, that “it would be better for me to lay by the pen, and betake myself to some more useful employment; that she thanked her God that she could make a shirt, and see to the cleaning of her house!”

These remarks were perfectly gratuitous, and called forth by no observation of mine; for I tried to conceal my blue stockings beneath the long conventional robes of the tamest

common-place, hoping to cover the faintest tinge of the objectionable colour. I had spoken to neither of these women in my life, and was much amused by their remarks; particularly as I could both make a shirt, and attend to the domestic arrangement of my family, as well as either of them.

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I verily believe that they expected to find an author one of a distinct species from themselves; that they imagined the aforesaid biped should neither eat, drink, sleep, nor talk like other folks;—a proud, useless, self-conceited, affected animal, that deserved nothing but kicks and buffets from the rest of mankind.

Anxious not to offend them, I tried to avoid all literary subjects. I confined my conversation to topics of common interest; but this gave greater offence than the most ostentatious show of learning, for they concluded that I would not talk on such subjects, because I thought them incapable of understanding me. This was more wounding to their self-love than the most arrogant assumption on my part; and they regarded me with a jealous, envious stand-a-loofishness, that was so intolerable that I gave up all ideas of visiting them. I was so accustomed to hear the whispered remark, or to have it retailed to me by others, “Oh, yes; she can write, but she can do nothing else,” that I was made more diligent in cultivating every branch of domestic usefulness; so that these ill-natured sarcasms ultimately led to my acquiring a great mass of most useful practical knowledge. Yet—such is the contradiction inherent in our poor fallen nature—-these people were more annoyed by my proficiency in the common labours of the household, than they would have been by any displays of my unfortunate authorship. Never was the fable of the old man and his ass so truly verified.

There is a very little of the social, friendly visiting among the Canadians which constitutes the great charm of home. Their hospitality is entirely reserved for those monster meetings in which they vie with each other in displaying fine clothes and costly furniture. As these large parties are very expensive, few families can afford to give more than one during the visiting season, which is almost exclusively confined to the winter. The great gun, once fired, you meet no more at the same house around the social board until the ensuing year, and would scarcely know that you had a neighbor, were it not for a formal morning call made now and then, just to remind you that such individuals are in the land of the living, and still exist in your near vicinity.

I am speaking of visiting in the towns and villages. The manners and habits of the European settlers in the country are far more simple and natural, and their hospitality more genuine and sincere. They have not been sophisticated by the hard, worldly wisdom of a Canadian town, and still retain a warm remembrance of the kindly humanities of home.

Among the women, a love of dress exceeds all other passions. In public they dress in silks and satins, and wear the most expensive ornaments, and they display considerable taste in the arrangement and choice of colours. The wife of a man in moderate circumstances, whose income does not exceed two or three hundred pounds a-year, does not hesitate in expending ten or fifteen pounds upon one article of outside finery, while often her inner garments are not worth as many sous; thus sacrificing to outward show all the real comforts of life.

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The aristocracy of wealth is bad enough; but the aristocracy of dress is perfectly contemptible. Could Raphael visit Canada in rags, he would be nothing in their eyes beyond a common sign-painter.

Great and manifold, even to the ruin of families, are the evils arising from this inordinate love for dress. They derive their fashions from the French and the Americans—seldom from the English, whom they far surpass in the neatness and elegance of their costume.

The Canadian women, while they retain the bloom and freshness of youth, are exceedingly pretty; but these charms soon fade, owing, perhaps, to the fierce extremes of their climate, or the withering effect of the dry metallic air of stoves, and their going too early into company and being exposed, while yet children, to the noxious influence of late hours, and the sudden change from heated rooms to the cold, biting, bitter winter blast.

Though small of stature, they are generally well and symmetrically formed, and possess a graceful, easy carriage. The early age at which they marry, and are introduced into society, takes from them all awkwardness and restraint. A girl of fourteen can enter a crowded ball-room with as much self-possession, and converse with as much confidence, as a matron of forty. The blush of timidity and diffidence is, indeed, rare upon the cheek of a Canadian beauty.

Their education is so limited and confined to so few accomplishments, and these not very perfectly taught, that their conversation seldom goes beyond a particular discussion on their own dress, or that of their neighbours, their houses, furniture, and servants, sometimes interlarded with a *little harmless gossip*, which, however, tells keenly upon the characters of their dear friends.

Yet they have abilities, excellent practical abilities, which, with a little mental culture, would render them intellectual and charming companions. At present, too many of these truly lovely girls remind one of choice flowers half buried in weeds.

Music and dancing are their chief accomplishments. In the former they seldom excel. Though possessing an excellent general taste for music, it is seldom in their power to bestow upon its study the time which is required to make a really good musician. They are admirable proficients in the other art, which they acquire readily, with the least instruction, often without any instruction at all, beyond that which is given almost intuitively by a good ear for time, and a quick perception of the harmony of motion.

The waltz is their favorite dance, in which old and young join with the greatest avidity; it is not unusual to see parents and their grown-up children dancing in the same set in a public ball-room.

Their taste in music is not for the sentimental; they prefer the light, lively tunes of the Virginian minstrels to the most impassioned strains of Bellini.

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On entering one of the public ball-rooms, a stranger would be delighted with such a display of pretty faces and neat figures. I have hardly ever seen a really plain Canadian girl in her teens; and a downright ugly one is almost unknown.

The high cheek-bones, wide mouth, and turned-up nose of the Saxon race, so common among the lower classes in Britain, are here succeeded in the next generation, by the small oval face, straight nose, and beautifully-cut mouth of the American; while the glowing tint of the Albion rose pales before the withering influence of late hours and stove-heat.

They are naturally a fine people, and possess capabilities and talents, which when improved by cultivation will render them second to no people in the world; and that period is not far distant.

Idiots and mad people are so seldom met with among natives of the colony, that not one of this description of unfortunates has ever come under my own immediate observation.

To the benevolent philanthropist, whose heart has bled over the misery and pauperism of the lower classes in Great Britain, the almost entire absence of mendicity from Canada would be highly gratifying. Canada has few, if any, native beggars; her objects of charity are generally imported from the mother country, and these are never suffered to want food or clothing. The Canadians are a truly charitable people; no person in distress is driven with harsh and cruel language from their doors; they not only generously relieve the wants of suffering strangers cast upon their bounty, but they nurse them in sickness, and use every means in their power to procure them employment. The number of orphan children yearly adopted by wealthy Canadians, and treated in every respect as their own, is almost incredible.

It is a glorious country for the labouring classes, for while blessed with health they are always certain of employment, and certain also to derive from it ample means of support for their families. An industrious, hard-working man in a few years is able to purchase from his savings a homestead of his own; and in process of time becomes one of the most important and prosperous class of settlers in Canada, her free and independent yeomen, who form the bones and sinews of this rising country, and from among whom she already begins to draw her senators, while their educated sons become the aristocrats of the rising generation.

It has often been remarked to me by people long resident in the colony, that those who come to the country destitute of means, but able and willing to work, invariably improve their condition and become independent; while the gentleman who brings out with him a small capital is too often tricked and cheated out of his property, and drawn into rash and dangerous speculations which terminate in his ruin. His children, neglected and uneducated, yet brought up with ideas far beyond their means, and suffered to waste

their time in idleness, seldom take to work, and not unfrequently sink down to the lowest class.

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But I have dwelt long enough upon these serious subjects; and I will leave my husband, who is better qualified than myself, to give a more accurate account of the country, while I turn to matters of a lighter and a livelier cast.

It was towards the close of the summer of 1833, which had been unusually cold and wet for Canada, while Moodie was absent at D——, inspecting a portion of his government grant of land, that I was startled one night, just before retiring to rest, by the sudden firing of guns in our near vicinity, accompanied by shouts and yells, the braying of horns, the beating of drums, and the barking of all the dogs in the neighborhood. I never heard a more stunning uproar of discordant and hideous sounds.

What could it all mean? The maid-servant, as much alarmed as myself, opened the door and listened.

“The goodness defend us!” she exclaimed, quickly closing it, and drawing a bolt seldom used. “We shall be murdered. The Yankees must have taken Canada, and are marching hither.”

“Nonsense! that cannot be it. Besides they would never leave the main road to attack a poor place like this. Yet the noise is very near. Hark! they are firing again. Bring me the hammer and some nails, and let us secure the windows.”

The next moment I laughed at my folly in attempting to secure a log hut, when the application of a match to its rotten walls would consume it in a few minutes. Still, as the noise increased, I was really frightened. My servant, who was Irish (for my Scotch girl, Bell, had taken to herself a husband and I had been obliged to hire another in her place, who had only been a few days in the country), began to cry and wring her hands, and lament her hard fate in coming to Canada.

Just at this critical moment, when we were both self-convicted of an arrant cowardice, which would have shamed a Canadian child of six years old, Mrs. O—— tapped at the door, and although generally a most unwelcome visitor, from her gossiping, mischievous propensities, I gladly let her in.

“Do tell me,” I cried, “the meaning of this strange uproar?”

“Oh, ’tis nothing,” she replied, laughing; “you and Mary look as white as a sheet; but you need not be alarmed. A set of wild fellows have met to charivari Old Satan, who has married his fourth wife to-night, a young gal of sixteen. I should not wonder if some mischief happens among them, for they are a bad set, made up of all the idle loafers about Port H—— and C——.”

“What is a charivari?” said I. “Do, pray, enlighten me.”

“Have you been nine months in Canada, and ask that question? Why I thought you knew everything! Well, I will tell you what it is. The charivari is a custom that the Canadians got from the French, in the Lower Province, and a queer custom it is. When an old man marries a young wife, or an old woman a young husband, or two old people, who ought to be thinking of their graves, enter for the second or third

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time into the holy estate of wedlock, as the priest calls it, all the idle young fellows in the neighborhood meet together to charivari them. For this purpose they disguise themselves, blackening their faces, putting their clothes on hind part before, and wearing horrible masks, with grotesque caps on their head, adorned with cocks' feathers and bells. They then form in a regular body, and proceed to the bridegroom's house, to the sound of tin kettles, horns, and drums, cracked fiddles, and all the discordant instruments they can collect together. Thus equipped, they surround the house where the wedding is held, just at the hour when the happy couple are supposed to be about to retire to rest—beating upon the door with clubs and staves, and demanding of the bridegroom admittance to drink the bride's health, or in lieu there of to receive a certain sum of money to treat the band at the nearest tavern.

"If the bridegroom refuses to appear and grant their request, they commence the horrible din you hear, firing guns charged with peas against the doors and windows, rattling old pots and kettles, and abusing him for his stinginess in no measured terms. Sometimes they break open the doors, and seize upon the bridegroom; and he may esteem himself a very fortunate man, under such circumstances, if he escapes being ridden upon a rail, tarred and feathered, and otherwise maltreated. I have known many fatal accidents arise out of an imprudent refusal to satisfy the demands of the assailants. People have even lost their lives in the fray; and I think the government should interfere, and put down these riotous meetings. Surely, it is very hard, that an old man cannot marry a young gal, if she is willing to take him, without asking the leave of such a rabble as that. What right have they to interfere with his private affairs?"

"What, indeed?" said I, feeling a truly British indignation at such a lawless infringement upon the natural rights of man.

"I remember," continued Mrs. O——, who had got fairly started upon a favorite subject, "a scene of this kind, that was acted two years ago, at ——, when old Mr. P—— took his third wife. He was a very rich storekeeper, and had made during the war a great deal of money. He felt lonely in his old age, and married a young, handsome widow, to enliven his house. The lads in the village were determined to make him pay for his frolic. This got wind, and Mr. P—— was advised to spend the honeymoon in Toronto; but he only laughed, and said that 'he was not going to be frightened from his comfortable home by the threats of a few wild boys.' In the morning, he was married at the church, and spent the day at home, where he entertained a large party of his own and the bride's friends. During the evening, all the idle chaps in the town collected round the house, headed by a mad young bookseller, who had offered himself for their captain, and, in the usual forms, demanded a sight of the bride, and liquor to drink her health. They were very good-naturedly received by Mr. P——, who sent a friend down to them to bid them welcome, and to inquire on what terms they would consent to let him off, and disperse.

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“The captain of the band demanded sixty dollars, as he, Mr. P——, could well afford to pay it.

“‘That’s too much, my fine fellows!’ cried Mr. P—— from the open window. ’Say twenty-five, and I will send you down a cheque upon the bank of Montreal for the money.’

“‘Thirty! thirty! thirty! old boy!’ roared a hundred voices. ’Your wife’s worth that. Down with the cash, and we will give you three cheers, and three times three for the bride, and leave you to sleep in peace. If you hang back, we will raise such a ’larum about your ears that you shan’t know that your wife’s your own for a month to come!’

“‘I’ll give you twenty-five,’ remonstrated the bridegroom, not the least alarmed at their threats, and laughing all the time in his sleeve.

“‘Thirty; not one copper less!’ Here they gave him such a salute of diabolical sounds that he ran from the window with his hands to his ears, and his friend came down stairs to the verandah, and gave them the sum they required. They did not expect that the old man would have been so liberal, and they gave him the ‘Hip, hip, hip hurrah!’ in fine style, and marched off the finish the night and spend the money at the tavern.”

“And do people allow themselves to be bullied out of their property by such ruffians?”

“Ah, my dear! ’tis the custom of the country, and ’tis not so easy to put it down. But I can tell you that a charivari is not always a joke.

“There was another affair that happened, just before you came to the place, that occasioned no small talk in the neighbourhood; and well it might, for it was a most disgraceful piece of business, and attended with very serious consequences. Some of the charivari party had to fly, or they might have ended their days in the penitentiary.

“There was runaway nigger from the States came to the village, and set up a barber’s poll, and settled among us. I am no friend to the blacks; but really Tom Smith was such a quiet, good-natured fellow, and so civil and obliging, that he soon got a good business. He was clever, too, and cleaned old clothes until they looked almost as good as new. Well, after a time he persuaded a white girl to marry him. She was not a bad-looking Irish woman, and I can’t think what bewitched the creature to take him.

“Her marriage with the black man created a great sensation in the town. All the young fellows were indignant at his presumption and her folly, and they determined to give them the charivari in fine style, and punish them both for the insult they had put upon the place.

“Some of the young gentlemen in the town joined in the frolic. They went so far as to enter the house, drag the poor nigger from his bed, and in spite of his shrieks for mercy,

they hurried him out into the cold air—for it was winter—and almost naked as he was, rode him upon a rail, and so ill-treated him that he died under their hands.

“They left the body, when they found what had happened, and fled. The ringleaders escaped across the lake to the other side; and those who remained could not be sufficiently identified to bring them to trial. The affair was hushed up; but it gave great uneasiness to several respectable families whose sons were in the scrape.”

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“Good heavens! are such things permitted in a Christian country? But scenes like these must be of rare occurrence?”

“They are more common than you imagine. A man was killed up at W—— the other day, and two others dangerously wounded, at a charivari. The bridegroom was a man in middle life, a desperately resolute and passionate man, and he swore that if such riff-raff dared to interfere with him, he would shoot at them with as little compunction as he would at so many crows. His threats only increased the mischievous determination of the mob to torment him; and when he refused to admit their deputation, or even to give them a portion of the wedding cheer, they determined to frighten him into compliance by firing several guns, loaded with peas, at his door. Their salute was returned from the chamber windows, by the discharge of a double-barrelled gun, loaded with buck-shot. The crowd gave back with a tremendous yell. Their leader was shot through the heart, and two of the foremost in the scuffle dangerously wounded. They vowed they would set fire to the house, but the bridegroom boldly stepped to the window, and told them to try it, and before they could light a torch he would fire among them again, as his gun was reloaded, and he would discharge it at them as long as one of them dared to remain on his premises.

“They cleared off; but though Mr. A—— was not punished for the *accident*, as it was called, he became a marked man, and lately left the colony, to settle in the United States.

“Why, Mrs. Moodie, you look quite serious. I can, however, tell you a less dismal tale, A charivari would seldom be attended with bad consequences if people would take it as a joke, and join in the spree.”

“A very dignified proceeding, for a bride and bridegroom to make themselves the laughing-stock of such people!”

“Oh, but custom reconciles us to everything; and ’tis better to give up a little of our pride than endanger the lives of our fellow-creatures. I have been told a story of a lady in the Lower Province, who took for her second husband a young fellow, who, as far as his age was concerned, might have been her son. The mob surrounded her house at night, carrying her effigy in an open coffin, supported by six young lads, with white favours in their hats; and they buried the poor bride, amid shouts of laughter, and the usual accompaniments, just opposite her drawing-room windows. The widow was highly amused by the whole of their proceedings, but she wisely let them have their own way. She lived in a strong stone house, and she barred the doors, and closed the iron shutters, and set them at defiance.

“‘As long as she enjoyed her health,’ she said, ’they were welcome to bury her in effigy as often as they pleased; she was really glad to be able to afford amusement to so many people.’

“Night after night, during the whole of that winter, the same party beset her house with their diabolical music; but she only laughed at them.

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“The leader of the mob was a young lawyer from these parts, a sad, mischievous fellow; the widow became aware of this, and she invited him one evening to take tea with a small party at her house. He accepted the invitation, was charmed with her hearty and hospitable welcome, and soon found himself quite at home; but only think how ashamed he must have felt, when the same ’larum commenced, at the usual hour, in front of the lady’s house!

“‘Oh,’ said Mrs. R——, smiling to her husband, ’here come our friends. Really, Mr. K——, they amuse us so much of an evening that I should feel quite dull without them.’

“From that hour the charivari ceased, and the old lady was left to enjoy the society of her young husband in quiet.

“I assure you, Mrs. M——, that the charivari often deters old people from making disgraceful marriages, so that it is not wholly without its use.”

A few days after the charivari affair, Mrs. D—— stepped in to see me. She was an American; a very respectable old lady, who resided in a handsome frame-house on the main road. I was at dinner, the servant-girl, in the meanwhile, nursing my child at a distance. Mrs. D—— sat looking at me very seriously until I concluded my meal, her dinner having been accomplished several hours before. When I had finished, the girl give me the child, and then removed the dinner-service into an outer room.

“You don’t eat with your helps,” said my visitor. “Is not that something like pride?”

“It is custom,” said I; “we were not used to do so at home, and I think that keeping a separate table is more comfortable for both parties.”

“Are you not both of the same flesh and blood? The rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the maker of them all.”

“True. Your quotation is just, and I assent to it with all my heart. There is no difference in the flesh and blood; but education makes a difference in the mind and manners, and, till these can assimilate, it is better to keep them apart.”

“Ah! you are not a good Christian, Mrs. Moodie. The Lord thought more of the poor than he did of the rich, and he obtained more followers from among them. Now, *we* always take our meals with our people.”

Presently after, while talking over the affairs of our households, I happened to say that the cow we had bought of Mollineux had turned out extremely well, and gave a great deal of milk.

“That man lived with us several years,” she said; “he was an excellent servant, and D —— paid him his wages in land. The farm he now occupies formed a part of our U.E. grant. But, for all his good conduct, I never could abide him, for being a *black*.”

“Indeed! Is he not the same flesh and blood as the rest?”

The colour rose into Mrs. D——’s sallow face, and she answered with much warmth—

“What! do you mean to compare *me* with a *nigger*!”

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“Not exactly. But, after all, the colour makes the only difference between him and uneducated men of the same class.”

“Mrs. Moodie!” she exclaimed, holding up her hands in pious horror; “they are the children of the devil! God never condescended to make a nigger.”

“Such an idea is an impeachment of the power and majesty of the Almighty. How can you believe such an ignorant fable?”

“Well, then,” said my monitress, in high dudgeon, “if the devil did not make them, they are descended from Cain.”

“But all Cain’s posterity perished in the flood.”

My visitor was puzzled.

“The African race, it is generally believed, are the descendants of Ham, and to many of their tribes the curse pronounced against him seems to cling. To be the servant of servants is bad enough, without our making their condition worse by our cruel persecutions. Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost; and in proof of this inestimable promise, he did not reject the Ethiopian eunuch who was baptised by Philip, and who was, doubtless, as black as the rest of his people. Do you not admit Mollineux to your table with your other helps?”

“Mercy sake! do you think that I would sit down at the same table with a nigger? My helps would leave the house if I dared to put such an affront upon them. Sit down with a dirty black, indeed!”

“Do you think, Mrs. D——, that there will be any negroes in heaven?”

“Certainly not, or I, for one, would never wish to go there;” and out of the house she sallied in high disdain.

Yet this was the woman who had given me such a plausible lecture on pride. Alas, for our fallen nature! Which is more subversive of peace and Christian fellowship—-ignorance of our own characters, or the characters of others?

Our departure for the woods became now a frequent theme of conversation. My husband had just returned from an exploring expedition to the backwoods, and was delighted with the prospect of removing thither. The only thing I listened to in their praise, with any degree of interest, was a lively song, which he had written during his brief sojourn at Douro:—

TO THE WOODS!—TO THE WOODS!

To the woods!—to the woods!—The sun shines bright,
  The smoke rises high in the clear frosty air;
Our axes are sharp, and our hearts are light,
  Let us toil while we can and drive away care.
Though homely our food, we are merry and strong,
  And labour is wealth, which no man can deny;
At eve we will chase the dull hours with a song,
  And at grey peep of dawn let this be our cry,

    To the woods!—to the woods!—&c.

Hark! how the trees crack in the keen morning blast,
  And see how the rapids are cover’d with steam;
Thaw your axes, my lads, the sun rises fast,
  And gilds the pine tops with his bright golden beam.

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To the woods!—to the woods!—&c.

Come, chop away, lads! the wild woods resound,
Let your quick-falling strokes in due harmony ring;
See, the lofty tree shivers—it falls to the ground!
Now with voices united together we'll sing—
To the woods!—to the woods!—The sun shines bright,
The smoke rises high in the clear frosty air;
Our axes are sharp, and our hearts are light,
Let us toil while we can and drive away care,
And drive away care.

J.W.D.M.

CHAPTER XII

THE VILLAGE HOTEL

Well, stranger, here you are all safe and sound;
You're now on shore. Methinks you look aghast,—
As if you'd made some slight mistake, and found
A land you liked not. Think not of the past;
Your leading-strings are cut; the mystic chain
That bound you to your fair and smiling shore
Is sever'd now, indeed. 'Tis now in vain
To sigh for joys that can return no more.

Emigration, however necessary as the obvious means of providing for the increasing population of early-settled and over-peopled countries, is indeed a very serious matter to the individual emigrant and his family. He is thrown adrift, as it were, on a troubled ocean, the winds and currents of which are unknown to him. His past experience, and his judgment founded on experience, will be useless to him in this new sphere of action. In an old country, where generation after generation inhabits the same spot, the mental dispositions and prejudices of our ancestors become in a manner hereditary, and descend to their children with their possessions. In a new colony, on the contrary, the habits and associations of the emigrant having been broken up for ever, he is suddenly thrown on his own internal resources, and compelled to act and decide at once; not unfrequently under pain of misery or starvation. He is surrounded with dangers, often without the ordinary means which common-sense and prudence suggest of avoiding them,—because the *experience* on which these common qualities are founded is wanting. Separated for ever from those warm-hearted friends, who in his native country would advise or assist him in his first efforts, and surrounded by people who have an interest in misleading and imposing upon him, every-day experience

shows that no amount of natural sagacity or prudence, founded on experience in other countries, will be an effectual safeguard against deception and erroneous conclusions.

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It is a fact worthy of observation, that among emigrants possessing the qualities of industry and perseverance so essential to success in all countries, those who possess the smallest share of original talent and imagination, and the least of a speculative turn of mind, are usually the most successful. They follow the beaten track and prosper. However humbling this reflection may be to human vanity, it should operate as a salutary check on presumption and hasty conclusions. After a residence of sixteen years in Canada, during which my young and helpless family have been exposed to many privations, while we toiled incessantly and continued to hope even against hope, these reflections naturally occur to our minds, not only as the common-sense view of the subject, but as the fruit of long and daily-bought experience.

After all this long probation in the backwoods of Canada, I find myself brought back in circumstances nearly to the point from whence I started, and am compelled to admit that had I only followed my own unassisted judgment, when I arrived with my wife and child in Canada, and quietly settled down on the cleared farm I had purchased, in a well-settled neighbourhood, and with the aid of the means I then possessed, I should now in all probability have been in easy if not in affluent circumstances.

Native Canadians, like Yankees, will make money where people from the old country would almost starve. Their intimate knowledge of the country, and of the circumstances of the inhabitants, enables them to turn their money to great advantage; and I must add, that few people from the old country, however avaricious, can bring themselves to stoop to the unscrupulous means of acquiring property which are too commonly resorted to in this country. These reflections are a rather serious commencement of a sketch which was intended to be of a more lively description; one of my chief objects in writing this chapter being to afford a connecting link between my wife's sketches, and to account for some circumstances connected with our situation, which otherwise would be unintelligible to the reader. Before emigrating to Canada, I had been settled as a bachelor in South Africa for about twelve years. I use the word settled, for want of a better term—for a bachelor can never, properly, be said to be settled. He has no object in life—no aim. He is like a knife without a blade, or a gun without a barrel. He is always in the way, and nobody cares for him. If he work on a farm, as I did, for I never could look on while others were working without lending a hand, he works merely for the sake of work. He benefits nobody by his exertions, not even himself; for he is restless and anxious, has a hundred indescribable ailments, which no one but himself can understand; and for want of the legitimate cares and anxieties connected with a family, he is full of cares and anxieties of his own creating. In short, he is in a false position, as every man must be who presumes to live alone when he can do better.

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This was my case in South Africa. I had plenty of land, and of all the common necessaries of life; but I lived for years without companionship, for my nearest English neighbour was twenty-five miles off. I hunted the wild animals of the country, and had plenty of books to read; but, from talking broken Dutch for months together, I almost forgot how to speak my own language correctly. My very ideas (for I had not entirely lost the reflecting faculty) became confused and limited, for want of intellectual companions to strike out new lights, and form new combinations in the regions of thought; clearly showing that man was not intended to live alone. Getting, at length, tired of this solitary and unproductive life, I started for England, with the resolution of placing my domestic matters on a more comfortable footing. By a happy accident, at the house of a literary friend in London, I became acquainted with one to whose cultivated mind, devoted affections, and untiring energy of character, I have been chiefly indebted for many happy hours, under the most adverse circumstances, as well as for much of that hope and firm reliance upon Providence which have enabled me to bear up against overwhelming misfortunes. I need not here repeat what has been already stated respecting the motives which induced us to emigrate to Canada. I shall merely observe that when I left South Africa it was with the intention of returning to that colony, where I had a fine property, to which I was attached in no ordinary degree, on account of the beauty of the scenery and delightful climate. However, Mrs. Moodie, somehow or other, had imbibed an invincible dislike to that colony, for some of the very reasons that I liked it myself. The wild animals were her terror, and she fancied that every wood and thicket was peopled with elephants, lions, and tigers, and that it would be utterly impossible to take a walk without treading on dangerous snakes in the grass. Unfortunately, she had my own book on South Africa to quote triumphantly in confirmation of her vague notions of danger; and, in my anxiety to remove these exaggerated impressions, I would fain have retracted my own statements of the hair-breadth escapes I had made, in conflicts with wild animals, respecting which the slightest insinuation of doubt from another party would have excited my utmost indignation.

In truth, before I became familiarised with such danger, I had myself entertained similar notions, and my only wonder, in reading such narratives before leaving my own country, was how the inhabitants of the country managed to attend to their ordinary business in the midst of such accumulated dangers and annoyances. Fortunately, these hair-breadth escapes are of rare occurrence; but travellers and book-makers, like cooks, have to collect high-flavoured dishes, from far and near, the better to please the palates of their patrons. So it was with my South African adventures; I threw myself in the way of danger from the love of strong

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excitement, and I collected all my adventures together, and related them in pure simplicity, without very particularly informing the reader over what space of time or place my narrative extended, or telling him that I could easily have kept out of harm's way had I felt so inclined. All these arguments, however, had little influence on my good wife, for I could not deny that I had seen such animals in abundance in South Africa; and she thought she should never be safe among such neighbours. At last, between my wife's fear of the wild animals of Africa, and a certain love of novelty, which formed a part of my own character, I made up my mind, as they write on stray letters in the post-office, to "try Canada." So here we are, just arrived in the village of C——, situated on the northern shore of Lake Ontario.

Mrs. Moodie has already stated that we procured lodgings at a certain hotel in the village of C—— kept by S——, a truly excellent and obliging American. The British traveller is not a little struck, and in many instances disgusted, with a certain air of indifference in the manners of such persons in Canada, which is accompanied with a tone of equality and familiarity exceedingly unlike the limber and oily obsequiousness of tavern-keepers in England. I confess I felt at the time not a little annoyed with Mr. S——'s free-and-easy manner, and apparent coolness and indifference when he told us he had no spare room in his house to accommodate our party. We endeavoured to procure lodgings at another tavern, on the opposite side of the street; but soon learned that, in consequence of the arrival of an unusual number of immigrants, all the taverns in the village were already filled to overflowing. We returned to Mr. S——, and after some further conversation, he seemed to have taken a kind of liking to us, and became more complaisant in his manner, until our arrangement with Tom Wilson, as already related, relieved us from further difficulty.

I *now* perfectly understand the cause of this apparent indifference on the part of our host. Of all people, Englishmen, when abroad, are the most addicted to the practice of giving themselves arrogant airs towards those persons whom they look upon in the light of dependents on their bounty; and they forget that an American tavern-keeper holds a very different position in society from one of the same calling in England. The manners and circumstances of new countries are utterly opposed to anything like pretension in any class of society; and our worthy host, and his excellent wife—who had both held a respectable position in the society of the United States—had often been deeply wounded in their feelings by the disgusting and vulgar arrogance of English *gentleman* and *ladies*, as they are called. Knowing from experience the truth of the saying that "what cannot be cured must be endured," we were particularly civil to Mr. S——; and it was astonishing how quickly his manners thawed. We had not been long in the

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house before we were witnesses of so many examples of the purest benevolence, exhibited by Mr. S—— and his amiable family, that it was impossible to regard them with any feeling but that of warm regard and esteem. S—— was, in truth, a noble-hearted fellow. Whatever he did seemed so much a matter of habit, that the idea of selfish design or ostentation was utterly excluded from the mind. I could relate several instances of the disinterested benevolence of this kind-hearted tavern-keeper. I shall just mention one, which came under my own observation while I lived near C——.

I had frequently met a young Englishman, of the name of M——, at Mr. S——'s tavern. His easy and elegant manners, and whole deportment, showed that he had habitually lived in what is called the best society. He had emigrated to Canada with 3,000 or 4,000 pounds, had bought horses, run races, entertained many of the wealthy people of Toronto, or York, as it was then called, and had done a number of other exceedingly foolish things. Of course his money was soon absorbed by the thirsty Canadians, and he became deeply involved in debt. M—— had spent a great deal of money at S——'s tavern, and owed him 70 or 80 pounds. At length he was arrested for debt by some other party, was sent to the district gaol, which was nearly two miles from C——, and was compelled at first to subsist on the gaol allowance. What greatly aggravated the misfortunes of poor M——, a man without suspicion or guile, was a bitter disappointment in another quarter. He had an uncle in England, who was very rich, and who intended to leave him all his property. Some kind friend, to whom M—— had confided his expectations, wrote to England, informing the old man of his nephew's extravagance and hopes. The uncle there-upon cast him off, and left his property, when he died, to another relative.

As soon as the kind-hearted tavern-keeper heard of the poor fellow's imprisonment, he immediately went to see him, and, though he had not the slightest hope of ever being paid one farthing of his claim, Mr. S——, for many months that poor M—— lay in gaol, continued to send him an excellent dinner every day from his tavern, to which he always added a bottle of wine; for as Mr. S—— remarked, "Poor M——, I guess, is accustomed to live well."

As soon as Mr. S—— found that we did not belong to that class of people who fancy they exalt themselves by insulting others, there were no bounds to the obligingness of his disposition. As I had informed him that I wished to buy a cleared farm near Lake Ontario, he drove me out every day in all directions, and wherever he thought farms were to be had cheap.

Before proceeding further in my account of the inhabitants, I shall endeavour to give the reader some idea of the appearance of the village and the surrounding country. Of course, from the existence of a boundless forest, only partially cleared, there is a great sameness and uniformity in Canadian scenery.

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We had a stormy passage from Kingston to C——, and the wind being directly ahead, the plunging of the steam-boat between the sharp seas of Lake Ontario produced a “motion” which was decidedly “unconstitutional;” and, for the first time since we left England, we experienced a sensation which strongly reminded us of sea-sickness. The general appearance of the coast from the lake was somewhat uninviting. The land appeared to be covered everywhere with the dense unbroken forest, and though there were some gently sloping hills and slight elevations, showing the margin of extensive clearings, there was a general want of a background of high hills or mountains, which imparts so much interest to the scenery of every country. On reaching C——, however, we found that we had been much deceived as to the features of the country, when viewed at a less distance.

Immediately on the shores of the great lake, the land is generally flat for two or three miles inland; and as the farms are there measured out in long, narrow strips, a mile and a quarter long, and a quarter of a mile wide, the back parts of the lots, which are reserved for firewood, are only visible at a distance. This narrow belt of the primeval forest, which runs along the rear of all the lots in the first line of settlements, or concession as it is here called, necessarily conceals the houses and clearings of the next concession, unless the land beyond rises into hills. This arrangement, however convenient, tends greatly to mar the beauty of Canadian scenery.

The unvarying monotony of rail-fences and quadrangular enclosures, occasions a tiresome uniformity in the appearance of the country, which is increased by the almost total absence of those little graceful ornaments in detail, in the immediate neighbourhood of the homesteads, which give such a charm to English rural scenery.

The day after our arrival, we had an opportunity to examine the town, or rather village, of C——. It then consisted chiefly of one long street, parallel with the shore of the lake, and the houses, with very few exceptions, were built of wood; but they were all finished, and painted with such a degree of neatness, that their appearance was showy, and in some instances elegant, from the symmetry of their proportions. Immediately beyond the bounds of the village, we, for the first time, witnessed the operation of clearing up a thick cedar-swamp. The soil looked black and rich, but the water stood in pools, and the trunks and branches of the cedars were leaning in all directions, and at all angles, with their thick foliage and branches intermingled in wild confusion. The roots spread along the uneven surface of the ground so thickly that they seemed to form a vast net-work, and apparently covered the greater part of the surface of the ground. The task of clearing such a labyrinth seemed utterly hopeless. My heart almost sickened at the prospect of clearing such land, and I was greatly confirmed in my resolution of buying a farm cleared to my hand.

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The clearing process, however, in this unpromising spot, was going on vigorously. Several acres had been chopped down, and the fire had run through the prostrate trees, consuming all the smaller branches and foliage, and leaving the trunks and ground as black as charcoal could make them. Among this vast mass of ruins, four or five men were toiling with yoke of oxen. The trees were cut into manageable lengths, and were then dragged by the oxen together, so that they could be thrown up into large log-heaps to burn. The men looked, with their bare arms, hands, and faces begrimed with charcoal, more like negroes than white men; and were we, like some shallow people, to compare their apparent condition with that of the negro slaves in more favoured regions, we should be disposed to consider the latter the happier race. But this disgusting work was the work of freemen, high-spirited and energetic fellows, who feared neither man nor wild beast, and trusted to their own strong arms to conquer all difficulties, while they could discern the light of freedom and independence glimmering through the dark woods before them.

A few years afterwards, I visited C——, and looked about for the dreadful cedar-swamp which struck such a chill into my heart, and destroyed the illusion which had possessed my mind of the beauty of the Canadian woods. The trees were gone, the tangled roots were gone, and the cedar-swamp was converted into a fair grassy meadow, as smooth as a bowling-green. About sixteen years after my first visit to this spot, I saw it again, and it was covered with stone and brick houses; and one portion of it was occupied by a large manufactory, five or six stories high, with steam-engines, spinning-jennies, and all the machinery for working up the wool of the country into every description of clothing. This is civilisation! This is freedom!

The sites of towns and villages in Canada are never selected at random. In England, a concurrence of circumstances has generally led to the gradual formation of hamlets, villages, and towns. In many instances, towns have grown up in barbarous ages around a place of refuge during war; around a fortalice or castle, and more frequently around the ford over a river, where the detention of travellers has led to the establishment of a place of entertainment, a blacksmith's or carpenter's shop. A village or town never grows to any size in Canada without a saw or a grist mill, both which require a certain amount of water-power to work the machinery. Whenever there is a river or stream available for such purposes, and the surrounding country is fertile, the village rapidly rises to be a considerable town. Frame-houses are so quickly erected, and the materials are so easily procured near a saw-mill, that, in the first instance, no other description of houses is to be found in our incipient towns. But as the town increases, brick and stone houses rapidly supplant these less substantial edifices, which seldom remain good for more than thirty or forty years.

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Mr. S—–'s tavern, or hotel, was an extensive frame-building of the kind common in the country. All the lodgers frequent the same long table at all their meals, at one end of which the landlord generally presides. Mr. S—–, however, usually preferred the company of his family in another part of the house; and some one of the gentlemen who boarded at the tavern, and who possessed a sufficiently large organ of self-esteem, voted himself into the post of honour, without waiting for an invitation from the rest of the company. This happy individual is generally some little fellow, with a long, protruding nose; some gentleman who can stretch his neck and backbone almost to dislocation, and who has a prodigious deal of talk, all about nothing.

The taverns in this country are frequented by all single men, and by many married men without children, who wish to avoid the trouble and greater expense of keeping house. Thus a large portion of the population of the towns take all their meals at the hotels or taverns, in order to save both expense and time. The extraordinary despatch used at meals in the United States has often been mentioned by travellers. The same observation equally applies to Canada, and for the same reason. Wages are high, and time is, therefore, valuable in both countries, and as one clerk is waiting in the shop while another is bolting his dinner, it would of course be exceedingly unkind to protract unnecessarily the sufferings of the hungry expectant; no one possessing any bowels of compassion could act so cruelly. For the same reason, every one is expected to take care of himself, without minding his neighbours. At times a degree of compassion is extended by some naturalised old countryman towards some diffident, over-scrupulous new comer, by offering to help him first; but such marks of consideration, except to ladies, to whom all classes in Canada are attentive, are never continued a bit longer than is thought sufficient for becoming acquainted with the ways of the country.

Soon after our arrival at C—–, I remember asking a person, who was what the Canadians call "a hickory Quaker," from the north of Ireland, to help me to a bit of very nice salmon-trout, which was vanishing alarmingly fast from the breakfast-table.

Obadiah very considerately lent a deaf ear to my repeated entreaties, pretending to be intently occupied with his own plate of fish; then, transferring the remains of the salmon-trout to his own place, he turned round to me with the most innocent face imaginable, saying very coolly, "I beg your pardon, friend, did you speak to me? There is such a noise at the table, I cannot hear very well."

Between meals there is "considerable of drinking," among the idlers about the tavern, of the various ingenious Yankee inventions resorted to in this country to disturb the brain. In the evening the plot thickens, and a number of young and middle-aged men drop in, and are found in little knots in the different public rooms.

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The practice of “treating” is almost universal in this country, and, though friendly and sociable in its way, is the fruitful source of much dissipation. It is almost impossible, in travelling, to steer clear of this evil habit. Strangers are almost invariably drawn into it in the course of business.

The town of C—— being the point where a large number of emigrants landed on their way to the backwoods of this part of the colony, it became for a time a place of great resort, and here a number of land-jobbers were established, who made a profitable trade of buying lands from private individuals, or at the government sales of wild land, and selling them again to the settlers from the old country. Though my wife had some near relatives settled in the backwoods, about forty miles inland, to the north of C——, I had made up my mind to buy a cleared farm near Lake Ontario, if I could get one to my mind, and the price of which would come within my limited means.

A number of the recent settlers in the backwoods, among whom were several speculators, resorted frequently to C——; and as soon as a new batch of settlers arrived on the lake shore, there was a keen contest between the land-jobbers of C—— and those of the backwoods to draw the new comer into their nets. The demand created by the continual influx of immigrants had caused a rapid increase in the price of lands, particularly of wild lands, and the grossest imposition was often practiced by these people, who made enormous profits by taking advantage of the ignorance of the new settlers and of their anxiety to settle themselves at once.

I was continually cautioned by these people against buying a farm in any other locality than the particular one they themselves represented as most eligible, and their rivals were always represented as unprincipled land-jobbers. Finding these accusations to be mutual, I naturally felt myself constrained to believe both parties to be alike.

Sometimes I got hold of a quiet farmer, hoping to obtain something like disinterested advice; but in nine cases out of ten, I am sorry to say, I found that the rage for speculation and trading in land, which was so prevalent in all the great thoroughfares, had already poisoned their minds also, and I could rarely obtain an opinion or advice which was utterly free from self-interest. They generally had some lot of land to sell—-or, probably, they would like to have a new comer for a neighbour, in the hope of selling him a span of horses or some cows at a higher price than they could obtain from the older settlers. In mentioning this unamiable trait in the character of the farmers near C——, I by no means intend to give it as characteristic of the farmers in general. It is, properly speaking, a *local* vice, produced by the constant influx of strangers unacquainted with the ways of the country, which tempts the farmers to take advantage of their ignorance.

STANZAS

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Where is religion found? In what bright sphere
Dwells holy love, in majesty serene
Shedding its beams, like planet o’er the scene;
The steady lustre through the varying year
Still glowing with the heavenly rays that flow
In copious streams to soften human woe?

It is not ’mid the busy scenes of life,
Where careworn mortals crowd along the way
That leads to gain—shunning the light of day;
In endless eddies whirl’d, where pain and strife
Distract the soul, and spread the shades of night,
Where love divine should dwell in purest light.

Short-sighted man!—go seek the mountain’s brow,
And cast thy raptured eye o’er hill and dale;
The waving woods, the ever-blooming vale,
Shall spread a feast before thee, which till now
Ne’er met thy gaze—obscured by passion’s sway;
And Nature’s works shall teach thee how to pray.

Or wend thy course along the sounding shore,
Where giant waves resistless onward sweep
To join the awful chorus of the deep—
Curling their snowy manes with deaf’ning roar,
Flinging their foam high o’er the trembling sod,
And thunder forth their mighty song to God!

J.W.D.M.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LAND-JOBBER

Some men, like greedy monsters of the deep,
Still prey upon their kind;—their hungry maws
Engulph their victims like the rav’nous shark
That day and night untiring plies around
The foamy bubbling wake of some great ship;
And when the hapless mariner aloft
Hath lost his hold, and down he falls
Amidst the gurgling waters on her lee,
Then, quick as thought, the ruthless felon-jaws

Close on his form;—the sea is stain'd with blood—
One sharp wild shriek is heard—and all is still!
The lion, tiger, alligator, shark—
The wily fox, the bright enamelled snake—
All seek their prey by force or stratagem;
But when—their hunger sated—languor creeps
Around their frames, they quickly sink to rest.
Not so with man—*he* never hath enough;
He feeds on all alike; and, wild or tame,
He's but a cannibal. He burns, destroys,
And scatters death to sate his morbid lust
For empty fame. But when the love of gain
Hath struck its roots in his vile, sordid heart,—
Each gen'rous impulse chill'd,—like vampire, now,
He sucks the life-blood of his friends or foes
Until he viler grows than savage beast.
And when, at length, stretch'd on his bed of death,
And powerless, friendless, o'er his clammy brow
The dark'ning shades descend, strong to the last
His avarice lives; and while he feebly plucks
His wretched coverlet, he gasps for breath,
And thinks he gathers gold!

J.W.D.M.

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I had a letter of introduction to a gentleman of large property, at C——, who, knowing that I wished to purchase a farm, very kindly drove me out to several lots of land in the immediate neighbourhood. He showed me seven or eight very eligible lots of cleared land, some of them with good houses and orchards; but somehow or other, on inquiry, I found they all belonged to himself, and, moreover, the prices were beyond my limited means. For one farm he asked 1000 pounds; for another, 1500 pounds, and so on. After inquiring in other quarters, I saw I had no chance of getting a farm in that neighbourhood for the price I could afford to pay down, which was only about 300 pounds. After satisfying myself as to this fact, I thought it the wiser course at once to undeceive my very obliging friend, whose attentions were obviously nicely adjusted to the estimate he had formed in his own mind of my pecuniary resources.

On communicating this discouraging fact, my friend's countenance instantly assumed a cold and stony expression, and I almost expected that he would have stopped his horses and set me down, to walk with other poor men. As may well be supposed, I was never afterwards honoured with a seat in his carriage. He saw just what I was worth, and I saw what his friendship was worth; and thus our brief acquaintance terminated.

Having thus let the cat out of the bag, when I might, according to the usual way of the world, have sported for awhile in borrowed plumage, and rejoiced in the reputation of being in more prosperous circumstances without fear of detection, I determined to pursue the same course, and make use of the little insight I had obtained into the ways of the land-jobbers of Canada, to procure a cleared farm on more reasonable terms.

It is not uncommon for the land speculators to sell a farm to a respectable settler at an unusually low price, in order to give a character to a neighbourhood where they hold other lands, and thus to use him as a decoy duck for friends or countrymen.

There was very noted character at C——, Mr. Q——, a great land-jobber, who did a large business in this way on his own account, besides getting through a great deal of dirty work for other more respectable speculators, who did not wish to drink at taverns and appear personally in such matters. To Mr. Q—— I applied, and effected a purchase of a farm of one hundred and fifty acres, about fifty of which were cleared, for 300 pounds, as I shall mention more particularly in the sequel. In the meantime, the character of this distinguished individual was—for he was long gone to give an account of his misdeeds in the other world—so remarkable, that I must endeavour to describe it for the edification of the reader. Q—— kept a shop, or store, in C——; but he left the principal management of this establishment to his clerks; while, taking advantage of the influx of emigrants, he pursued, with unrivalled success, the profitable business of land-jobbing.

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In his store, before taking to this business, he had been accustomed for many years to retail goods to the farmers at high prices, on the usual long credit system. He had thus got a number of farmers deeply in his debt, and, in many cases, in preference to suing them, had taken mortgages on their farms. By this means, instead of merely recovering the money owing to him by the usual process of law, he was enabled, by threatening to foreclose the mortgages, to compel them to sell their farms nearly on his own terms, whenever an opportunity occurred to re-sell them advantageously to new comers. Thus, besides making thirty or forty per cent. on his goods, he often realised more than a hundred per cent. on his land speculations.

In a new country, where there is no great competition in mercantile business, and money is scarce, the power and profits of store-keepers are very great. Mr. Q—— was one of the most grasping of this class. His heart was case-hardened, and his conscience, like gum, elastic; it would readily stretch, on the shortest notice, to any required extent, while his well-tutored countenance betrayed no indication of what was passing in his mind. But I must not forget to give a sketch of the appearance, or outward man, of this highly-gifted individual.

He was about the middle size, thin and limber, and somewhat loose in his lower joints, like most of the native Canadians and Yankees. He had a slight stoop in his shoulders, and his long, thin neck was continually stretched out before him, while his restless little cunning eyes were roaming about in search of prey. His face, when well watched, was an index to his selfish and unfeeling soul. Complexion he had none, except that sempiternally enduring red-and-tawny mixture which is acquired by exposure and hard drinking. His cheeks and the corners of his eyes were marked by an infinity of curved lines, and, like most avaricious and deceitful men, he had a long, crooked chin, and that peculiar prominent and slightly aquiline nose which, by people observant of such indications, has been called “the rogue’s nose.” But how shall I describe his eye—that small hole through which you can see an honest man’s heart? Q——’s eye was like no other eye I had ever seen. His face and mouth could assume a good-natured expression, and smile; but his eye was still the same—it never smiled, but remained cold, hard, dry, and inscrutable. If it had any expression at all, it was an unhappy one. Such were the impressions created by his appearance, when the observer was unobserved by him; for he had the art of concealing the worst traits of his character in an extraordinary degree, and when he suspected that the curious hieroglyphics which Nature had stamped on his visage were too closely scanned, he knew well how to divert the investigator’s attention to some other object.

He was a humorist, besides, in his way, because he found that jokes and fun admirably served his turn. They helped to throw people off their guard, and to conceal his hang-dog look.

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He had a hard head, as well as hard heart, and could stand any quantity of drink. His drinking, however, like everything else about him, had a motive; and, instead of trying to appear sober, like other drunkards, he rather wished to appear a little elevated. In addition to his other acquirements, Q—— was a most accomplished gambler. In short, no virtuous man, who employs every passing moment of his short life in doing good to his fellow-creatures, could be more devoted and energetic in his endeavours to serve God and mankind, than Q—— was in his endeavours to ease them of their spare cash.

He possessed a great deal of that free-and-easy address and tact which distinguish the Canadians; and, in addition to the current coin of vulgar flattery which is found so useful in all countries, his quick eye could discover the high-minded gentleman by a kind of instinct, which did not seem quite natural to his sordid character, and, knowing that such men are not to be taken by vulgar adulation, he could address them with deferential respect; against which no minds are entirely secure. Thus he wriggled himself into their good graces. After a while the unfavourable impression occasioned by his sinister countenance would become more faint, while his well-feigned kindness and apparent indulgence to his numerous debtors would tell greatly in his favour.

My first impression of this man was pretty nearly such as I have described; and, though I suspected and shunned him, I was sure to meet him at every turn. At length this unfavourable feeling wore off in some degree, and finding him in the best society of the place, I began to think that his countenance belied him, and I reproached myself for my ungenerous suspicions.

Feeling a certain security in the smallness of my available capital, I did not hesitate in applying to Mr. Q—— to sell me a farm, particularly as I was aware of his anxiety to induce me to settle near C——, for the reasons already stated. I told him that 300 pounds was the very largest sum I could give for a farm, and that, if I could not get one for that price, I should join my friends in the backwoods.

Q——, after scratching his head, and considering for a few minutes, told me that he knew a farm which he could sell me for that price, particularly as he wished to get rid of a set of Yankee rascals who prevented emigrants from settling in that neighbourhood. We afterwards found that there was but too good reason for the character he gave of some of our neighbours.

Q—— held a mortgage for 150 pounds on a farm belonging to a certain Yankee settler, named Joe H——, as security for a debt incurred for goods at his store, in C——. The idea instantly struck Q—— that he would compel Joe H—— to sell him his farm, by threatening to foreclose the mortgage. I drove out with Mr. Q—— next day to see the farm in question. It was situated in a pretty retired valley, surrounded by hills, about

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eight miles from C——, and about a mile from the great road leading to Toronto. There was an extensive orchard upon the farm, and two log houses, and a large frame-barn. A considerable portion of the cleared land was light and sandy; and the uncleared part of the farm, situated on the flat, rocky summit of a high hill, was reserved for “a sugar bush,” and for supplying fuel. On the whole, I was pleased with the farm, which was certainly cheap at the price of 300 pounds; and I therefore at once closed the bargain with Mr. Q——.

At that time I had not the slightest idea but that the farm actually belonged to the land-jobber; and I am to this day unable to tell by what means he succeeded in getting Mr. H —— to part with his property.

The father of Joe H—— had cleared the farm, and while the soil was new it gave good crops; but as the rich surface, or “black muck,” as it is called, became exhausted by continual cropping, nothing but a poor, meagre soil remained.

The early settlers were wretched farmers; they never ploughed deep enough, and never thought of manuring the land. After working the land for several years, they would let it lie waste for three or four years without sowing grass-seeds, and then plough it up again for wheat. The greater part of the hay raised on these farms was sold in the towns, and the cattle were fed during the long severe winter on wheat-straw. The natural result of this poor nourishment was, that their cattle continually degenerated, and great numbers died every spring of a disease called the “hollow horn,” which appears to be peculiar to this country. When the lands became sterile, from this exhausting treatment, they were called “worn-out farms;” and the owners generally sold them to new settlers from the old country, and with the money they received, bought a larger quantity of wild lands, to provide for their sons; by whom the same improvident process was recommenced.

These early settlers were, in fact, only fit for pioneers to a more thrifty class of settlers.

Joe H——, or “Uncle Joe,” as the country people call any acquaintance, after a fashion borrowed, no doubt, from the Dutch settlers of the State of New York, was, neither by his habits nor industry, likely to become more prosperous than his neighbours of the same thoughtless class. His father had worked hard in his time, and Uncle Joe thought he had a good right to enjoy himself. The nearest village was only five miles from his place, and he was never without some excuse for going thither every two or three days. His horse wanted shoeing, or his plough or waggon wanted “to be fixed” by the blacksmith or carpenter. As a matter of course, he came home “pretty high;” for he was in the constant habit of pouring a half-tumbler of whiskey down his throat, standing bolt upright at the bar of the tavern, after which he would drink about the same quantity of cold water to wash it down. These habits together with bad farming, and a lazy,

slovenly helpmate, in a few years made Joe as poor as he could desire to be; and at last he was compelled to sell his farm to Mr. Q——.

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After we had got settled down on this farm, I had often occasion to drive into C——, for the purpose of buying groceries and other necessaries, as we then thought them, at the store of Mr. Q——. On these occasions I always took up my quarters, for the time, at the tavern of our worthy Yankee friend, Mr. S——. As I drove up to the door, I generally found S—— walking about briskly on the boarded platform, or "stoop," in front of the house, welcoming his guests in his own peculiar free-and-easy style, looking after their horses, and seeing that his people were attentive to their duties. I think I see him now before me with his thin, erect, lathy figure, his snub nose, and puckered-up face, wriggling and twisting himself about, in his desire to please his customers.

On stopping in front of the tavern, shortly after our settlement on the farm, Mr. S—— stepped up to me, in the most familiar manner imaginable, holding out his hand quite condescendingly,—"Ah, Mister Moodie, ha-a-w do you do?—and ha-a-w's the old woman?"

At first I could not conceive whom he meant by this very homely appellation; and I very simply asked him what person he alluded to, as I had no old woman in my establishment.

"Why, *your* old woman, to be sure—your missus—Mrs. Moodie, I guess. You don't quite understand our language yet."

"O! now I understand you; she's quite well, I thank you; and how is our friend Mrs. S ——?" I replied, laying a slight emphasis on the *Mrs*., by way of a gentle hint for his future guidance.

"Mrs. S——, I guess she's smart, pret-ty *con*-siderable. She'll be right glad to see you, for you're pretty considerable of a favour-ITE with her, I tell you; but now tell me what you will drink?—for it's my treat."

As he said these words, he strutted into the tavern before me, throwing his head and shoulders back, and rising on his tiptoes at every step.

Mrs. S—— had been a very handsome woman, and still retained much of her good looks. She was a most exemplary housewife and manager. I was often astonished to witness the incessant toil she had to ensure in attending to the wants of such a numerous household.

She had plenty of Irish "helps" in the kitchen; but they knew as much of cookery as they did of astronomy, and poor Mrs. S——'s hands, as well as her head, were in constant requisition.

She had two very pretty daughters, whom she would not suffer to do any rough work which would spoil their soft white hands. Mrs. S——, no doubt, foresaw that she could

not expect to keep such fair creatures long in such a marrying country as Canada, and, according to the common caution of divines, she held these blessings with a loose hand.

There was one sweet little girl, whom I had often seen in her father's arms, with her soft dark eyes, and her long auburn ringlets hanging in wild profusion over his shoulders.

"I guess she likes pa, *some*," Mr. S—— would say when I remarked her fondness for him.

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This little fairy had a natural genius for music, and though she was only four years old, she would sit for an hour at a time at the door of our room to hear me play on the flute, and would afterwards sing all the airs she picked up, with the sweetest voice in the world.

Humble as the calling of a tavern-keeper may be considered in England, it is looked upon in the United States, where Mrs. S—— was “raised,” as extremely respectable; and I have never met with women, in any class of society elsewhere, who possessed more of the good-feeling and unobtrusive manners which should belong to ladies than in the family of this worthy tavern-keeper.

When I contrast their genuine kindness and humanity with the haughty, arrogant airs assumed by some ladies of a higher standing in society from England who sojourned in their house at the same time with ourselves—when I remember their insolent way of giving their orders to Mrs. S——, and their still more wounding condescension—I confess I cannot but feel ashamed of my countrywomen. All these patronising airs, I doubt not, were assumed purposely to impress the minds of those worthy people with an idea of their vast superiority. I have sometimes, I confess, been a little annoyed with the familiarity of the Americans, Canadians as well as Yankees; but I must say that experience has taught me to blame myself at least as much as them. If, instead of sending our youthful aristocracy to the continent of Europe, to treat the natives with contempt and increase the unpopularity of the British abroad, while their stock of native arrogance is augmented by the cringing complaisance of those who only bow to their superiority in wealth, they were sent to the United States, or even to Canada, they would receive a lesson or two which would be of infinite service to them; some of their most repulsive prejudices and peculiarities would soon be rubbed off by the rough towel of democracy.

It is curious to observe the remarkable diversity in the accounts given by recent emigrants to this country of their treatment, and of the manners and character of the people in the United States and in Canada. Some meet with constant kindness, others with nothing but rudeness and brutality. Of course there is truth in both accounts; but strangers from an aristocratical country do not usually make sufficient allowance for the habits and prejudices of a people of a land, in which, from the comparatively equal distribution of property, and the certain prosperity attendant on industry, the whole constitution of society is necessarily democratical, irrespectively of political institutions. Those who go to such a country with the notion that they will carry everything before them by means of pretence and assumption, will find themselves grievously deceived. To use a homely illustration, it is just as irrational to expect to force a large body through a small aperture. In both cases they will meet with unyielding resistance.

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When a poor and industrious mechanic, farmer, or labourer comes here without pretensions of any kind, no such complaints are to be heard. He is treated with respect, and every one seems willing to help him forward. If in after-years the manners of such a settler should grow in importance with his prosperity—which is rarely the case—his pretensions would be much more readily tolerated than those of any unknown or untried individual in a higher class of society.

The North Americans generally are much more disposed to value people according to the estimate they form of their industry, and other qualities which more directly lead to the acquisition of property, and to the benefit of the community, than for their present and actual wealth. While they pay a certain mock homage to a wealthy immigrant, when they have a motive in doing so, they secretly are more inclined to look on him as a well-fledged goose who has come to America to be plucked. In truth, many of them are so dexterous in this operation that the unfortunate victim is often stripped naked before he is aware that he has lost a feather.

There seems to be a fatality attending riches imported into Canada. They are sure to make to themselves wings and flee away, while wealth is no less certain to adhere to the poor and industrious settler. The great fault of the Canadian character is an unwillingness to admit the just claims of education and talent, however unpretending, to some share of consideration. In this respect the Americans of the United States are greatly superior to the Canadians, because they are better educated and their country longer settled. These genuine Republicans, when their theory of the original and natural equality among them is once cheerfully admitted, are ever ready to show respect to *mental* superiority, whether natural or acquired.

My evenings on visiting C—— were usually spent at Mr. S——'s tavern, where I was often much amused with the variety of characters who were there assembled, and who, from the free-and-easy familiarity of the colonial manners, had little chance of concealing their peculiarities from an attentive observer.

Mr Q——, of course, was always to be found there, drinking, smoking cigars, and cracking jokes. To a casual observer he appeared to be a regular boon companion without an object but that of enjoying the passing hour. Among his numerous accomplishments, he had learnt a number of sleight-of-hand tricks from the travelling conjurors who visit the country, and are generally willing to sell their secrets singly, at a regulated price. This seemed a curious investment for Q——, but he knew how to turn everything to account. By such means he was enabled to contribute to the amusement of the company, and thus became a kind of favourite. If he could not manage to sell a lot of land to an immigrant or speculator, he would carelessly propose to some of the company to have a game at whist or loo, to pass the time away; and he never failed to conjure most of their money into his pockets.

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At this time a new character made his appearance at C——, at Mr. B——, an English farmer of the true yeoman breed. He was a short-legged, long-bodied, corpulent little man. He wore a brown coat, with ample skirts, and a vast expanse of vest, with drab-coloured small-clothes and gaiters. B—— was a jolly, good-natured looking man, with an easy blunt manner which might easily pass for honesty.

Q—— had sold him a lot of wild land in some out-of-the-way township, by making Mr. B —— believe that he could sell it again very soon, with a handsome profit. Of course his bargain was not a good one. He soon found from its situation that the land was quite unsaleable, there being no settlements in the neighbourhood. Instead of expressing any resentment, he fairly acknowledged that Q—— was his master at a bargain, and gave him full credit for his address and cunning, and quite resolved in his own mind to profit by the lesson he had received.

Now, with all their natural acuteness and habitual dexterity in such matters, the Canadians have one weak point; they are too ready to believe that Englishmen are made of money. All that an emigrant has to do to acquire the reputation of having money, is to seem quite easy, and free from care or anxiety for the future, and to maintain a certain degree of reserve in talking of his private affairs. Mr. B—— perfectly understood how to play his cards with the land-jobber; and his fat, jolly physiognomy, and rustic, provincial manners and accent, greatly assisted him in the deception.

Every day Q—— drove him out to look at different farms. B—— talked carelessly of buying some large “block” of land, that would have cost him some 3000 or 4000 pounds, providing he could only find the kind of soil he particularly liked for farming purposes. As he seemed to be in no hurry in making his selection, Q—— determined to make him useful, in the meantime, in promoting his views with respect to others. He therefore puffed Mr. B—— up to everybody as a Norfolk farmer of large capital, and always appealed to him to confirm the character he gave of any farm he wished to sell to a new comer. B——, on his side, was not slow in playing into Q——’s hand on these occasions, and without being at all suspected of collusion.

In the evening, Mr. B—— would walk into the public room of the tavern, apparently fatigued with his exertions through the day; fling himself carelessly on a sofa, and unbutton his gaiters and the knees of his small-clothes. He took little notice of anybody unless he was spoken to, and his whole demeanour seemed to say, as plainly as words, “I care for nobody, nobody cares for me.” This was just the kind of man for Q——. He instantly saw that he would be an invaluable ally and coadjutor, without seeming to be so. When B—— made his appearance in the evening, Q—— was seldom at the tavern, for his time had not yet come. In the meanwhile, B—— was sure to be drawn gradually into conversation by

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some emigrants, who, seeing that he was a practical farmer, would be desirous of getting his opinion respecting certain farms which they thought of purchasing. There was such an appearance of blunt simplicity of character about him, that most of these inquirers thought he was forgetting his own interest in telling them so much as he did. In the course of conversation, he would mention several farms he had been looking at with the intention of purchasing, and he would particularly mention some one of them as possessing extraordinary advantages, but which had some one disadvantage which rendered it ineligible for him; such as being too small, a circumstance which, in all probability, would recommend it to another description of settler.

It is hard to say whether Q—— was or was not deceived by B——; but though he used him for the present as a decoy, he no doubt expected ultimately to sell him some of his farms, with a very handsome profit. B——, however whose means were probably extremely small, fought shy of buying; and after looking at a number of farms, he told Q —— that, on mature reflection, he thought he could employ his capital more profitably by renting a number of farms, and working them in the English manner, which he felt certain would answer admirably in Canada, instead of sinking his capital at once in the purchase of lands. Q—— was fairly caught; and B—— hired some six or seven farms from him, which he worked for some time, no doubt greatly to his own advantage, for he neither paid rent nor wages.

Occasionally, other land-speculators would drop into the tavern, when a curious game would be played between Q—— and them. Once of the speculators would ask another if he did not own some land in a particular part of the country, as he had bought some lots in the same quarter, without seeing them, and would like to know if they were good. The other would answer in the affirmative, and pretend to desire to purchase the lots mentioned. The former, in his turn, would pretend reluctance, and make a similar offer of buying. All this cunning manoeuvring would be continued for a time, in the hope of inducing some third party or stranger to make an offer for the land, which would be accepted. It often happened that some other person, who had hitherto taken no part in the course of these conversations, and who appeared to have no personal interest in the matter, would quietly inform the stranger that he knew the land in question, and that it was all of the very best quality.

It would be endless to describe all the little artifices practised by these speculators to induce persons to purchase from them.

Besides a few of these unprincipled traders in land, some of whom are found in most of the towns, there are a large number of land-speculators who own both wild and improved farms in all parts of the colony who do not descend to these discreditable arts, but wait quietly until their lands become valuable by the progress of improvement in

their neighbourhood, when they readily find purchasers—or, rather, the purchasers find them out, and obtain their lands at reasonable prices.

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In 1832, when we came to Canada, a great speculation was carried on in the lands of the U.E. (or United Empire) Loyalists. The sons and daughters of these loyalists, who had fled to Canada from the United States at the time of the revolutionary war, were entitled to free grants of lots of wild land. Besides these, few free grants of land were made by the British Government, except those made to half-pay officers of the army and navy, and of course there was a rapid rise in their value.

Almost all the persons entitled to such grants had settled in the eastern part of the Upper Province, and as the large emigration which had commenced to Canada had chiefly flowed into the more western part of the colony, they were, in general, ignorant of the increased value of their lands, and were ready to sell them for a mere trifle. They were bought by the speculators at from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 9d. per acre, and often for much less, and were sold again, with an enormous profit, at from 5s. to 20s., and sometimes even 40s. per acre, according to their situation.

As to personally examining these lands, it was a thing never thought of, for their price was so low that it was almost impossible to lose by the purchase. The supply of U.E. Loyalists' lands, or claims for land, for a long time seemed to be almost inexhaustible; for the loyal refugees appear to have been prolific beyond all precedent, and most of those who held office at the capital of the province, or who could command a small capital, became speculators and throve prodigiously. Many persons, during the early days of the colony, were thus enriched, without risk or labour, from the inexhaustible "quivers" of the U.E. Loyalists.

Though the bulk of the speculators bought lands at haphazard, certain parties who found favour at the government offices managed to secure the best lands which were for sale or location, before they were exposed to fair competition at the periodical public sales in the different districts. Thus a large portion of the wild lands in the colony were and are still held: the absentee proprietors profiting from the increased value given to their property by the improvements of the actual settlers, while they contribute little or nothing to the cultivation of the country. The progress of the colony has thus been retarded, and its best interests sacrificed, to gratify the insatiable cupidity of a clique who boasted the exclusive possession of all the loyalty in the country; and every independent man who dared to raise his voice against such abuses was branded as a Republican.

Mr. Q—— dealt largely in these "U.E. Rights," as they were called, and so great was the emigration in 1832 that the lands he bought at 2s. 6d. per acre he could readily sell again to emigrants and Canadians at from 5s. to 15s. per acre, according to situation and the description of purchasers he met with. I have stated that the speculators generally buy lands at hap-hazard. By this I mean as to the quality of the lands. All colonists accustomed to observe the progress of settlement, and the local advantages which hasten improvement, acquire a peculiar sagacity in such matters. Unfortunately

for many old countrymen, they are generally entirely destitute of this kind of knowledge, which is only acquired by long observation and experience in colonies.

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The knowledge of the causes which promote the rapid settlement of a new country, and of those in general which lead to the improvement of the physical condition of mankind may be compared to the knowledge of a language. The inhabitant of a civilised and long-settled country may speak and write his own language with the greatest purity, but very few ever reflect on the amount of thought, metaphor, and ingenuity which has been expended by their less civilised ancestors in bringing that language to perfection. The barbarian first feels the disadvantage of a limited means of communicating his ideas, and with great labour and ingenuity devises the means, from time to time, to remedy the imperfections of his language. He is compelled to analyse and study it in its first elements, and to augment the modes of expression in order to keep pace with the increasing number of his wants and ideas.

A colony bears the same relation to an old-settled country that a grammar does to a language. In a colony, society is seen in its first elements, the country itself is in its rudest and simplest form. The colonist knows them in this primitive state, and watches their progress step by step. In this manner he acquires an intimate knowledge of the philosophy of improvement, which is almost unattainable by an individual who has lived from his childhood in a highly complex and artificial state of society, where everything around him was formed and arranged long before he came into the world; he sees the effects, the causes existed long before his time. His place in society—his portion of the wealth of the country—his prejudices—his religion itself, if he has any, are all more or less hereditary. He is in some measure a mere machine, or rather a part of one. He is a creature of education, rather than of original thought.

The colonist has to create—he has to draw on his own stock of ideas, and to rouse up all his latent energies to meet all his wants in his new position. Thus his thinking principle is strengthened, and he is more energetic. When a moderate share of education is added to these advantages—for they are advantages in one sense—he becomes a superior being.

I have indulged in these reflections, with manifest risk of being thought somewhat prosy by my more lively readers, in order to guard my countrymen, English, Scotch, and Irish, against a kind of presumption which is exceedingly common among them when they come to Canada—of fancying that they are as capable of forming correct opinions on local matters as the Canadians themselves. It is always somewhat humbling to our self-love to be compelled to confess what may be considered an error of judgment, but my desire to guard future settlers against similar mistakes overpowers my reluctance to own that I fell into the common error of many of my countrymen, of purchasing wild land, on speculation, with a very inadequate capital. This was one of the chief causes of much suffering, in which for many years my family became involved; but through which, supported by trust in Providence, and the energy of a devoted partner, I continued by her aid to struggle, until when least expected, the light of hope at length dawned upon us.

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In reflecting on this error—for error and imprudence it was, even though the result had been fortunate—I have still this poor comfort, that there was not one in a hundred of persons similarly situated but fell into the same mistake, of trusting too much to present appearances, without sufficient experience in the country.

I had, as I have already stated, about 300 pounds when I arrived in Canada. This sum was really advantageously invested in a cleared farm, which possessed an intrinsic and not a merely speculative value. Afterwards a small legacy of about 700 pounds fell into my hands, and had I contented myself with this farm, and purchased two adjoining cleared farms containing two hundred acres of land of the finest quality which were sold far below their value by the thriftless owners, I should have done well, or at all events have invested my money profitably. But the temptation to buy wild land at 5s. an acre, which was expected to double in value in a few months, with the example of many instances of similar speculation proving successful which came under my notice, proved irresistible.

In 1832 emigration was just at its height, and a great number of emigrants, several of whom were of the higher class, and possessed of considerable capital, were directed to the town of C—, in the rear of which extensive tracts of land were offered to settlers at the provincial government sales. Had this extensive emigration continued, I should have been enabled to double my capital, by selling my wild lands to settlers; but, unfortunately, the prevalence of cholera during that year, and other causes, gave such a serious check to emigration to Canada that it has never been renewed to the same extent since that time. Besides the chance of a check to emigration generally, the influx of strangers is often extremely capricious in the direction it takes, flowing one year into one particular locality, and afterwards into another. Both these results, neither of which was foreseen by any one, unfortunately for me, ensued just at that time. It seemed natural that emigrants should flow into a fertile tract of land, and emigration was confidently expected steadily to increase; these were our anticipations, but neither of them was realised. Were it suitable to the character of these sketches, I would enter into the subject of emigration and the progress of improvement in Canada, respecting which my judgment has been matured by experience and observation; but such considerations would be out of place in volumes like the present, and I shall therefore proceed with my narrative.

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I had obtained my cleared farm on easy terms, and, in so far as the probability of procuring a comfortable subsistence was concerned, we had no reason to complain; but comfort and happiness do not depend entirely on a sufficiency of the necessaries of life. Some of our neighbours were far from being agreeable to us. Being fresh from England, it could hardly be expected that we could at once accommodate ourselves to the obtrusive familiarity of persons who had no conception of any differences in taste or manners arising from education and habits acquired in a more refined state of society. I allude more particularly to some rude and demoralised American farmers from the United States, who lived in our immediate neighbourhood. Our neighbours from the same country were worthy, industrious people; but, on the whole, the evil greatly predominated over the good amongst them.

At a few miles' distance from our farm, we had some intelligent English neighbours, of a higher class; but they were always so busily occupied with their farming operations that they had little leisure or inclination for that sort of easy intercourse to which we had been accustomed. If we called in the forenoon, we generally found our neighbour hard at work in the fields, and his wife over head and ears in her domestic occupations. We had to ring the bell repeatedly before we could gain admittance, to allow her time to change her ordinary dress. Long before this could be effected, or we could enter the door, sundry reconnoitring parties of the children would peep at us round the corners of the house, and then scamper off to make their reports.

It seems strange that sensible people should not at once see the necessity of accommodating their habits to their situation and circumstances, and receive their friends without appearing to be ashamed of their employments. This absurdity, however, is happily confined to the would-be-genteel people in the country, who visit in the towns, and occasionally are ambitious enough to give large parties to the aristocracy of the towns. The others, who do not pretend to vie with the townspeople in such follies, are a great deal more easy and natural in their manners, and more truly independent and hospitable.

Now that we are better acquainted with the country, we much prefer the conversation of the intelligent and unpretending class of farmers, who, though their education has been limited, often possess a rich fund of strong commonsense and liberality of sentiment, and not unfrequently great observation and originality of mind. At the period I refer to, a number of the American settlers from the United States, who composed a considerable part of the population, regarded British settlers with an intense feeling of dislike, and found a pleasure in annoying and insulting them when any occasion offered. They did not understand us, nor did we them, and they generally mistook the reserve which is common with the British towards strangers for pride and superciliousness.

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“You Britishers are too superstitious,” one of them told me on a particular occasion.

It was some time before I found out what he meant by the term “superstitious,” and that it was generally used by them for “supercilious.”

New settlers of the lower classes were then in the habit of imitating their rudeness and familiarity, which they mistook for independence. To a certain extent, this feeling still exists amongst the working class from Europe, but they have learnt to keep it within prudent bounds for their own sakes; and the higher class have learnt to moderate their pretensions, which will not be tolerated here, where labourers are less dependent on them for employment. The character of both classes, in fact, has been altered very much for the better, and a better and healthier feeling exists between them—much more so, indeed, than in England.

The labouring class come to this country, too often with the idea that the higher class are their tyrants and oppressors; and, with a feeling akin to revenge, they are often inclined to make their employers in Canada suffer in their turn. This feeling is the effect of certain depressing causes, often remote and beyond the reach of legislation, but no less real on that account; and just in proportion to the degree of poverty and servility which exists among the labouring class in the particular part of the United Kingdom from which they come, will be the reaction here. When emigrants have been some years settled in Canada, they find out their particular and just position, as well as their duties and interests, and then they begin to feel truly happy. The fermentation arising from the strange mixture of discordant elements and feelings gradually subsides, but until this takes place, the state of society is anything but agreeable or satisfactory.

Such was its state at C——, in 1832; and to us it was distasteful, that though averse, for various reasons, to commence a new settlement, we began to listen to the persuasions of our friends, who were settled in the township of D——, about forty miles from C——, and who were naturally anxious to induce us to settle among them.

Mrs. Moodie’s brother, S——, had recently formed a settlement in that township, and just before our arrival in Canada had been joined by an old brother officer and countryman of mine, Mr. T——, who was married to Mrs. Moodie’s sister. The latter, who like myself, was a half-pay officer, had purchased a lot of wild land, close to the farm occupied by S——.

Mr. S—— S—— had emigrated to Canada while quite a youth, and was thoroughly acquainted with the backwoods, and with the use of the felling-axe, which he wielded with all the ease and dexterity of a native.

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I had already paid some flying visits to the backwoods and found the state of society, though rude and rough, more congenial to our European tastes and habits, for several gentlemen of liberal education were settled in the neighbourhood, among whom there was a constant interchange of visits and good offices. All these gentlemen had recently arrived from England, Ireland, or Scotland, and all the labouring class were also fresh from the old country and consequently very little change had taken place in the manners or feelings of either class. There we felt we could enjoy the society of those who could sympathise with our tastes and prejudices, and who, from inclination as well as necessity, were inclined to assist each other in their farming operations.

There is no situation in which men feel more the necessity of mutual assistance than in clearing land.

Alone, a man may fell the trees on a considerable extent of woodland; but without the assistance of two or three others, he cannot pile up the logs previous to burning. Common labours and common difficulties, as among comrades during a campaign, produce a social unity of feeling among backwoods-men. There is, moreover, a peculiar charm in the excitement of improving a wilderness for the benefit of children and posterity; there is in it, also, that consciousness of usefulness which forms so essential an ingredient in true happiness. Every tree that falls beneath the axe opens a wider prospect, and encourages the settler to persevere in his efforts to attain independence.

Mr. S—— had secured for me a portion of the military grant of four hundred acres, which I was entitled to as a half-pay officer, in his immediate neighbourhood. Though this portion amounted to only sixty acres, it was so far advantageous to me as being in a settled part of the country. I bought a clergy reserve of two hundred acres, in the rear of the sixty acres for 1 pound per acre, for which immediately afterwards I was offered 2 pounds per acre, for at that period there was such an influx of settlers into that locality that lands had risen rapidly to a fictitious price. I had also purchased one hundred acres more for 1 pound 10s. per acre, from a private individual; this also was considered cheap at the time.

These lots, forming altogether a compact farm of three hundred and sixty acres, were situated on the sloping banks of a beautiful lake, or, rather, expansion of the river Otonabee, about half-a-mile wide, and studded with woody islets. From this lake I afterwards procured many a good meal for my little family, when all other means of obtaining food had failed us. I thus secured a tract of land which was amply sufficient for the comfortable subsistence of a family, had matters gone well with me.

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It should be distinctly borne in mind by the reader, that uncleared land in a remote situation from markets possesses, properly speaking, no intrinsic value, like cleared land, for a great deal of labour or money must be expended before it can be made to produce anything to sell. My half-pay, which amounted to about 100 pounds per annum of Canadian currency, was sufficient to keep us supplied with food, and to pay for clearing a certain extent of land, say ten acres every year, for wheat, which is immediately afterwards sown with grass-seeds to supply hay for the cattle during winter. Unfortunately, at this period, a great change took place in my circumstances, which it was impossible for the most prudent or cautious to have foreseen.

An intimation from the War-office appeared in all the newspapers, calling on half-pay officers either to sell their commissions or to hold themselves in readiness to join some regiment. This was a hard alternative, as many of these officers were situated; for a great many of them had been tempted to emigrate to Canada by the grants of land which were offered them by government, and had expended all their means in improving these grants, which were invariably given to them in remote situations, where they were worse than worthless to any class of settlers but those who could command sufficient labour in their own families to make the necessary clearings and improvements.

Rather than sell my commission, I would at once have made up my mind to join a regiment in any part of the world; but, when I came to think of the matter, I recollected that the expense of an outfit, and of removing my family—to say nothing of sacrificing my property in the colony—would render it utterly impossible for me to accept this unpleasant alternative after being my own master for eighteen years, and after effectually getting rid of all the habits which render a military life attractive to a young man. Under these circumstances, I too hastily determined to sell out of the army. This, of course, was easily managed. I expected to get about 600 pounds for my commission; and, before the transaction was concluded, I was inquiring anxiously for some mode of investing the proceeds, as to yield a yearly income.

Unfortunately, as it turned out, I made a bargain with Mr. Q—— for twenty-five shares, of 25 pounds each, in a fine steamer, which had just been built at C——, and which was expected to pay at least twenty-five per cent. to the shareholders. This amount of stock Q—— offered me for the proceeds of my commission, whatever amount it might be sold for; offering at the same time to return all he should receive above 600 pounds sterling. As I had nothing but his word for this part of the agreement, he did not recollect it when he obtained 700 pounds, which was 100 pounds more than I expected.

Some boats on Lake Ontario, while the great emigration lasted, and there was less competition, yielded more than thirty per cent.; and there seemed then no reason to doubt that the new boat would be equally profitable.

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It is possible that Q—— foresaw what actually happened; or, more probably, he thought he could employ his money better in land speculations. As soon as the steamer began to run, a quarrel took place between the shareholders who resided at C——, where she was built, and those who lived at the capital of the Upper Province—York, as it was then called. The consequence was that she remained idle a long time, and at last she came under the entire control of the shareholders at York, who managed the boat as they liked, and to suit their own interests. Afterwards, though the boat continued to be profitably employed, somehow or other all her earnings were consumed in repairs, &c., and for several years I never received a penny for my shares. At last the steamer was sold, and I only received about a fourth part of my original stock. This, as may be supposed, was a bitter disappointment to me; for I had every reason to think that I had not only invested my money well, but very profitably, judging from the profits of the other boats on the lake. Had I received the proceeds of my commission, and bought bank stock in the colony—which then and still yields eight per cent.—my 700 pounds sterling, equal to 840 pounds currency, would have given me 60 pounds per annum, which, with my own labour, would have kept my family tolerably well, have helped to pay servants, and have saved us all much privation and harassing anxiety.

Having thus supplied the painful details of a transaction, a knowledge of which was necessary to explain many circumstances in our situation, otherwise unintelligible, I shall proceed with my narrative.

The government did not carry out its intention with respect to half-pay officers in the colonies; but many officers, like myself, had already sold their commissions, under the apprehension of being compelled to accept this hard alternative. I was suddenly thrown on my own resources, to support a helpless and increasing family, without any regular income. I had this consolation, however, under my misfortune, that I had acted from the best motives, and without the most remote idea that I was risking the comfort and happiness of those depending upon me. I found very soon, that I had been too precipitate, as people often are in extraordinary positions; though, had the result been more fortunate, most people would have commended my prudence and foresight. We determined, however, to bear up manfully against our ill-fortune, and trust to that Providence which never deserts those who do not forget their own duties in trying circumstances.

It is curious how, on such occasions, some stray stanzas which hang about the outskirts of the memory, will suddenly come to our aid. Thus, I often caught myself humming over some of the verses of that excellent moral song “The Pilot,” and repeating, with a peculiar emphasis, the concluding lines of each stanza,

“Fear not! but trust in Providence,
Wherever thou may’st be.”

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Such songs do good; and a peculiar blessing seems to attend every composition, in prose or verse, which inculcates good moral sentiments, or tends to strengthen our virtuous resolutions. This fine song, I feel assured, will live embalmed in the memory of mankind long after the sickly, affected, and unnatural ditties of its author have gone to their merited oblivion. Sometimes, however, in spite of my good resolutions, when left alone, the dark clouds of despondency would close around me, and I could not help contrasting the happy past in our life with my gloomy anticipations of the future. Sleep, which should bring comfort and refreshment, often only aggravated my painful regrets, by recalling scenes which had nearly escaped my waking memory. In such a mood the following verses were written:—

OH, LET ME SLEEP!

Oh, let me sleep! nor wake to sadness
The heart that, sleeping, dreams of gladness;
For sleep is death, without the pain—
Then wake me not to life again.
Oh, let me sleep! nor break the spell
That soothes the captive in his cell;
That bursts his chains, and sets him free,
To revel in his liberty.

Loved scenes, array’d in tenderest hue,
Now rise in beauty to my view;
And long-lost friends around me stand,
Or, smiling, grasp my willing hand.
Again I seek my island home;
Along the silent bays I roam,
Or, seated on the rocky shore,
I hear the angry surges roar.

And oh, how sweet the music seems
I’ve heard amid my blissful dreams!
But of the sadly pleasing strains,
Nought save the thrilling sense remains.
Those sounds so loved in scenes so dear,
Still—still they murmur in my ear:
But sleep alone can bless the sight
With forms that face with morning’s light.

J.W.D.M.

CHAPTER XIV

A JOURNEY TO THE WOODS

’Tis well for us poor denizens of earth
That God conceals the future from our gaze;
Or Hope, the blessed watcher on Life’s tower,
Would fold her wings, and on the dreary waste
Close the bright eye that through the murky clouds
Of blank Despair still sees the glorious sun.

It was a bright frosty morning when I bade adieu to the farm, the birthplace of my little Agnes, who, nestled beneath my cloak, was sweetly sleeping on my knee, unconscious of the long journey before us into the wilderness. The sun had not as yet risen. Anxious to get to our place of destination before dark, we started as early as we could. Our own fine team had been sold the day before for forty pounds; and one of our neighbours, a Mr. D——, was to convey us and our household goods to Douro for the sum of twenty dollars. During the week he had made several journeys, with furniture and stores; and all that now remained was to be conveyed to the woods in two large lumber sleighs, one driven by himself, the other by a younger brother.

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It was not without regret that I left Melsetter, for so my husband had called the place, after his father's estate in Orkney. It was a beautiful, picturesque spot; and, in spite of the evil neighbourhood, I had learned to love it; indeed, it was much against my wish that it was sold. I had a great dislike to removing, which involves a necessary loss, and is apt to give to the emigrant roving and unsettled habits. But all regrets were now useless; and happily unconscious of the life of toil and anxiety that awaited us in those dreadful woods, I tried my best to be cheerful, and to regard the future with a hopeful eye.

Our driver was a shrewd, clever man, for his opportunities. He took charge of the living cargo, which consisted of my husband, our maid-servant, the two little children, and myself—besides a large hamper, full of poultry, a dog, and a cat. The lordly sultan of the imprisoned seraglio thought fit to conduct himself in a very eccentric manner, for at every barn-yard we happened to pass, he clapped his wings, and crowed so long and loud that it afforded great amusement to the whole party, and doubtless was very edifying to the poor hens, who lay huddled together as mute as mice.

"That 'ere rooster thinks he's on the top of the heap," said our driver, laughing. "I guess he's not used to travelling in a close conveyance. Listen! How all the crowers in the neighbourhood give him back a note of defiance! But he knows that he's safe enough at the bottom of the basket."

The day was so bright for the time of year (the first week in February), that we suffered no inconvenience from the cold. Little Katie was enchanted with the jingling of the sleigh-bells, and, nestled among the packages, kept singing or talking to the horses in her baby lingo. Trifling as these little incidents were, before we had proceeded ten miles on our long journey, they revived my drooping spirits, and I began to feel a lively interest in the scenes through which we were passing.

The first twenty miles of the way was over a hilly and well-cleared country; and as in winter the deep snow fills up the inequalities, and makes all roads alike, we glided as swiftly and steadily along as if they had been the best highways in the world. Anon, the clearings began to diminish, and tall woods arose on either side of the path; their solemn aspect, and the deep silence that brooded over their vast solitudes, inspiring the mind with a strange awe. Not a breath of wind stirred the leafless branches, whose huge shadows reflected upon the dazzling white covering of snow, lay so perfectly still, that it seemed as if Nature had suspended her operations, that life and motion had ceased, and that she was sleeping in her winding-sheet, upon the bier of death.

"I guess you will find the woods pretty lonesome," said our driver, whose thoughts had been evidently employed on the same subject as our own. "We were once in the woods, but emigration has stepped ahead of us, and made our'n a cleared part of the country. When I was a boy, all this country, for thirty miles on every side of us, was

bush land. As to Peterborough, the place was unknown; not a settler had ever passed through the great swamp, and some of them believed that it was the end of the world."

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“What swamp is that?” asked I.

“Oh, the great Cavan swamp. We are just two miles from it; and I tell you that the horses will need a good rest, and ourselves a good dinner, by the time we are through it. Ah, Mrs. Moodie, if ever you travel that way in summer, you will know something about corduroy roads. I was ’most jolted to death last fall; I thought it would have been no bad notion to have insured my teeth before I left C——. I really expected that they would have been shook out of my head before we had done manoeuvring over the big logs.”

“How will my crockery stand it in the next sleigh?” quoth I. “If the road is such as you describe, I am afraid that I shall not bring a whole plate to Douro.”

“Oh, the snow is a great leveller—it makes all rough places smooth. But with regard to this swamp, I have something to tell you. About ten years ago, no one had ever seen the other side of it; and if pigs or cattle strayed away into it, they fell a prey to the wolves and bears, and were seldom recovered.

“An old Scotch emigrant, who had located himself on this side of it, so often lost his beasts that he determined during the summer season to try and explore the place, and see if there were any end to it. So he takes an axe on his shoulder, and a bag of provisions for a week, not forgetting a flask of whiskey, and off he starts all alone, and tells his wife that if he never returned, she and little Jock must try and carry on the farm without him; but he was determined to see the end of the swamp, even if it led to the other world. He fell upon a fresh cattle-track, which he followed all that day; and towards night he found himself in the heart of a tangled wilderness of bushes, and himself half eaten up with mosquitoes and black-flies. He was more than tempted to give in, and return home by the first glimpse of light.

“The Scotch are a tough people; they are not easily daunted—a few difficulties only seem to make them more eager to get on; and he felt ashamed the next moment, as he told me, of giving up. So he finds out a large thick cedar-tree for his bed, climbs up, and coiling himself among the branches like a bear, he was soon fast asleep.

“The next morning, by daylight, he continued his journey, not forgetting to blaze with his axe the trees to the right and left as he went along. The ground was so spongy and wet that at every step he plunged up to his knees in water, but he seemed no nearer the end of the swamp than he had been the day before. He saw several deer, a raccoon, and a ground-hog, during his walk, but was unmolested by bears or wolves. Having passed through several creeks, and killed a great many snakes, he felt so weary towards the close of the second day that he determined to go home the next morning. But just as he began to think his search was fruitless he observed that the cedars and tamaracks which had obstructed his path became less numerous, and were succeeded

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by bass and soft maple. The ground, also, became less moist, and he was soon ascending a rising slope, covered with oak and beech, which shaded land of the very best quality. The old man was now fully convinced that he had cleared the great swamp; and that, instead of leading to the other world, it had conducted him to a country that would yield the very best returns for cultivation. His favourable report led to the formation of the road that we are about to cross, and to the settlement of Peterborough, which is one of the most promising new settlements in this district, and is surrounded by a splendid back country."

We were descending a very steep hill, and encountered an ox-sleigh, which was crawling slowly up it in a contrary direction. Three people were seated at the bottom of the vehicle upon straw, which made a cheap substitute for buffalo-robes. Perched, as we were, upon the crown of the height, we looked completely down into the sleigh, and during the whole course of my life I never saw three uglier mortals collected into such a narrow space. The man was blear-eyed, with a hare-lip, through which protruded two dreadful yellow teeth that resembled the tusks of a boar. The woman was long-faced, high cheek-boned, red-haired, and freckled all over like a toad. The boy resembled his hideous mother, but with the addition of a villanous obliquity of vision which rendered him the most disgusting object in this singular trio.

As we passed them, our driver gave a knowing nod to my husband, directing, at the same time, the most quizzical glance towards the strangers, as he exclaimed, "We are in luck, sir! I think that 'ere sleigh may be called Beauty's egg-basket!"

We made ourselves very merry at the poor people's expense, and Mr. D——, with his odd stories and Yankeefied expressions, amused the tedium of our progress through the great swamp, which in summer presents for several miles one uniform bridge of rough and unequal logs, all laid loosely across huge sleepers, so that they jump up and down, when pressed by the wheels, like the keys of a piano. The rough motion and jolting occasioned by this collision is so distressing that it never fails to entail upon the traveller sore bones and an aching head for the rest of the day. The path is so narrow over these logs that two waggons cannot pass without great difficulty, which is rendered more dangerous by the deep natural ditches on either side of the bridge, formed by broad creeks that flow out of the swamp, and often terminate in mud-holes of very ominous dimensions. The snow, however, hid from us all the ugly features of the road, and Mr. D—— steered us through in perfect safety, and landed us at the door of a little log house which crowned the steep hill on the other side of the swamp, and which he dignified with the name of a tavern.

It was now two o'clock. We had been on the road since seven; and men, women, and children were all ready for the good dinner that Mr. D—— had promised us at this

splendid house of entertainment, where we were destined to stay for two hours, to refresh ourselves and rest the horses.

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“Well, Mrs. J——, what have you got for our dinner?” said our driver, after he had seen to the accommodation of his teams.

“Pritters[1] and pork, sir. Nothing else to be had in the woods. Thank God, we have enough of that!”

[1] Vulgar Canadian for potatoes.

D—— shrugged up his shoulders, and looked at us. “We’ve plenty of that same at home. But hunger’s good sauce. Come, be spry, widow, and see about it, for I am very hungry.”

I inquired for a private room for myself and the children, but there were no private rooms in the house. The apartment we occupied was like the cobbler’s stall in the old song, and I was obliged to attend upon them in public.

“You have much to learn, ma’am, if you are going to the woods,” said Mrs. J——.

“To unlearn, you mean,” said Mr. D——. “To tell you the truth, Mrs. Moodie, ladies and gentlemen have no business in the woods. Eddication spoils man or woman for that location. So, widow (turning to our hostess), you are not tired of living alone yet?”

“No, sir; I have no wish for a second husband. I had enough of the first. I like to have my own way—to lie down mistress, and get up master.”

“You don’t like to be put out of your old way,” returned he, with a mischievous glance.

She coloured very red; but it might be the heat of the fire over which she was frying the pork for our dinner.

I was very hungry, but I felt no appetite for the dish she was preparing for us. It proved salt, hard, and unsavoury.

D—— pronounced it very bad, and the whiskey still worse, with which he washed it down.

I asked for a cup of tea and a slice of bread. But they were out of tea, and the hop-rising had failed, and there was no bread in the house. For this disgusting meal we paid at the rate of a quarter of a dollar a-head.

I was glad when the horses being again put to, we escaped from the rank odour of the fried pork, and were once more in the fresh air.

“Well, mister; did not you grudge your money for that bad meat?” said D——, when we were once more seated in the sleigh. “But in these parts, the worse the fare the higher the charge.”

“I would not have cared,” said I, “if I could have got a cup of tea.”

“Tea! it’s poor trash. I never could drink tea in my life. But I like coffee, when ’tis boiled till it’s quite black. But coffee is not good without plenty of trimmings.”

“What do you mean by trimmings?”

He laughed. “Good sugar, and sweet cream. Coffee is not worth drinking without trimmings.”

Often in after years have I recalled the coffee trimmings, when endeavouring to drink the vile stuff which goes by the name of coffee in the houses of entertainment in the country.

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We had now passed through the narrow strip of clearing which surrounded the tavern, and again entered upon the woods. It was near sunset, and we were rapidly descending a steep hill, when one of the traces that held our sleigh suddenly broke. D—— pulled up in order to repair the damage. His brother's team was close behind, and our unexpected stand-still brought the horses upon us before J. D—— could stop them. I received so violent a blow from the head of one of them, just in the back of the neck, that for a few minutes I was stunned and insensible. When I recovered, I was supported in the arms of my husband, over whose knees I was leaning, and D—— was rubbing my hands and temples with snow.

"There, Mr. Moodie, she's coming to. I thought she was killed. I have seen a man before now killed by a blow from a horse's head in the like manner." As soon as we could, we resumed our places in the sleigh; but all enjoyment of our journey, had it been otherwise possible, was gone.

When we reached Peterborough, Moodie wished us to remain at the inn all night, as we had still eleven miles of our journey to perform, and that through a blazed forest-road, little travelled, and very much impeded by fallen trees and other obstacles; but D—— was anxious to get back as soon as possible to his own home, and he urged us very pathetically to proceed.

The moon arose during our stay at the inn, and gleamed upon the straggling frame-houses which then formed the now populous and thriving town of Peterborough. We crossed the wild, rushing, beautiful Otonabee river by a rude bridge, and soon found ourselves journeying over the plains or level heights beyond the village, which were thinly wooded with picturesque groups of oak and pine, and very much resembled a gentleman's park at home.

Far below, to our right (for we were upon the Smith-town side) we heard the rushing of the river, whose rapid waters never receive curb from the iron chain of winter. Even while the rocky banks are coated with ice, and the frost-king suspends from every twig and branch the most beautiful and fantastic crystals, the black waters rush foaming along, a thick steam rising constantly above the rapids, as from a boiling pot. The shores vibrate and tremble beneath the force of the impetuous flood, as it whirls round cedar-crowned islands and opposing rocks, and hurries on to pour its tribute into the Rice Lake, to swell the calm, majestic grandeur of the Trent, till its waters are lost in the beautiful bay of Quinte, and finally merged in the blue ocean of Ontario.

The most renowned of our English rivers dwindle into little muddy rills when compared with the sublimity of the Canadian waters. No language can adequately express the solemn grandeur of her lake and river scenery; the glorious islands that float, like visions from fairy land, upon the bosom of these azure mirrors of her cloudless skies. No dreary breadth of marshes, covered with flags, hide from our gaze the expanse of heaven-tinted waters; no foul mud-banks spread their unwholesome exhalations

around. The rocky shores are crowned with the cedar, the birch, the alder, and soft maple, that dip their long tresses in the pure stream; from every crevice in the limestone the hare-bell and Canadian rose wave their graceful blossoms.

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The fiercest droughts of summer may diminish the volume and power of these romantic streams, but it never leaves their rocky channels bare, nor checks the mournful music of their dancing waves.

Through the openings in the forest, we now and then caught the silver gleam of the river tumbling on in moonlight splendour, while the hoarse chiding of the wind in the lofty pines above us gave a fitting response to the melancholy cadence of the waters.

The children had fallen asleep. A deep silence pervaded the party. Night was above us with her mysterious stars. The ancient forest stretched around us on every side, and a foreboding sadness sunk upon my heart. Memory was busy with the events of many years. I retraced step by step the pilgrimage of my past life, until arriving at that passage in its sombre history, I gazed through tears upon the singularly savage scene around me, and secretly marvelled, “What brought me here?”

“Providence,” was the answer which the soul gave. “Not for your own welfare, perhaps, but for the welfare of your children, the unerring hand of the Great Father has led you here. You form a connecting link in the destinies of many. It is impossible for any human creature to live for himself alone. It may be your lot to suffer, but others will reap a benefit from your trials. Look up with confidence to Heaven, and the sun of hope will yet shed a cheering beam through the forbidding depths of this tangled wilderness.”

The road now became so bad that Mr. D—— was obliged to dismount, and lead his horses through the more intricate passages. The animals themselves, weary with their long journey and heavy load, proceeded at foot-fall. The moon, too, had deserted us, and the only light we had to guide us through the dim arches of the forest was from the snow and the stars, which now peered down upon us, through the leafless branches of the trees, with uncommon brilliancy.

“It will be past midnight before we reach your brother’s clearing” (where we expected to spend the night), said D——. “I wish, Mr. Moodie, we had followed your advice, and staid at Peterborough. How fares it with you, Mrs. Moodie, and the young ones? It is growing very cold.”

We were now in the heart of a dark cedar-swamp, and my mind was haunted with visions of wolves and bears; but beyond the long, wild howl of a solitary wolf, no other sound awoke the sepulchral silence of that dismal-looking wood.

“What a gloomy spot!” said I to my husband. “In the old country, superstition would people it with ghosts.”

“Ghosts! There are no ghosts in Canada!” said Mr. D——. “The country is too new for ghosts. No Canadian is afear’d of ghosts. It is only in old countries, like your’n, that are full of sin and wickedness, that people believe in such nonsense. No human habitation

has ever been erected in this wood through which you are passing. Until a very few years ago, few white persons had ever passed through it;

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and the Red Man would not pitch his tent in such a place as this. Now, ghosts, as I understand the word, are the spirits of bad men that are not allowed by Providence to rest in their graves but, for a punishment, are made to haunt the spots where their worst deeds were committed. I don't believe in all this; but, supposing it to be true, bad men must have died here before their spirits could haunt the place. Now, it is more than probable that no person ever ended his days in this forest, so that it would be folly to think of seeing his ghost."

This theory of Mr. D——'s had the merit of originality, and it is not improbable that the utter disbelief in supernatural appearances which is common to most native-born Canadians, is the result of the same very reasonable mode of arguing. The unpeopled wastes of Canada must present the same aspect to the new settler that the world did to our first parents after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden; all the sin which could defile the spot, or haunt it with the association of departed evil, is concentrated in their own persons. Bad spirits cannot be supposed to linger near a place where crime has never been committed. The belief in ghosts, so prevalent in old countries, must first have had its foundation in the consciousness of guilt.

After clearing this low, swampy portion of the wood, with much difficulty, and the frequent application of the axe, to cut away the fallen timber that impeded our progress, our ears were assailed by a low, roaring, rushing sound, as of the falling of waters.

"That is Herriot's Falls," said our guide. "We are within two miles of our destination."

Oh, welcome sound! But those two miles appeared more lengthy than the whole journey. Thick clouds, that threatened a snow-storm, had blotted out the stars, and we continued to grope our way through a narrow, rocky path, upon the edge of the river, in almost total darkness. I now felt the chillness of the midnight hour, and the fatigue of the long journey, with double force, and envied the servant and children, who had been sleeping ever since we left Peterborough. We now descended the steep bank, and prepared to cross the rapids.

Dark as it was, I looked with a feeling of dread upon the foaming waters as they tumbled over their bed of rocks, their white crests flashing, life-like, amid the darkness of the night.

"This is an ugly bridge over such a dangerous place," said D——, as he stood up in the sleigh and urged his tired team across the miserable, insecure log bridge, where darkness and death raged below, and one false step of his jaded horses would have plunged us into both. I must confess I drew a freer breath when the bridge was crossed, and D—— congratulated us on our safe arrival in Douro.

We now continued our journey along the left bank of the river, but when in sight of Mr. S ——'s clearing, a large pine-tree, which had newly fallen across the narrow path, brought the teams to a standstill.

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The mighty trunk which had lately formed one of the stately pillars in the sylvan temple of Nature, was of too large dimensions to chop in two with axes; and after about half an hour's labour, which to me, poor, cold, weary wight! seemed an age, the males of the party abandoned the task in despair. To go round it was impossible; its roots were concealed in an impenetrable wall of cedar-jungle on the right-hand side of the road, and its huge branches hung over the precipitous bank of the river.

"We must try and make the horses jump over it," said D——. "We may get an upset, but there is no help for it; we must either make the experiment, or stay here all night, and I am too cold and hungry for that—so here goes." He urged his horses to leap the log; restraining their ardour for a moment as the sleigh rested on the top of the formidable barrier, but so nicely balanced, that the difference of a straw would almost have overturned the heavily-laden vehicle and its helpless inmates. We, however, cleared it in safety. He now stopped, and gave directions to his brother to follow the same plan that he had adopted; but whether the young man had less coolness, or the horses in his team were more difficult to manage, I cannot tell: the sleigh, as it hung poised upon the top of the log, was overturned with a loud crash, and all my household goods and chattels were scattered over the road.

Alas, for my crockery and stone china! scarcely one article remained unbroken.

"Never fret about the china," said Moodie; "thank God the man and the horses are uninjured."

I should have felt more thankful had the crocks been spared too; for, like most of my sex, I had a tender regard for china, and I knew that no fresh supply could be obtained in this part of the world. Leaving his brother to collect the scattered fragments, D—— proceeded on his journey. We left the road, and were winding our way over a steep hill, covered with heaps of brush and fallen timber, and as we reached the top, a light gleamed cheerily from the windows of a log house, and the next moment we were at my brother-in-law's door.

I thought my journey was at an end; but here I was doomed to fresh disappointment. His wife was absent on a visit to her friends, and it had been arranged that we were to stay with my sister, Mrs. T——, and her husband. With all this I was unacquainted; and I was about to quit the sleigh and seek the warmth of the fire when I was told that I had yet further to go. Its cheerful glow was to shed no warmth on me, and, tired as I was, I actually buried my face and wept upon the neck of a hound which Moodie had given to Mr. S——, and which sprang up upon the sleigh to lick my face and hands. This was my first halt in that weary wilderness, where I endured so many bitter years of toil and sorrow. My brother-in-law and his family had retired to rest, but they instantly rose to receive the way-worn travellers; and I never enjoyed more heartily a warm welcome after a long day of intense fatigue, than I did that night of my first sojourn in the backwoods.

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THE OTONABEE

Dark, rushing, foaming river!
  I love the solemn sound
  That shakes thy shores around,
And hoarsely murmurs, ever,
  As thy waters onward bound,
    Like a rash, unbridled steed
Flying madly on its course;
That shakes with thundering force
    The vale and trembling mead.
So thy billows downward sweep,
  Nor rock nor tree can stay
  Their fierce, impetuous way;
Now in eddies whirling deep,
   Now in rapids white with spray.

I love thee, lonely river!
  Thy hollow restless roar,
  Thy cedar-girded shore;
The rocky isles that sever,
  The waves that round them pour.
    Katchawanook[1] basks in light,
But thy currents woo the shade
By the lofty pine-trees made,
    That cast a gloom like night,
Ere day's last glories fade.
  Thy solitary voice
The same bold anthem sung
When Nature's frame was young.
   No longer shall rejoice
The woods where erst it rung!

Lament, lament, wild river!
  A hand is on thy mane[2]
  That will bind thee in a chain
No force of thine can sever.
  Thy furious headlong tide,
In murmurs soft and low,
  Is destined yet to glide
To meet the lake below;
  And many a bark shall ride
Securely on thy breast,

To waft across the main
Rich stores of golden grain
From the valleys of the West.

[1] The Indian name for one of the many expansions of this beautiful river.

[2] Alluding to the projected improvements on the Trent, of which the Otonabee is a continuation. Fifteen years have passed away since this little poem was written; but the Otonabee still rushes on in its own wild strength. Some idea of the rapidity of this river may be formed from the fact that heavy rafts of timber are floated down from Herriot's Falls, a distance of nine miles from Peterborough, in less than an hour. The shores are bold and rocky, and abound in beautiful and picturesque views.

CHAPTER XV

THE WILDERNESS, AND OUR INDIAN FRIENDS

Man of strange race! stern dweller of the wild!
Nature's free-born, untamed, and daring child!

The clouds of the preceding night, instead of dissolving in snow, brought on a rapid thaw. A thaw in the middle of winter is the most disagreeable change that can be imagined. After several weeks of clear, bright, bracing, frosty weather, with a serene atmosphere and cloudless sky, you awake one morning surprised at the change in the temperature; and, upon looking out of the window, behold the woods obscured by a murky haze—not so dense as an English November fog, but more black and lowering—and the heavens shrouded in a uniform covering of leaden-coloured

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clouds, deepening into a livid indigo at the edge of the horizon. The snow, no longer hard and glittering, has become soft and spongy, and the foot slips into a wet and insidiously-yielding mass at every step. From the roof pours down a continuous stream of water, and the branches of the trees collecting the moisture of the reeking atmosphere, shower it upon the earth from every dripping twig. The cheerless and uncomfortable aspect of things without never fails to produce a corresponding effect upon the minds of those within, and casts such a damp upon the spirits that it appears to destroy for a time all sense of enjoyment. Many persons (and myself among the number) are made aware of the approach of a thunder-storm by an intense pain and weight about the head; and I have heard numbers of Canadians complain that a thaw always made them feel bilious and heavy, and greatly depressed their animal spirits.

I had a great desire to visit our new location, but when I looked out upon the cheerless waste, I gave up the idea, and contented myself with hoping for a better day on the morrow; but many morrows came and went before a frost again hardened the road sufficiently for me to make the attempt.

The prospect from the windows of my sister's log hut was not very prepossessing. The small lake in front, which formed such a pretty object in summer, now looked like an extensive field covered with snow, hemmed in from the rest of the world by a dark belt of sombre pine-woods. The clearing round the house was very small, and only just reclaimed from the wilderness, and the greater part of it covered with piles of brushwood, to be burnt the first dry days of spring. The charred and blackened stumps on the few acres that had been cleared during the preceding year were everything but picturesque; and I concluded, as I turned, disgusted, from the prospect before me, that there was very little beauty to be found in the backwoods. But I came to this decision during a Canadian thaw, be it remembered, when one is wont to view every object with jaundiced eyes.

Moodie had only been able to secure sixty-six acres of his government grant upon the Upper Katchawanook Lake, which, being interpreted, means in English, the "Lake of the Waterfalls," a very poetical meaning, which most Indian names have. He had, however, secured a clergy reserve of two hundred acres adjoining; and he afterwards purchased a fine lot, which likewise formed part of the same block, one hundred acres, for 150 pounds.[1] This was an enormously high price for wild land; but the prospect of opening the Trent and Otonabee for the navigation of steamboats and other small craft, was at that period a favourite speculation, and its practicability, and the great advantages to be derived from it, were so widely believed as to raise the value of the wild lands along these remote waters to an enormous price; and settlers in the vicinity were eager to secure lots, at any sacrifice, along their shores.

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[1] After a lapse of fifteen years, we have been glad to sell these lots of land, after considerable clearings had been made upon them, for less than they originally cost us.

Our government grant was upon the lake shore, and Moodie had chosen for the site of his log house a bank that sloped gradually from the edge of the water, until it attained to the dignity of a hill. Along the top of this ridge, the forest road ran, and midway down the hill, our humble home, already nearly completed, stood, surrounded by the eternal forest. A few trees had been cleared in its immediate vicinity, just sufficient to allow the workmen to proceed, and to prevent the fall of any tree injuring the building, or the danger of its taking fire during the process of burning the fallow.

A neighbour had undertaken to build this rude dwelling by contract, and was to have it ready for us by the first week in the new year. The want of boards to make the divisions in the apartments alone hindered him from fulfilling his contract. These had lately been procured, and the house was to be ready for our reception in the course of a week. Our trunks and baggage had already been conveyed thither by Mr. D——; and, in spite of my sister's kindness and hospitality, I longed to find myself once more settled in a home of my own.

The day after our arrival, I was agreeably surprised by a visit from Monaghan, whom Moodie had once more taken into his service. The poor fellow was delighted that his nurse-child, as he always called little Katie, had not forgotten him, but evinced the most lively satisfaction at the sight of her dark friend.

Early every morning, Moodie went off to the house; and the first fine day, my sister undertook to escort me through the wood, to inspect it. The proposal was joyfully accepted; and although I felt rather timid when I found myself with only my female companion in the vast forest, I kept my fears to myself, lest I should be laughed at. This foolish dread of encountering wild beasts in the woods, I never could wholly shake off, even after becoming a constant resident in their gloomy depths, and accustomed to follow the forest-path, alone, or attended with little children, daily. The cracking of an old bough, or the hooting of the owl, was enough to fill me with alarm, and try my strength in a precipitate flight. Often have I stopped and reproached myself for want of faith in the goodness of Providence, and repeated the text, "The wicked are afraid when no man pursueth: but the righteous are as bold as a lion," as if to shame myself into courage. But it would not do; I could not overcome the weakness of the flesh. If I had one of my infants with me, the wish to protect the child from any danger which might beset my path gave me for a time a fictitious courage; but it was like love fighting with despair.

It was in vain that my husband assured me that no person had ever been attacked by wild animals in the woods, that a child might traverse them even at night in safety; whilst I knew that wild animals existed in those woods, I could not believe him, and my fears on this head rather increased than diminished.

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The snow had been so greatly decreased by the late thaw, that it had been converted into a coating of ice, which afforded a dangerous and slippery footing. My sister, who had resided for nearly twelve months in the woods, was provided for her walk with Indian moccasins, which rendered her quite independent; but I stumbled at every step. The sun shone brightly, the air was clear and invigorating, and, in spite of the treacherous ground and my foolish fears, I greatly enjoyed my first walk in the woods. Naturally of a cheerful, hopeful disposition, my sister was enthusiastic in her admiration of the woods. She drew such a lively picture of the charms of a summer residence in the forest that I began to feel greatly interested in her descriptions, and to rejoice that we, too, were to be her near neighbours and dwellers in the woods; and this circumstance not a little reconciled me to the change.

Hoping that my husband would derive an income equal to the one he had parted with from the investment of the price of his commission in the steam-boat stock, I felt no dread of want. Our legacy of 700 pounds had afforded us means to purchase land, build our house, and give out a large portion of land to be cleared, and, with a considerable sum of money still in hand, our prospects for the future were in no way discouraging.

When we reached the top of the ridge that overlooked our cot, my sister stopped, and pointed out a log-house among the trees. “There, S——,” she said, “is your home. When that black cedar-swamp is cleared away, that now hides the lake from us, you will have a very pretty view.” My conversation with her had quite altered the aspect of the country, and predisposed me to view things in the most favourable light. I found Moodie and Monaghan employed in piling up heaps of bush near the house, which they intended to burn off by hand previous to firing the rest of the fallow, to prevent any risk to the building from fire. The house was made of cedar logs, and presented a superior air of comfort to most dwellings of the same kind. The dimensions were thirty-six feet in length, and thirty-two in breadth, which gave us a nice parlour, a kitchen, and two small bed-rooms, which were divided by plank partitions. Pantry or store-room there was none; some rough shelves in the kitchen, and a deal cupboard in a corner of the parlour, being the extent of our accommodations in that way.

Our servant, Mary Tate, was busy scrubbing out the parlour and bed-room; but the kitchen, and the sleeping-room off it, were still knee-deep in chips, and filled with the carpenter’s bench and tools, and all our luggage. Such as it was, it was a palace when compared to Old Satan’s log hut, or the miserable cabin we had wintered in during the severe winter of 1833, and I regarded it with complacency as my future home.

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While we were standing outside the building, conversing with my husband, a young gentleman, of the name of Morgan, who had lately purchased land in that vicinity, went into the kitchen to light his pipe at the stove, and, with true backwood carelessness, let the hot cinder fall among the dry chips that strewed the floor. A few minutes after, the whole mass was in a blaze, and it was not without great difficulty that Moodie and Mr. R —— succeeded in putting out the fire. Thus were we nearly deprived of our home before we had taken up our abode in it.

The indifference to the danger of fire in a country where most of the dwellings are composed of inflammable materials, is truly astonishing. Accustomed to see enormous fires blazing on every hearth-stone, and to sleep in front of these fires, his bedding often riddled with holes made by hot particles of wood flying out during the night, and igniting beneath his very nose, the sturdy backwoodsman never dreads an enemy in the element that he is used to regard as his best friend. Yet what awful accidents, what ruinous calamities arise, out of this criminal negligence, both to himself and others!

A few days after this adventure, we bade adieu to my sister, and took possession of our new dwelling, and commenced “a life in the woods.”

The first spring we spent in comparative ease and idleness. Our cows had been left upon our old place during the winter. The ground had to be cleared before it could receive a crop of any kind, and I had little to do but to wander by the lake shore, or among the woods, and amuse myself.

These were the halcyon days of the bush. My husband had purchased a very light cedar canoe, to which he attached a keel and a sail; and most of our leisure hours, directly the snows melted, were spent upon the water.

These fishing and shooting excursions were delightful. The pure beauty of the Canadian water, the sombre but august grandeur of the vast forest that hemmed us in on every side and shut us out from the rest of the world, soon cast a magic spell upon our spirits, and we began to feel charmed with the freedom and solitude around us. Every object was new to us. We felt as if we were the first discoverers of every beautiful flower and stately tree that attracted our attention, and we gave names to fantastic rocks and fairy isles, and raised imaginary houses and bridges on every picturesque spot which we floated past during our aquatic excursions. I learned the use of the paddle, and became quite a proficient in the gentle craft.

It was not long before we received visits from the Indians, a people whose beauty, talents, and good qualities have been somewhat overrated, and invested with a poetical interest which they scarcely deserve. Their honesty and love of truth are the finest traits in characters otherwise dark and unlovely. But these are two God-like attributes, and from them spring all that is generous and ennobling about them.

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There never was a people more sensible of kindness, or more grateful for any little act of benevolence exercised towards them. We met them with confidence; our dealings with them were conducted with the strictest integrity; and they became attached to our persons, and in no single instance ever destroyed the good opinion we entertained of them.

The tribes that occupy the shores of all these inland waters, back of the great lakes, belong to the Chippewa or Missasagua Indians, perhaps the least attractive of all these wild people, both with regard to their physical and mental endowments.

The men of this tribe are generally small of stature, with very coarse and repulsive features. The forehead is low and retreating, the observing faculties large, the intellectual ones scarcely developed; the ears large, and standing off from the face; the eyes looking towards the temples, keen, snake-like, and far apart; the cheek-bones prominent; the nose long and flat, the nostrils very round; the jaw-bone projecting, massy, and brutal; the mouth expressing ferocity and sullen determination; the teeth large, even, and dazzlingly white. The mouth of the female differs widely in expression from that of the male; the lips are fuller, the jaw less projecting, and the smile is simple and agreeable. The women are a merry, light-hearted set, and their constant laugh and incessant prattle form a strange contrast to the iron taciturnity of their grim lords.

Now I am upon the subject, I will recapitulate a few traits and sketches of these people, as they came under my own immediate observation.

A dry cedar-swamp, not far from the house, by the lake shore, had been their usual place of encampment for many years. The whole block of land was almost entirely covered with maple trees, and had originally been an Indian sugar-bush. Although the favourite spot had now passed into the hands of strangers, they still frequented the place, to make canoes and baskets, to fish and shoot, and occasionally to follow their old occupation.

Scarcely a week passed away without my being visited by the dark strangers; and as my husband never allowed them to eat with the servants (who viewed them with the same horror that Mrs. D—— did black Mollineux), but brought them to his own table, they soon grew friendly and communicative, and would point to every object that attracted their attention, asking a thousand questions as to its use, the material of which it was made, and if we were inclined to exchange it for their commodities?

With a large map of Canada, they were infinitely delighted. In a moment they recognised every bay and headland in Ontario, and almost screamed with delight when, following the course of the Trent with their fingers, they came to their own lake.

How eagerly each pointed out the spot to his fellows; how intently their black heads were bent down, and their dark eyes fixed upon the map. What strange, uncouth

exclamations of surprise burst from their lips as they rapidly repeated the Indian names for every lake and river on this wonderful piece of paper.

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The old chief, Peter Nogan, begged hard for the coveted treasure. He would give "Canoe, venison, duck, fish, for it; and more by and by."

I felt sorry that I was unable to gratify his wishes; but the map had cost upwards of six dollars, and was daily consulted by my husband, in reference to the names and situations of localities in the neighbourhood.

I had in my possession a curious Japanese sword, which had been given to me by an uncle of Tom Wilson's—a strange gift to a young lady; but it was on account of its curiosity, and had no reference to my warlike propensities. This sword was broad, and three-sided in the blade, and in shape resembled a moving snake. The hilt was formed of a hideous carved image of one of their war-gods; and a more villanous-looking wretch was never conceived by the most distorted imagination. He was represented in a sitting attitude, the eagle's claws, that formed his hands, resting upon his knees; his legs terminated in lion's paws; and his face was a strange compound of beast and bird—the upper part of his person being covered with feathers, the lower with long, shaggy hair. The case of this awful weapon was made of wood, and, in spite of its serpentine form, fitted it exactly. No trace of a join could be found in this scabbard, which was of hard wood, and highly polished.

One of my Indian friends found this sword lying upon the bookshelf, and he hurried to communicate the important discovery to his companions. Moodie was absent, and they brought it to me to demand an explanation of the figure that formed the hilt.

I told them that it was a weapon that belonged to a very fierce people who lived in the east, far over the Great Salt Lake; that they were not Christians as we were, but said their prayers to images made of silver, and gold, and ivory, and wood, and that this was one of them; that before they went into battle they said their prayers to that hideous thing, which they had made with their own hands.

The Indians were highly amused by this relation, and passed the sword from one to the other, exclaiming, "A god!—Owgh!—A god!"

But, in spite of these outward demonstrations of contempt, I was sorry to perceive that this circumstance gave the weapon a great value, in their eyes, and they regarded it with a sort of mysterious awe.

For several days they continued to visit the house, bringing along with them some fresh companion to look at Mrs. Moodie's god!—until, vexed and annoyed by the delight they manifested at the sight of the eagle-beaked monster, I refused to gratify their curiosity by not producing him again.

The manufacture of the sheath, which had caused me much perplexity, was explained by old Peter in a minute. "'Tis burnt out," he said. "Instrument made like sword—heat red-hot—burnt through—polished outside."

Had I demanded a whole fleet of canoes for my Japanese sword, I am certain they would have agreed to the bargain.

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The Indian possesses great taste, which is displayed in the carving of his paddles, in the shape of his canoes, in the elegance and symmetry of his bows, in the cut of his leggings and moccasins, the sheath of his hunting-knife, and in all the little ornaments in which he delights. It is almost impossible for a settler to imitate to perfection an Indian's cherry-wood paddle. My husband made very creditable attempts, but still there was something wanting—the elegance of the Indian finish was not there. If you show them a good print, they invariably point out the most natural, and the best-executed figure in the group. They are particularly delighted with pictures, examine them long, and carefully, and seem to feel an artist-like pleasure in observing the effect produced by light and shade.

I had been showing John Nogan, the eldest son of old Peter, some beautiful coloured engravings of celebrated females; to my astonishment he pounced upon the best, and grunted out his admiration in the most approved Indian fashion. After having looked for a long time at all the pictures very attentively, he took his dog Sancho upon his knee, and showed him the pictures, with as much gravity as if the animal really could have shared in his pleasure.

The vanity of these grave men is highly amusing. They seem perfectly unconscious of it themselves and it is exhibited in the most child-like manner.

Peter and his son John were taking tea with us, when we were joined by my brother, Mr. S——. The latter was giving us an account of the marriage of Peter Jones, the celebrated Indian preacher.

"I cannot think," he said, "how any lady of property and education could marry such a man as Jones. Why, he's as ugly as Peter here."

This was said, not with any idea of insulting the red-skin on the score of his beauty, of which he possessed not the smallest particle, but in total forgetfulness that our guest understood English. Never shall I forget the red flash of that fierce dark eye as it glared upon my unconscious brother. I would not have received such a fiery glance for all the wealth that Peter Jones obtained with his Saxon bride. John Nogan was highly amused by his father's indignation. He hid his face behind the chief; and though he kept perfectly still, his whole frame was convulsed with suppressed laughter.

A plainer human being than poor Peter could scarcely be imagined; yet he certainly deemed himself handsome. I am inclined to think that their ideas of personal beauty differ very widely from ours.

Tom Nogan, the chief's brother, had a very large, fat, ugly squaw for his wife. She was a mountain of tawny flesh; and, but for the innocent, good-natured expression which, like a bright sunbeam penetrating a swarthy cloud, spread all around a kindly glow, she might have been termed hideous.

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This woman they considered very handsome, calling her “a fine squaw—clever squaw—a much good woman;” though in what her superiority consisted, I never could discover, often as I visited the wigwam. She was very dirty, and appeared quite indifferent to the claims of common decency (in the disposal of the few filthy rags that covered her). She was, however, very expert in all Indian craft. No Jew could drive a better bargain than Mrs. Tom; and her urchins, of whom she was the happy mother of five or six, were as cunning and avaricious as herself.

One day she visited me, bringing along with her a very pretty covered basket for sale. I asked her what she wanted for it, but could obtain from her no satisfactory answer. I showed her a small piece of silver. She shook her head. I tempted her with pork and flour, but she required neither. I had just given up the idea of dealing with her, in despair, when she suddenly seized upon me, and, lifting up my gown, pointed exultingly to my quilted petticoat, clapping her hands, and laughing immoderately.

Another time she led me all over the house, to show me what she wanted in exchange for *basket*. My patience was well nigh exhausted in following her from place to place, in her attempt to discover the coveted article, when, hanging upon a peg in my chamber, she espied a pair of trousers belonging to my husband’s logging-suit. The riddle was solved. With a joyful cry she pointed to them, exclaiming “Take basket. Give them!” It was with no small difficulty that I rescued the indispensables from her grasp.

From this woman I learned a story of Indian coolness and courage which made a deep impression on my mind. One of their squaws, a near relation of her own, had accompanied her husband on a hunting expedition into the forest. He had been very successful, and having killed more deer than they could well carry home, he went to the house of a white man to dispose of some of it, leaving the squaw to take care of the rest until his return. She sat carelessly upon the log with his hunting-knife in her hand, when she heard the breaking of branches near her, and turning round, beheld a great bear only a few paces from her.

It was too late to retreat; and seeing that the animal was very hungry, and determined to come to close quarters, she rose, and placed her back against a small tree, holding her knife close to her breast, and in a straight line with the bear. The shaggy monster came on. She remained motionless, her eyes steadily fixed upon her enemy, and as his huge arms closed around her, she slowly drove the knife into his heart. The bear uttered a hideous cry, and sank dead at her feet. When the Indian returned, he found the courageous woman taking the skin from the carcass of the formidable brute. What iron nerves these people must possess, when even a woman could dare and do a deed like this!

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The wolf they hold in great contempt, and scarcely deign to consider him as an enemy. Peter Nogan assured me that he never was near enough to one in his life to shoot it; that, except in large companies, and when greatly pressed by hunger, they rarely attack men. They hold the lynx, or wolverine, in much dread, as they often spring from trees upon their prey, fastening upon the throat with their sharp teeth and claws, from which a person in the dark could scarcely free himself without first receiving a dangerous wound. The cry of this animal is very terrifying, resembling the shrieks of a human creature in mortal agony.

My husband was anxious to collect some of the native Indian airs, as they all sing well, and have a fine ear for music, but all his efforts proved abortive. “John,” he said to young Nogan (who played very creditably on the flute, and had just concluded the popular air of “Sweet Home"), “cannot you play me one of your own songs?”

“Yes,—but no good.”

“Leave me to be the judge of that. Cannot you give me a war-song?”

“Yes,—but no good,” with an ominous shake of the head.

“A hunting-song?”

“No fit for white man,”—with an air of contempt. “No good, no good!”

“Do, John, sing us a love-song,” said I, laughing, “if you have such a thing in your language.”

“Oh! much love-song—very much—bad—bad—no good for Christian man. Indian song no good for white ears.” This was very tantalising, as their songs sounded very sweetly from the lips of their squaws, and I had a great desire and curiosity to get some of them rendered into English.

To my husband they gave the name of “the musician,” but I have forgotten the Indian word. It signified the maker of sweet sounds. They listened with intense delight to the notes of his flute, maintaining a breathless silence during the performance; their dark eyes flashing into fierce light at a martial strain, or softening with the plaintive and tender.

The cunning which they display in their contests with their enemies, in their hunting, and in making bargains with the whites (who are too apt to impose on their ignorance), seems to spring more from a law of necessity, forced upon them by their isolated position and precarious mode of life, than from any innate wish to betray. The Indian’s face, after all, is a perfect index of his mind. The eye chances its expression with every impulse and passion, and shows what is passing within as clearly as the lightning in a dark night betrays the course of the stream. I cannot think that deceit forms any

prominent trait in the Indian's character. They invariably act with the strictest honour towards those who never attempt to impose upon them. It is natural for a deceitful person to take advantage of the credulity of others. The genuine Indian never utters a falsehood, and never employs flattery (that powerful weapon in the hands of the insidious), in his communications with the whites.

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His worst traits are those which he has in common with the wild animals of the forest, and which his intercourse with the lowest order of civilised men (who, in point of moral worth, are greatly his inferiors), and the pernicious effects of strong drink, have greatly tended to inflame and debate.

It is a melancholy truth, and deeply to be lamented, that the vicinity of European settlers has always produced a very demoralising effect upon the Indians. As a proof of this, I will relate a simple anecdote.

John, of Rice Lake, a very sensible, middle-aged Indian, was conversing with me about their language, and the difficulty he found in understanding the books written in Indian for their use. Among other things, I asked him if his people ever swore, or used profane language towards the Deity.

The man regarded me with a sort of stern horror, as he replied, “Indian, till after he knew your people, never swore—no bad word in Indian. Indian must learn your words to swear and take God’s name in vain.”

Oh, what a reproof to Christian men! I felt abashed, and degraded in the eyes of this poor savage—who, ignorant as he was in many respects, yet possessed that first great attribute of the soul, a deep reverence for the Supreme Being. How inferior were thousands of my countrymen to him in this important point.

The affection of Indian parents to their children, and the deference which they pay to the aged, is another beautiful and touching trait in their character.

One extremely cold, wintry day, as I was huddled with my little ones over the stove, the door softly unclosed, and the moccasined foot of an Indian crossed the floor. I raised my head, for I was too much accustomed to their sudden appearance at any hour to feel alarmed, and perceived a tall woman standing silently and respectfully before me, wrapped in a large blanket. The moment she caught my eye she dropped the folds of her covering from around her, and laid at my feet the attenuated figure of a boy, about twelve years of age, who was in the last stage of consumption.

“Papouse die,” she said, mournfully clasping her hands against her breast, and looking down upon the suffering lad with the most heartfelt expression of maternal love, while large tears trickled down her dark face. “Moodie’s squaw save papouse—poor Indian woman much glad.”

Her child was beyond all human aid. I looked anxiously upon him, and knew, by the pinched-up features and purple hue of his wasted cheek, that he had not many hours to live. I could only answer with tears her agonising appeal to my skill.

“Try and save him! All die but him.” (She held up five of her fingers.) “Brought him all the way from Mutta Lake[1] upon my back, for white squaw to cure.”

[1] Mud Lake, or Lake Shemong, in Indian.

“I cannot cure him, my poor friend. He is in God’s care; in a few hours he will be with Him.”

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The child was seized with a dreadful fit of coughing, which I expected every moment would terminate his frail existence. I gave him a teaspoonful of currant jelly, which he took with avidity, but could not retain a moment on his stomach.

“Papouse die,” murmured the poor woman; “alone—alone! No papouse; the mother all alone.” She began re-adjusting the poor sufferer in her blanket. I got her some food, and begged her to stay and rest herself; but she was too much distressed to eat, and too restless to remain. She said little, but her face expressed the keenest anguish; she took up her mournful load, pressed for a moment his wasted, burning hand in hers, and left the room.

My heart followed her a long way on her melancholy journey. Think what this woman’s love must have been for that dying son, when she had carried a lad of his age six miles, through the deep snow, upon her back, on such a day, in the hope of my being able to do him some good. Poor heart-broken mother! I learned from Joe Muskrat’s squaw some days after that the boy died a few minutes after Elizabeth Iron, his mother, got home.

They never forget any little act of kindness. One cold night, late in the fall, my hospitality was demanded by six squaws, and puzzled I was how to accommodate them all. I at last determined to give them the use of the parlour floor during the night. Among these women there was one very old, whose hair was as white as snow. She was the only gray-haired Indian I ever saw, and on that account I regarded her with peculiar interest. I knew that she was the wife of a chief, by the scarlet embroidered leggings, which only the wives and daughters of chiefs are allowed to wear. The old squaw had a very pleasing countenance, but I tried in vain to draw her into conversation. She evidently did not understand me; and the Muskrat squaw, and Betty Cow, were laughing at my attempts to draw her out. I administered supper to them with my own hands, and after I had satisfied their wants (which is no very easy task, for they have great appetites), I told our servant to bring in several spare mattresses and blankets for their use. “Now mind, Jenny, and give the old squaw the best bed,” I said; “the others are young, and can put up with a little inconvenience.”

The old Indian glanced at me with her keen, bright eye; but I had no idea that she comprehended what I said.

Some weeks after this, as I was sweeping over my parlour floor, a slight tap drew me to the door. On opening it I perceived the old squaw, who immediately slipped into my hand a set of beautifully-embroidered bark trays, fitting one within the other, and exhibiting the very best sample of the porcupine quill-work. While I stood wondering what this might mean, the good old creature fell upon my neck, and kissing me, exclaimed, “You remember old squaw—make her comfortable! Old squaw no forget you. Keep them for her sake,” and before I could detain her she ran down the hill with a swiftness which seemed to bid defiance to years. I never saw this interesting Indian

again, and I concluded that she died during the winter, for she must have been of a great age.

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My dear reader, I am afraid I shall tire you with my Indian stories; but you must bear with me patiently whilst I give you a few more. The real character of a people can be more truly gathered from such seemingly trifling incidents than from any ideas we may form of them from the great facts in their history, and this is my reason for detailing events which might otherwise appear insignificant and unimportant.

A friend was staying with us, who wished much to obtain a likeness of Old Peter. I promised to try and make a sketch of the old man the next time he paid us a visit. That very afternoon he brought us some ducks in exchange for pork, and Moodie asked him to stay and take a glass of whiskey with him and his friend Mr. K——. The old man had arrayed himself in a new blanket-coat, bound with red, and the seams all decorated with the same gay material. His leggings and moccasins were new, and elaborately fringed; and, to cap the climax of the whole, he had a blue cloth conical cap upon his head, ornamented with a deer's tail dyed blue, and several cock's feathers.

He was evidently very much taken up with the magnificence of his own appearance, for he often glanced at himself in a small shaving-glass that hung opposite, with a look of grave satisfaction. Sitting apart, that I might not attract his observation, I got a tolerably faithful likeness of the old man, which after slightly colouring, to show more plainly his Indian finery, I quietly handed over to Mr. K——. Sly as I thought myself, my occupation and the object of it had not escaped the keen eye of the old man. He rose, came behind Mr. K——'s chair, and regarded the picture with a most affectionate eye. I was afraid that he would be angry at the liberty I had taken. No such thing! He was as pleased as Punch.

"That Peter?" he grunted. "Give me—put up in wigwam—make dog too! Owgh! owgh!" and he rubbed his hands together, and chuckled with delight. Mr. K—— had some difficulty in coaxing the picture from the old chief; so pleased was he with this rude representation of himself. He pointed to every particular article of his dress, and dwelt with peculiar glee on the cap and blue deer's tail.

A few days after this, I was painting a beautiful little snow-bird, that our man had shot out of a large flock that alighted near the door. I was so intent upon my task, to which I was putting the finishing strokes, that I did not observe the stealthy entrance (for they all walk like cats) of a stern-looking red man, till a slender, dark hand was extended over my paper to grasp the dead bird from which I was copying, and which as rapidly transferred it to the side of the painted one, accompanying the act with the deep guttural note of approbation, the unmusical, savage "Owgh."

My guest then seated himself with the utmost gravity in a rocking-chair, directly fronting me, and made the modest demand that I should paint a likeness of him, after the following quaint fashion:—

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“Moodie’s squaw know much—make Peter Nogan toder day on papare—make Jacob to-day—Jacob young—great hunter—give much duck—venison—to squaw.”

Although I felt rather afraid of my fierce-looking visitor, I could scarcely keep my gravity; there was such an air of pompous self-approbation about the Indian, such a sublime look of conceit in his grave vanity.

“Moodie’s squaw cannot do everything; she cannot paint young men,” said I, rising, and putting away my drawing-materials, upon which he kept his eye intently fixed, with a hungry, avaricious expression. I thought it best to place the coveted objects beyond his reach. After sitting for some time, and watching all my movements, he withdrew, with a sullen, disappointed air.

This man was handsome, but his expression was vile. Though he often came to the house, I never could reconcile myself to his countenance.

Late one very dark, stormy night, three Indians begged to be allowed to sleep by the kitchen stove. The maid was frightened out of her wits at the sight of these strangers, who were Mohawks from the Indian woods upon the Bay of Quinte, and they brought along with them a horse and cutter. The night was so stormy, that, after consulting our man—Jacob Faithful, as we usually called him—I consented to grant their petition, although they were quite strangers, and taller and fiercer-looking than our friends the Missasaguas.

I was putting my children to bed, when the girl came rushing in, out of breath. “The Lord preserve us, madam, if one of these wild men has not pulled off his trousers, and is a-sitting, mending them behind the stove! and what shall I do?”

“Do?—why, stay with me, and leave the poor fellow to finish his work.”

The simple girl had never once thought of this plan of pacifying her outraged sense of propriety.

Their sense of hearing is so acute that they can distinguish sounds at an incredible distance, which cannot be detected by a European at all. I myself witnessed a singular exemplification of this fact. It was mid-winter; the Indians had pitched their tent, or wigwam, as usual, in our swamp. All the males were absent on a hunting expedition up the country, and had left two women behind to take care of the camp and its contents, Mrs. Tom Nogan and her children, and Susan Moore, a young girl of fifteen, and the only truly beautiful squaw I ever saw. There was something interesting about this girl’s history, as well as her appearance. Her father had been drowned during a sudden hurricane, which swamped his canoe on Stony Lake; and the mother, who witnessed the accident from the shore, and was near her confinement with this child, boldly swam

out to his assistance. She reached the spot where he sank, and even succeeded in recovering the body; but it was too late; the man was dead.

The soul of an Indian that has been drowned is reckoned accursed, and he is never permitted to join his tribe on the happy hunting-grounds, but his spirit haunts the lake or river in which he lost his life. His body is buried on some lonely island, which the Indians never pass without leaving a small portion of food, tobacco, ammunition, to supply his wants; but he is never interred with the rest of his people.

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His children are considered unlucky, and few willingly unite themselves to the females of the family, lest a portion of the father's curse should be visited on them.

The orphan Indian girl generally kept aloof from the rest, and seemed so lonely and companionless, that she soon attracted my attention and sympathy, and a hearty feeling of good-will sprang up between us. Her features were small and regular, her face oval, and her large, dark, loving eyes were full of tenderness and sensibility, but as bright and shy as those of the deer. A rich vermilion glow burnt upon her olive cheek and lips, and set off the dazzling whiteness of her even and pearly teeth. She was small of stature, with delicate little hands and feet, and her figure was elastic and graceful. She was a beautiful child of nature, and her Indian name signified "the voice of angry waters." Poor girl, she had been a child of grief and tears from her birth! Her mother was a Mohawk, from whom she, in all probability, derived her superior personal attractions; for they are very far before the Missasaguas in this respect.

My friend and neighbour, Emilia S——, the wife of a naval officer, who lived about a mile distant from me, through the bush, had come to spend the day with me; and hearing that the Indians were in the swamp, and the men away, we determined to take a few trifles to the camp, in the way of presents, and spend an hour in chatting with the squaws.

What a beautiful moonlight night it was, as light as day!—the great forest sleeping tranquilly beneath the cloudless heavens—not a sound to disturb the deep repose of nature but the whispering of the breeze, which, during the most profound calm, creeps through the lofty pine tops. We bounded down the steep bank to the lake shore. Life is a blessing, a precious boon indeed, in such an hour, and we felt happy in the mere consciousness of existence—the glorious privilege of pouring out the silent adoration of the heart to the Great Father in his universal temple.

On entering the wigwam, which stood within a few yards of the clearing, in the middle of a thick group of cedars, we found Mrs. Tom alone with her elvish children, seated before the great fire that burned in the centre of the camp; she was busy boiling some bark in an iron spider. The little boys, in red flannel shirts which were their only covering, were tormenting a puppy, which seemed to take their pinching and pummelling in good part, for it neither attempted to bark nor to bite, but, like the eels in the story, submitted to the infliction because it was used to it. Mrs. Tom greeted us with a grin of pleasure, and motioned to us to sit down upon a buffalo-skin, which, with a courtesy so natural to the Indians, she had placed near her for our accommodation.

"You are all alone," said I, glancing round the camp.

"Ye'es; Indian away hunting—Upper Lakes. Come home with much deer."

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“And Susan, where is she?”

“By and by. (Meaning that she was coming.) Gone to fetch water—ice thick—chop with axe—take long time.”

As she ceased speaking, the old blanket that formed the door of the tent was withdrawn, and the girl, bearing two pails of water, stood in the open space, in the white moonlight. The glow of the fire streamed upon her dark, floating locks, danced in the black, glistening eye, and gave a deeper blush to the olive cheek! She would have made a beautiful picture; Sir Joshua Reynolds would have rejoiced in such a model—so simply graceful and unaffected, the very beau ideal of savage life and unadorned nature. A smile of recognition passed between us. She put down her burden beside Mrs. Tom, and noiselessly glided to her seat.

We had scarcely exchanged a few words with our favourite, when the old squaw, placing her hand against her ear, exclaimed, “Whist! whist!”

“What is it?” cried Emilia and I, starting to our feet. “Is there any danger?”

“A deer—a deer—in bush!” whispered the squaw, seizing a rifle that stood in a corner. “I hear sticks crack—a great way off. Stay here!”

A great way off the animal must have been, for though Emilia and I listened at the open door, an advantage which the squaw did not enjoy, we could not hear the least sound: all seemed still as death. The squaw whistled to an old hound, and went out.

“Did you hear anything, Susan?”

She smiled, and nodded.

“Listen; the dog has found the track.”

The next moment the discharge of a rifle, and the deep baying of the dog, woke up the sleeping echoes of the woods; and the girl started off to help the old squaw to bring in the game that she had shot.

The Indians are great imitators, and possess a nice tact in adopting the customs and manners of those with whom they associate. An Indian is Nature’s gentleman—never familiar, coarse, or vulgar. If he take a meal with you, he waits to see how you make use of the implements on the table, and the manner in which you eat, which he imitates with a grave decorum, as if he had been accustomed to the same usages from childhood. He never attempts to help himself, or demand more food, but waits patiently until you perceive what he requires. I was perfectly astonished at this innate politeness, for it seems natural to all the Indians with whom I have had any dealings.

There was one old Indian, who belonged to a distant settlement, and only visited our lakes occasionally on hunting parties. He was a strange, eccentric, merry old fellow, with a skin like red mahogany, and a wiry, sinewy frame, that looked as if it could bid defiance to every change of temperature.

Old Snow-storm, for such was his significant name, was rather too fond of the whiskey-bottle, and when he had taken a drop too much, he became an unmanageable wild beast. He had a great fancy for my husband, and never visited the other Indians without extending the same favour to us. Once upon a time, he broke the nipple of his gun; and Moodie repaired the injury for him by fixing a new one in its place, which little kindness quite won the heart of the old man, and he never came to see us without bringing an offering of fish, ducks, partridges, or venison, to show his gratitude.

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One warm September day, he made his appearance bare-headed, as usual, and carrying in his hand a great checked bundle.

“Fond of grapes?” said he, putting the said bundle into my hands. “Fine grapes—-brought them from island, for my friend’s squaw and papouse.”

Glad of the donation, which I considered quite a prize, I hastened into the kitchen to untie the grapes and put them into a dish. But imagine my disappointment, when I found them wrapped up in a soiled shirt, only recently taken from the back of the owner. I called Moodie, and begged him to return Snow-storm his garment, and to thank him for the grapes.

The mischievous creature was highly diverted with the circumstance, and laughed immoderately.

“Snow-storm,” said he, “Mrs. Moodie and the children are obliged to you for your kindness in bringing them the grapes; but how came you to tie them up in a dirty shirt?”

“Dirty!” cried the old man, astonished that we should object to the fruit on that score. “It ought to be clean; it has been washed often enough. Owgh! You see, Moodie,” he continued, “I have no hat—never wear hat—want no shade to my eyes—love the sun—-see all around me—up and down—much better widout hat. Could not put grapes in hat—blanket-coat too large, crush fruit, juice run out. I had noting but my shirt, so I takes off shirt, and brings grape safe over the water on my back. Papouse no care for dirty shirt; their lee-tel bellies have no eyes.”

In spite of this eloquent harangue, I could not bring myself to use the grapes, ripe and tempting as they looked, or give them to the children. Mr. W—— and his wife happening to step in at that moment, fell into such an ecstasy at the sight of the grapes, that, as they were perfectly unacquainted with the circumstance of the shirt, I very generously gratified their wishes by presenting them with the contents of the large dish; and they never ate a bit less sweet for the novel mode in which they were conveyed to me!

The Indians, under their quiet exterior, possess a deal of humour. They have significant names for everything, and a nickname for every one, and some of the latter are laughably appropriate. A fat, pompous, ostentatious settler in our neighbourhood they called Muckakee, “the bull frog.” Another, rather a fine young man, but with a very red face, they named Segoskee, “the rising sun.” Mr. Wood, who had a farm above ours, was a remarkably slender young man, and to him they gave the appellation of Metiz, “thin stick.” A woman, that occasionally worked for me, had a disagreeable squint; she was known in Indian by the name of Sachabo, “cross eye.” A gentleman with a very large nose was Choojas, “big, or ugly nose.” My little Addie, who was a fair, lovely creature, they viewed with great approbation, and called Anoonk, “a star;” while the rosy Katie was Nogesigook, “the northern lights.” As to me, I was Nonocosiqui, a “humming-

bird;" a ridiculous name for a tall woman, but it had reference to the delight I took in painting birds. My friend, Emilia, was "blue cloud;" my little Donald, "frozen face;" young C——, "the red-headed woodpecker," from the colour of his hair; my brother, Chippewa, and "the bald-headed eagle." He was an especial favourite among them.

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The Indians are often made a prey of and cheated by the unprincipled settlers, who think it no crime to overreach a red-skin. One anecdote will fully illustrate this fact. A young squaw, who was near becoming a mother, stopped at a Smith-town settler's house to rest herself. The woman of the house, who was Irish, was peeling for dinner some large white turnips, which her husband had grown in their garden. The Indian had never seen a turnip before, and the appearance of the firm, white, juicy root gave her such a keen craving to taste it that she very earnestly begged for a small piece to eat. She had purchased at Peterborough a large stone-china bowl, of a very handsome pattern (or, perhaps, got it at the store in exchange for *basket*), the worth of which might be half-a-dollar. If the poor squaw longed for the turnip, the value of which could scarcely reach a copper, the covetous European had fixed as longing a glance upon the china bowl, and she was determined to gratify her avaricious desire and obtain it on the most easy terms. She told the squaw, with some disdain, that her man did not grow turnips to give away to "Injuns," but she would sell her one. The squaw offered her four coppers, all the change she had about her. This the woman refused with contempt. She then proffered a basket; but that was not sufficient; nothing would satisfy her but the bowl. The Indian demurred; but opposition had only increased her craving for the turnip in a tenfold degree; and, after a short mental struggle, in which the animal propensity overcame the warnings of prudence, the squaw gave up the bowl, and received in return one turnip! The daughter of this woman told me this anecdote of her mother as a very clever thing. What ideas some people have of moral justice!

I have said before that the Indian never forgets a kindness. We had a thousand proofs of this, when overtaken by misfortune, and withering beneath the iron grasp of poverty, we could scarcely obtain bread for ourselves and our little ones; then it was that the truth of the eastern proverb was brought home to our hearts, and the goodness of God fully manifested towards us, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days." During better times we had treated these poor savages with kindness and liberality, and when dearer friends looked coldly upon us they never forsook us. For many a good meal I have been indebted to them, when I had nothing to give in return, when the pantry was empty, and "the hearthstone growing cold," as they term the want of provisions to cook at it. And their delicacy in conferring these favours was not the least admirable part of their conduct. John Nogan, who was much attached to us, would bring a fine bunch of ducks, and drop them at my feet "for the papouse," or leave a large muskinonge on the sill of the door, or place a quarter of venison just within it, and slip away without saying a word, thinking that receiving a present from a poor Indian might hurt our feelings, and he would spare us the mortification of returning thanks.

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Often have I grieved that people with such generous impulses should be degraded and corrupted by civilised men; that a mysterious destiny involves and hangs over them, pressing them back into the wilderness, and slowly and surely sweeping them from the earth.

Their ideas of Christianity appeared to me vague and unsatisfactory. They will tell you that Christ died for men, and that He is the Saviour of the World, but they do not seem to comprehend the spiritual character of Christianity, nor the full extent of the requirements and application of the law of Christian love. These imperfect views may not be entertained by all Christian Indians, but they were very common amongst those with whom I conversed. Their ignorance upon theological, as well as upon other subjects, is, of course, extreme. One Indian asked me very innocently if I came from the land where Christ was born, and if I had ever seen Jesus. They always mention the name of the Persons in the Trinity with great reverence.

They are a highly imaginative people. The practical meaning of their names, and their intense admiration for the beauties of Nature, are proof of this. Nothing escapes their observing eyes. There is not a flower that blooms in the wilderness, a bird that cuts the air with its wings, a beast that roams the wood, a fish that stems the water, or the most minute insect that sports in the sunbeams, but it has an Indian name to illustrate its peculiar habits and qualities. Some of their words convey the direct meaning of the thing implied—thus, che-charm, “to sneeze,” is the very sound of that act; too-me-duh, “to churn,” gives the noise made by the dashing of the cream from side to side; and many others.

They believe in supernatural appearances—in spirits of the earth, the air, the waters. The latter they consider evil, and propitiate before undertaking a long voyage, by throwing small portions of bread, meat, tobacco, and gunpowder into the water.

When an Indian loses one of his children, he must keep a strict fast for three days, abstaining from food of any kind. A hunter, of the name of Young, told me a curious story of their rigid observance of this strange rite.

“They had a chief,” he said, “a few years ago, whom they called ’Handsome Jack’—-whether in derision, I cannot tell, for he was one of the ugliest Indians I ever saw. The scarlet fever got into the camp—a terrible disease in this country, and doubly terrible to those poor creatures who don’t know how to treat it. His eldest daughter died. The chief had fasted two days when I met him in the bush. I did not know what had happened, but I opened my wallet, for I was on a hunting expedition, and offered him some bread and dried venison. He looked at me reproachfully.

“’Do white men eat bread the first night their papouse is laid in the earth?’

“I then knew the cause of his depression, and left him.”

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On the night of the second day of his fast another child died of the fever. He had now to accomplish three more days without tasting food. It was too much even for an Indian. On the evening of the fourth, he was so pressed by ravenous hunger, that he stole into the woods, caught a bull-frog, and devoured it alive. He imagined himself alone; but one of his people, suspecting his intention, had followed him, unperceived, to the bush. The act he had just committed was a hideous crime in their eyes, and in a few minutes the camp was in an uproar. The chief fled for protection to Young's house. When the hunter demanded the cause of his alarm, he gave for answer, "There are plenty of flies at my house. To avoid their stings I came to you."

It required all the eloquence of Mr. Young, who enjoyed much popularity among them, to reconcile the rebellious tribe to their chief.

They are very skilful in their treatment of wounds, and many diseases. Their knowledge of the medicinal qualities of their plants and herbs is very great. They make excellent poultices from the bark of the bass and the slippery elm. They use several native plants in their dyeing of baskets and porcupine quills. The inner bark of the swamp-alder, simply boiled in water, makes a beautiful red. From the root of the black briony they obtain a fine salve for sores, and extract a rich yellow dye. The inner bark of the root of the sumach, roasted, and reduced to powder, is a good remedy for the ague; a teaspoonful given between the hot and cold fit. They scrape the fine white powder from the large fungus that grows upon the bark of the pine into whiskey, and take it for violent pains in the stomach. The taste of this powder strongly reminded me of quinine.

I have read much of the excellence of Indian cookery, but I never could bring myself to taste anything prepared in their dirty wigwams. I remember being highly amused in watching the preparation of a mess, which might have been called the Indian hotch-potch. It consisted of a strange mixture of fish, flesh, and fowl, all boiled together in the same vessel. Ducks, partridges, muskinonge, venison, and muskrats, formed a part of this delectable compound. These were literally smothered in onions, potatoes, and turnips, which they had procured from me. They very hospitably offered me a dishful of the odious mixture, which the odour of the muskrats rendered everything but savoury; but I declined, simply stating that I was not hungry. My little boy tasted it, but quickly left the camp to conceal the effect it produced upon him.

Their method of broiling fish, however, is excellent. They take a fish, just fresh out of the water, cut out the entrails, and, without removing the scales, wash it clean, dry it in a cloth, or in grass, and cover it all over with clear hot ashes. When the flesh will part from the bone, they draw it out of the ashes, strip off the skin, and it is fit for the table of the most fastidious epicure.

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The deplorable want of chastity that exists among the Indian women of this tribe seems to have been more the result of their intercourse with the settlers in the country than from any previous disposition to this vice. The jealousy of their husbands has often been exercised in a terrible manner against the offending squaws; but this has not happened of late years. The men wink at these derelictions in their wives, and share with them the price of their shame.

The mixture of European blood adds greatly to the physical beauty of the half-race, but produces a sad falling-off from the original integrity of the Indian character. The half-caste is generally a lying, vicious rogue, possessing the worst qualities of both parents in an eminent degree. We have many of these half-Indians in the penitentiary, for crimes of the blackest dye.

The skill of the Indian in procuring his game, either by land or water, has been too well described by better writers than I could ever hope to be to need any illustration from my pen, and I will close this long chapter with a droll anecdote which is told of a gentleman in this neighbourhood.

The early loss of his hair obliged Mr. —— to procure the substitute of a wig. This was such a good imitation of nature, that none but his intimate friends and neighbours were aware of the fact.

It happened that he had had some quarrel with an Indian, which had to be settled in one of the petty courts. The case was decided in favour of Mr. ——, which so aggrieved the savage, who considered himself the injured party, that he sprang upon him with a furious yell, tomahawk in hand, with the intention of depriving him of his scalp. He twisted his hand in the looks which adorned the cranium of his adversary, when—horror of horrors!—the treacherous wig came off in his hand, “Owgh! owgh!” exclaimed the affrighted savage, flinging it from him, and rushing from the court as if he had been bitten by a rattlesnake. His sudden exit was followed by peals of laughter from the crowd, while Mr. —— coolly picked up his wig, and drily remarked that it had saved his head.

THE INDIAN FISHERMAN’S LIGHT

The air is still, the night is dark,
  No ripple breaks the dusky tide;
From isle to isle the fisher’s bark
  Like fairy meteor seems to glide;
Now lost in shade—now flashing bright
  On sleeping wave and forest tree;
We hail with joy the ruddy light,

Which far into the darksome night
  Shines red and cheerily!

With spear high poised, and steady hand,
  The centre of that fiery ray,
Behold the Indian fisher stand
  Prepared to strike the finny prey;
Hurrah! the shaft has sped below—
  Transfix'd the shining prize I see;
On swiftly darts the birch canoe;
Yon black rock shrouding from my view
  Its red light gleaming cheerily!

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Around yon bluff, whose pine crest hides
  The noisy rapids from our sight,
Another bark—another glides—
  Red meteors of the murky night.
The bosom of the silent stream
  With mimic stars is dotted free;
The waves reflect the double gleam,
The tall woods lighten in the beam,
  Through darkness shining cheerily!

CHAPTER XVI

BURNING THE FALLOW

There is a hollow roaring in the air—
The hideous hissing of ten thousand flames,
That from the centre of yon sable cloud
Leap madly up, like serpents in the dark,
Shaking their arrowy tongues at Nature's heart.

It is not my intention to give a regular history of our residence in the bush, but merely to present to my readers such events as may serve to illustrate a life in the woods.

The winter and spring of 1834 had passed away. The latter was uncommonly cold and backward; so much so that we had a very heavy fall of snow upon the 14th and 15th of May, and several gentlemen drove down to Cobourg in a sleigh, the snow lying upon the ground to the depth of several inches.

A late, cold spring in Canada is generally succeeded by a burning hot summer; and the summer of '34 was the hottest I ever remember. No rain fell upon the earth for many weeks, till nature drooped and withered beneath one bright blaze of sunlight; and the ague and fever in the woods, and the cholera in the large towns and cities, spread death and sickness through the country.

Moodie had made during the winter a large clearing of twenty acres around the house. The progress of the workmen had been watched by me with the keenest interest. Every tree that reached the ground opened a wider gap in the dark wood, giving us a broader ray of light and a clearer glimpse of the blue sky. But when the dark cedar-swamp fronting the house fell beneath the strokes of the axe, and we got a first view of the lake, my joy was complete; a new and beautiful object was now constantly before me, which gave me the greatest pleasure. By night and day, in sunshine or in storm, water is always the most sublime feature in a landscape, and no view can be truly grand in which it is wanting. From a child, it always had the most powerful effect upon my mind,

from the great ocean rolling in majesty, to the tinkling forest rill, hidden by the flowers and rushes along its banks. Half the solitude of my forest home vanished when the lake unveiled its bright face to the blue heavens, and I saw sun and moon, and stars and waving trees reflected there. I would sit for hours at the window as the shades of evening deepened round me, watching the massy foliage of the forests pictured in the waters, till fancy transported me back to England, and the songs of birds and the lowing of cattle were sounding in my ears. It was long, very long, before I could discipline my mind to learn and practice all the menial employments which are necessary in a good settler's wife.

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The total absence of trees about the doors in all new settlements had always puzzled me, in a country where the intense heat of summer seems to demand all the shade that can be procured. My husband had left several beautiful rock-elms (the most picturesque tree in the country) near our dwelling, but alas! the first high gale prostrated all my fine trees, and left our log cottage entirely exposed to the fierce rays of the sun.

The confusion of an uncleared fallow spread around us on every side. Huge trunks of trees and piles of brush gave a littered and uncomfortable appearance to the locality, and as the weather had been very dry for some weeks, I heard my husband daily talking with his choppers as to the expediency of firing the fallow. They still urged him to wait a little longer, until he could get a good breeze to carry the fire well through the brush.

Business called him suddenly to Toronto, but he left a strict charge with old Thomas and his sons, who were engaged in the job, by no means to attempt to burn it off until he returned, as he wished to be upon the premises himself, in case of any danger. He had previously burnt all the heaps immediately about the doors.

While he was absent, old Thomas and his second son fell sick with the ague, and went home to their own township, leaving John, a surly, obstinate young man, in charge of the shanty, where they slept, and kept their tools and provisions.

Monaghan I had sent to fetch up my three cows, as the children were languishing for milk, and Mary and I remained alone in the house with the little ones.

The day was sultry, and towards noon a strong wind sprang up that roared in the pine tops like the dashing of distant billows, but without in the least degree abating the heat. The children were lying listlessly upon the floor for coolness, and the girl and I were finishing sun-bonnets, when Mary suddenly exclaimed, “Bless us, mistress, what a smoke!” I ran immediately to the door, but was not able to distinguish ten yards before me. The swamp immediately below us was on fire, and the heavy wind was driving a dense black cloud of smoke directly towards us.

“What can this mean?” I cried, “Who can have set fire to the fallow?”

As I ceased speaking, John Thomas stood pale and trembling before me. “John, what is the meaning of this fire?”

“Oh, ma’am, I hope you will forgive me; it was I set fire to it, and I would give all I have in the world if I had not done it.”

“What is the danger?”

“Oh, I’m terribly afear’d that we shall all be burnt up,” said the fellow, beginning to whimper.

“Why did you run such a risk, and your master from home, and no one on the place to render the least assistance?”

“I did it for the best,” blubbered the lad. “What shall we do?”

“Why, we must get out of it as fast as we can, and leave the house to its fate.”

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“We can’t get out,” said the man, in a low, hollow tone, which seemed the concentration of fear; “I would have got out of it if I could; but just step to the back door, ma’am, and see.”

I had not felt the least alarm up to this minute; I had never seen a fallow burnt, but I had heard of it as a thing of such common occurrence that I had never connected with it any idea of danger. Judge then, my surprise, my horror, when, on going to the back door, I saw that the fellow, to make sure of his work, had fired the field in fifty different places. Behind, before, on every side, we were surrounded by a wall of fire, burning furiously within a hundred yards of us, and cutting off all possibility of retreat; for could we have found an opening through the burning heaps, we could not have seen our way through the dense canopy of smoke; and, buried as we were in the heart of the forest, no one could discover our situation till we were beyond the reach of help.

I closed the door, and went back to the parlour. Fear was knocking loudly at my heart, for our utter helplessness annihilated all hope of being able to effect our escape—I felt stupefied. The girl sat upon the floor by the children, who, unconscious of the peril that hung over them, had both fallen asleep. She was silently weeping; while the fool who had caused the mischief was crying aloud.

A strange calm succeeded my first alarm; tears and lamentations were useless; a horrible death was impending over us, and yet I could not believe that we were to die. I sat down upon the step of the door, and watched the awful scene in silence. The fire was raging in the cedar-swamp immediately below the ridge on which the house stood, and it presented a spectacle truly appalling. From out the dense folds of a canopy of black smoke, the blackest I ever saw, leaped up continually red forks of lurid flame as high as the tree tops, igniting the branches of a group of tall pines that had been left standing for saw-logs.

A deep gloom blotted out the heavens from our sight. The air was filled with fiery particles, which floated even to the door-step—while the crackling and roaring of the flames might have been heard at a great distance. Could we have reached the lake shore, where several canoes were moored at the landing, by launching out into the water we should have been in perfect safety; but, to attain this object, it was necessary to pass through this mimic hell; and not a bird could have flown over it with unscorched wings. There was no hope in that quarter, for, could we have escaped the flames, we should have been blinded and choked by the thick, black, resinous smoke.

The fierce wind drove the flames at the sides and back of the house up the clearing; and our passage to the road, or to the forest, on the right and left, was entirely obstructed by a sea of flames. Our only ark of safety was the house, so long as it remained untouched by the consuming element. I turned to young Thomas, and asked him, how long he thought that would be.

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“When the fire clears this little ridge in front, ma’am. The Lord have mercy upon us, then, or we must all go!”

“Cannot you, John, try and make your escape, and see what can be done for us and the poor children?”

My eye fell upon the sleeping angels, locked peacefully in each other’s arms, and my tears flowed for the first time.

Mary, the servant-girl, looked piteously up in my face. The good, faithful creature had not uttered one word of complaint, but now she faltered forth—

“The dear, precious lambs!—Oh! such a death!”

I threw myself down upon the floor beside them, and pressed them alternately to my heart, while inwardly I thanked God that they were asleep, unconscious of danger, and unable by their childish cries to distract our attention from adopting any plan which might offer to effect their escape.

The heat soon became suffocating. We were parched with thirst, and there was not a drop of water in the house, and none to be procured nearer than the lake. I turned once more to the door, hoping that a passage might have been burnt through to the water. I saw nothing but a dense cloud of fire and smoke—could hear nothing but the crackling and roaring of the flames, which were gaining so fast upon us that I felt their scorching breath in my face.

“Ah,” thought I—and it was a most bitter thought—“what will my beloved husband say when he returns and finds that his poor Susy and his dear girls have perished in this miserable manner? But God can save us yet.”

The thought had scarcely found a voice in my heart before the wind rose to a hurricane, scattering the flames on all sides into a tempest of burning billows. I buried my head in my apron, for I thought that our time was come, and that all was lost, when a most terrific crash of thunder burst over our heads, and, like the breaking of a water-spout, down came the rushing torrent of rain which had been pent up for so many weeks.

In a few minutes the chip-yard was all afloat, and the fire effectually checked. The storm which, unnoticed by us, had been gathering all day, and which was the only one of any note we had that summer, continued to rage all night, and before morning had quite subdued the cruel enemy, whose approach we had viewed with such dread.

The imminent danger in which we had been placed struck me more forcibly after it was past than at the time, and both the girl and myself sank upon our knees, and lifted up our hearts in humble thanksgiving to that God who had saved us by an act of His Providence from an awful and sudden death. When all hope from human assistance

was lost, His hand was mercifully stretched forth, making His strength more perfectly manifested in our weakness:—

“He is their stay when earthly help is lost,
The light and anchor of the tempest-toss’d.”

There was one person unknown to us, who had watched the progress of that rash blaze, and had even brought his canoe to the landing, in the hope of us getting off. This was an Irish pensioner named Dunn, who had cleared a few acres on his government grant, and had built a shanty on the opposite shore of the lake.

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“Faith, madam! an’ I thought the captain was stark, staring mad to fire his fallow on such a windy day, and that blowing right from the lake to the house. When Old Wittals came in and towld us that the masther was not to the fore, but only one lad, an’ the wife an’ the chilther at home,—thinks I, there’s no time to be lost, or the crathurs will be burnt up intirely. We started instanther, but, by Jove! we were too late. The swamp was all in a blaze when we got to the landing, and you might as well have thried to get to heaven by passing through the other place.”

This was the eloquent harangue with which the honest creature informed me the next morning of the efforts he had made to save us, and the interest he had felt in our critical situation. I felt comforted for my past anxiety, by knowing that one human being, however humble, had sympathised in our probable fate, while the providential manner in which we had been rescued will ever remain a theme of wonder and gratitude.

The next evening brought the return of my husband, who listened to the tale of our escape with a pale and disturbed countenance; not a little thankful to find his wife and children still in the land of the living.

For a long time after the burning of that fallow, it haunted me in my dreams. I would awake with a start, imagining myself fighting with the flames, and endeavouring to carry my little children through them to the top of the clearing, when invariably their garments and my own took fire just as I was within reach of a place of safety.

THE FORGOTTEN DREAM

Ere one ruddy streak of light
Glimmer’d o’er the distant height,
Kindling with its living beam
Frowning wood and cold grey stream,
I awoke with sudden start,
Clammy brow and beating heart,
Trembling limbs, convulsed and chill,
Conscious of some mighty ill;
Yet unable to recall
Sights that did my sense appal;
Sounds that thrill’d my sleeping ear
With unutterable fear;
Forms that to my sleeping eye
Presented some strange phantasy—
Shadowy, spectral, and sublime,
That glance upon the sons of time
At moments when the mind, o’erwrought,
Yields reason to mysterious thought,

And night and solitude in vain
Bind the free spirit in their chain.
Such the vision wild that press'd
On tortur'd brain and heaving chest;
But sight and sound alike are gone,
I woke, and found myself alone;
With choking sob and stifled scream
To bless my God 'twas but a dream!
To smooth my damp and stiffen'd hair,
And murmur out the Saviour's prayer—
The first to grateful memory brought,
The first a gentle mother taught,
When, bending o'er her children's bed,
She bade good angels guard my head;
Then paused, with tearful eyes, and smiled
On the calm slumbers of her child—
As God himself had heard her prayer,
And holy angels worshipped there.

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CHAPTER XVII

OUR LOGGING-BEE

There was a man in our town,
In our town, in our town—
There was a man in our town,
He made a logging-bee;

And he bought lots of whiskey,
To make the loggers frisky—
To make the loggers frisky
At his logging-bee.

The Devil sat on a log heap,
A log heap, a log heap—
A red hot burning log heap—
A-grinning at the bee;

And there was lots of swearing,
Of boasting and of daring,
Of fighting and of tearing,
At that logging bee.

J.W.D.M.

A logging-bee followed the burning of the fallow, as a matter of course. In the bush, where hands are few, and labour commands an enormous rate of wages, these gatherings are considered indispensable, and much has been written in their praise; but to me, they present the most disgusting picture of a bush life. They are noisy, riotous, drunken meetings, often terminating in violent quarrels, sometimes even in bloodshed. Accidents of the most serious nature often occur, and very little work is done when we consider the number of hands employed, and the great consumption of food and liquor.

I am certain, in our case, had we hired with the money expended in providing for the bee, two or three industrious, hard-working men, we should have got through twice as much work, and have had it done well, and have been the gainers in the end.

People in the woods have a craze for giving and going to bees, and run to them with as much eagerness as a peasant runs to a race-course or a fair; plenty of strong drink and excitement making the chief attraction of a bee.

In raising a house or barn, a bee may be looked upon as a necessary evil, but these gatherings are generally conducted in a more orderly manner than those for logging.

Fewer hands are required; and they are generally under the control of the carpenter who puts up the frame, and if they get drunk during the raising they are liable to meet with very serious accidents.

Thirty-two men, gentle and simple, were invited to our bee, and the maid and I were engaged for two days preceding the important one, in baking and cooking for the entertainment of our guests. When I looked at the quantity of food we had prepared, I thought it could never be all eaten, even by thirty-two men. It was a burning hot day towards the end of July, when our loggers began to come in, and the “gee!” and “ha!” to encourage the oxen resounded on every side.

There was my brother S——, with his frank English face, a host in himself; Lieutenant —— in his blouse, wide white trousers, and red sash, his broad straw hat shading a dark manly face that would have been a splendid property for a bandit chief; the four gay, reckless, idle sons of ——, famous at any spree, but incapable of the least mental or physical exertion, who considered hunting and fishing as the sole aim and object of life. These young men rendered very little assistance themselves, and their example deterred others who were inclined to work.

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There were the two R——s, who came to work and to make others work; my good brother-in-law, who had volunteered to be the Grog Boss, and a host of other settlers, among whom I recognised Moodie's old acquaintance, Dan Simpson, with his lank red hair and freckled face; the Youngs, the hunters, with their round, black, curly heads and rich Irish brogue; poor C—— with his long, spare, consumptive figure, and thin sickly face. Poor fellow, he has long since been gathered to his rest!

There was the ruffian squatter P——, from Clear Lake,—the dread of all honest men; the brutal M——, who treated oxen as if they had been logs, by beating them with handspikes; and there was Old Wittals, with his low forehead and long nose, a living witness of the truth of phrenology, if his large organ of acquisitiveness and his want of consciousness could be taken in evidence. Yet in spite of his derelictions from honesty, he was a hard-working, good-natured man, who, if he cheated you in a bargain, or took away some useful article in mistake from your homestead, never wronged his employer in his day's work.

He was a curious sample of cunning and simplicity—quite a character in his way—and the largest eater I ever chanced to know. From this ravenous propensity, for he eat his food like a famished wolf, he had obtained his singular name of "Wittals."

During the first year of his settlement in the bush, with a very large family to provide for, he had been often in want of food. One day he came to my brother, with a very long face.

"Mr. S—— I'm no beggar, but I'd be obliged to you for a loaf of bread. I declare to you on my honour that I have not had a bit of wittals to dewour for two whole days."

He came to the right person with his petition. Mr. S—— with a liberal hand relieved his wants, but he entailed upon him the name of "Old Wittals," as part payment.

His daughter, who was a very pretty girl, had stolen a march upon him into the wood, with a lad whom he by no means regarded with a favourable eye. When she returned, the old man confronted her and her lover with this threat, which I suppose he considered "the most awful" punishment that he could devise.

"March into the house, Madam 'Ria (Maria); and if ever I catch you with that scamp again, I'll tie you up to a stump all day, and give you no wittals."

I was greatly amused by overhearing a dialogue between Old Wittals and one of his youngest sons, a sharp, Yankeefied-looking boy, who had lost one of his eyes, but the remaining orb looked as if it could see all ways at once.

“I say, Sol, how came you to tell that tarnation tearing lie to Mr. S—— yesterday? Didn’t you expect that you’d catch a good wallopping for the like of that? Lying may be excusable in a man, but ’tis a terrible bad habit for a boy.”

“Lor’, father, that worn’t a lie. I told Mr. S—— our cow worn’t in his peas. Nor more she wor; she was in his wheat.”

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“But she was in the peas all night, boy.”

“That wor nothing to me; she worn’t in just then. Sure I won’t get a licking for that?”

“No, no, you are a good boy; but mind what I tell you, and don’t bring me into a scrape with any of your real lies.”

Prevarication, the worst of falsehoods, was a virtue in his eyes. So much for the old man’s morality.

Monaghan was in his glory, prepared to work or fight, whichever should come uppermost; and there was old Thomas and his sons, the contractors for the clearing, to expedite whose movements the bee was called. Old Thomas was a very ambitious man in his way. Though he did not know A from B, he took into his head that he had received a call from Heaven to convert the heathen in the wilderness; and every Sunday he held a meeting in our loggers’ shanty, for the purpose of awakening sinners, and bringing over “Injun pagans” to the true faith. His method of accomplishing this object was very ingenious. He got his wife, Peggy—or “my Paggy,” as he called her—to read aloud to him a text from the Bible, until he knew it by heart; and he had, as he said truly, “a good remembrancer,” and never heard a striking sermon but he retained the most important passages, and retailed them secondhand to his bush audience.

I must say that I was not a little surprised at the old man’s eloquence when I went one Sunday over to the shanty to hear him preach. Several wild young fellows had come on purpose to make fun of him; but his discourse, which was upon the text “We shall all meet before the judgment-seat of Christ,” was rather too serious a subject to turn into a jest, with even old Thomas for the preacher. All went on very well until the old man gave out a hymn, and led off in such a loud, discordant voice, that my little Katie, who was standing between her father’s knees, looked suddenly up, and said, “Mamma, what a noise old Thomas makes.” This remark led to a much greater noise, and the young men, unable to restrain their long-suppressed laughter, ran tumultuously from the shanty.

I could have whipped the little elf; but small blame could be attached to a child of two years old, who had never heard a preacher, especially such a preacher as the old backwoodsman, in her life. Poor man! He was perfectly unconscious of the cause of the disturbance, and remarked to us, after the service was over,

“Well, ma’am, did we not get on famously? Now, worn’t that a BOOTIFUL discourse?”

“It was, indeed; much better than I expected.”

“Yes, yes; I knew it would please you. It had quite an effect on those wild fellows. A few more such sermons will teach them good behaviour. Ah, the bush is a bad place for

young men. The farther in the bush, say I, the farther from God, and the nearer to hell. I told that wicked Captain L—— of Dummer so the other Sunday; ‘an’,’ says he, ’if you don’t hold your confounded jaw, you old fool, I’ll kick you there.’ Now ma’am—now, sir, was not that bad manners in a gentleman, to use such appropriate epitaphs to a humble servant of God, like I?”

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And thus the old man ran on for an hour, dilating upon his own merits and the sins of his neighbors.

There was John R——, from Smith-town, the most notorious swearer in the district; a man who esteemed himself clever, nor did he want for natural talent, but he had converted his mouth into such a sink of iniquity that it corrupted the whole man, and all the weak and thoughtless of his own sex who admitted him into their company. I had tried to convince John R—— (for he often frequented the house under the pretence of borrowing books) of the great crime that he was constantly committing, and of the injurious effect it must produce upon his own family, but the mental disease had taken too deep a root to be so easily cured. Like a person labouring under some foul disease, he contaminated all he touched. Such men seem to make an ambitious display of their bad habits in such scenes, and if they afford a little help, they are sure to get intoxicated and make a row. There was my friend, old Ned Dunn, who had been so anxious to get us out of the burning fallow. There was a whole group of Dummer Pines: Levi, the little wiry, witty poacher; Cornish Bill, the honest-hearted old peasant, with his stalwart figure and uncouth dialect; and David, and Nedall good men and true; and Malachi Chroak, a queer, withered-up, monkey-man, that seemed like some mischievous elf, flitting from heap to heap to make work and fun for the rest; and many others were at that bee who have since found a rest in the wilderness: Adam T——, H——, J. M——, H. N——.

These, at different times, lost their lives in those bright waters in which, on such occasions as these, they used to sport and frolic to refresh themselves during the noonday heat. Alas! how many, who were then young and in their prime, that river and its lakes have swept away!

Our men worked well until dinner-time, when, after washing in the lake, they all sat down to the rude board which I had prepared for them, loaded with the best fare that could be procured in the bush. Pea-soup, legs of pork, venison, eel, and raspberry pies, garnished with plenty of potatoes, and whiskey to wash them down, besides a large iron kettle of tea. To pour out the latter, and dispense it round, devolved upon me. My brother and his friends, who were all temperance men, and consequently the best workers in the field, kept me and the maid actively employed in replenishing their cups.

The dinner passed off tolerably well; some of the lower order of the Irish settlers were pretty far gone, but they committed no outrage upon our feelings by either swearing or bad language, a few harmless jokes alone circulating among them.

Some one was funning Old Wittalls for having eaten seven large cabbages at Mr. T——'s bee, a few days previous. His son, Sol, thought himself, as in duty bound, to take up the cudgel for his father.

"Now, I guess that's a lie, anyhow. Faythe was sick that day, and I tell you he only ate five."

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This announcement was followed by such an explosion of mirth that the boy looked fiercely round him, as if he could scarcely believe the fact that the whole party were laughing at him.

Malachi Chroak, who was good-naturedly drunk, had discovered an old pair of cracked bellows in a corner, which he placed under his arm, and applying his mouth to the pipe, and working his elbows to and fro, pretended that he was playing upon the bagpipes, every now and then letting the wind escape in a shrill squeak from this novel instrument.

“Arrah, ladies and jintlemen, do jist turn your swate little eyes upon me whilst I play for your iddifications the last illigant tune which my owld grandmother taught me. Och hone! ’tis a thousand pities that such musical owld crathers should be suffered to die, at all at all, to be poked away into a dirthy, dark hole, when their canthles shud be burnin’ a-top of a bushel, givin’ light to the house. An’ then it is she that was the illigant dancer, stepping out so lively and frisky, just so.”

And here he minced to and fro, affecting the airs of a fine lady. The suppositious bagpipe gave an uncertain, ominous howl, and he flung it down, and started back with a ludicrous expression of alarm.

“Alive, is it ye are? Ye croaking owld divil, is that the tune you taught your son?

“Och! my old granny taught me, but now she is dead,
That a dhrop of nate whiskey is good for the head;
It would make a man spake when jist ready to dhie,
If you doubt it—my boys!—I’d advise you to thry.

“Och! my owld granny sleeps with her head on a stone,—
‘Now, Malach, don’t throuble the galls when I’m gone!’
I thried to obey her; but, och, I am shure,
There’s no sorrow on earth that the angels can’t cure.

“Och! I took her advice—I’m a bachelor still;
And I dance, and I play, with such excellent skill,
(Taking up the bellows, and beginning to dance.)
That the dear little crathurs are striving in vain
Which furst shall my hand or my fortin’ obtain.”

“Malach!” shouted a laughing group. “How was it that the old lady taught you to go a-courting?”

“Arrah, that’s a sacret! I don’t let out owld granny’s sacrets,” said Malachi, gracefully waving his head to and fro to the squeaking of the bellows; then, suddenly tossing back the long, dangling black elf-locks that curled down the sides of his lank, yellow cheeks,

and winking knowingly with his comical little deep-seated black eyes, he burst out again —

"Wid the blarney I'd win the most dainty proud dame,
No gall can resist the soft sound of that same;
Wid the blarney, my boys—if you doubt it, go thry—
But hand here the bottle, my whistle is dhry."

The men went back to the field, leaving Malachi to amuse those who remained in the house; and we certainly did laugh our fill at his odd capers and conceits.

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Then he would insist upon marrying our maid. There could be no refusal—have her he would. The girl, to keep him quiet, laughingly promised that she would take him for her husband. This did not satisfy him. She must take her oath upon the Bible to that effect. Mary pretended that there was no bible in the house, but he found an old spelling-book upon a shelf in the kitchen, and upon it he made her swear, and called upon me to bear witness to her oath, and that she was now his betrothed, and he would go next day with her to the “praist.” Poor Mary had reason to repent her frolic, for he stuck close to her the whole evening, tormenting her to fulfill her contract.

After the sun went down, the logging-band came in to supper, which was all ready for them. Those who remained sober ate the meal in peace, and quietly returned to their own homes; while the vicious and the drunken stayed to brawl and fight.

After having placed the supper on the table, I was so tired with the noise, and heat, and fatigue of the day, that I went to bed, leaving to Mary and my husband the care of the guests.

The little bed-chamber was only separated from the kitchen by a few thin boards; and unfortunately for me and the girl, who was soon forced to retreat thither, we could hear all the wickedness and profanity going on in the next room. My husband, disgusted with the scene, soon left it, and retired into the parlour, with the few of the loggers who at that hour remained sober. The house rang with the sound of unhallowed revelry, profane songs and blasphemous swearing. It would have been no hard task to have imagined these miserable, degraded beings fiends instead of men. How glad I was when they at last broke up; and we were once more left in peace to collect to broken glasses and cups, and the scattered fragments of that hateful feast.

We were obliged to endure a second and a third repetition of this odious scene, before sixteen acres of land were rendered fit for the reception of our fall crop of wheat.

My hatred to these tumultuous, disorderly meetings was not in the least decreased by my husband being twice seriously hurt while attending them. After the second injury he received, he seldom went to them himself, but sent his oxen and servant in his place. In these odious gatherings, the sober, moral, and industrious man is more likely to suffer than the drunken and profane, as during the delirium of drink these men expose others to danger as well as themselves.

The conduct of many of the settlers, who considered themselves gentlemen, and would have been very much affronted to have been called otherwise, was often more reprehensible than that of the poor Irish emigrants, to whom they should have set an example of order and sobriety. The behaviour of these young men drew upon them the severe but just censures of the poorer class, whom they regarded in every way as their inferiors.

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“That blackguard calls himself a gentleman. In what respect is he better than us?” was an observation too frequently made use of at these gatherings. To see a bad man in the very worst point of view, follow him to a bee: be he profane, licentious, quarrelsome, or a rogue, all his native wickedness will be fully developed there.

Just after the last of these logging-bees, we had to part with our good servant Mary, and just at a time when it was the heaviest loss to me. Her father, who had been a dairyman in the north of Ireland, an honest, industrious man, had brought out upwards of one hundred pounds to this country. With more wisdom than is generally exercised by Irish emigrants, instead of sinking all his means in buying a bush farm, he hired a very good farm in Cavan, with cattle, and returned to his old avocation. The services of his daughter, who was an excellent dairymaid, were required to take the management of the cows; and her brother brought a wagon and horses all the way from the front to take her home.

This event was perfectly unexpected, and left me without a moment’s notice to provide myself with another servant, at a time when servants were not to be had, and I was perfectly unable to do the least thing. My little Addie was sick almost to death with the summer complaint, and the eldest still too young to take care of herself.

This was but the beginning of trouble.

Ague and lake fever had attacked our new settlement. The men in the shanty were all down with it; and my husband was confined to his bed on each alternate day, unable to raise hand or foot, and raving in the delirium of the fever.

In my sister and brother’s families, scarcely a healthy person remained to attend upon the sick; and at Herriot’s Falls, nine persons were stretched upon the floor of one log cabin, unable to help themselves or one another. After much difficulty, and only by offering enormous wages, I succeeded in procuring a nurse to attend upon me during my confinement. The woman had not been a day in the house before she was attacked by the same fever. In the midst of this confusion, and with my precious little Addie lying insensible on a pillow at the foot of my bed—expected at every moment to breathe her last—on the night of the 26th of August the boy I had so ardently coveted was born. The next day, old Pine carried his wife (my nurse) away upon his back, and I was left to struggle through, in the best manner I could, with a sick husband, a sick child, and a newborn babe.

It was a melancholy season, one of severe mental and bodily suffering. Those who have drawn such agreeable pictures of a residence in the backwoods never dwell upon the periods of sickness, when, far from medical advice, and often, as in my case, deprived of the assistance of friends by adverse circumstances, you are left to languish, unattended, upon the couch of pain.

The day that my husband was free of the fit, he did what he could for me and his poor sick babes, but, ill as he was, he was obliged to sow the wheat to enable the man the proceed with the drag, and was therefore necessarily absent in the field the greater part of the day.

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I was very ill, yet for hours at a time I had no friendly voice to cheer me, to proffer me a drink of cold water, or to attend to the poor babe; and worse, still worse, there was no one to help that pale, marble child, who lay so cold and still, with “half-closed violet eyes,” as if death had already chilled her young heart in his iron grasp.

There was not a breath of air in our close, burning bed-closet; and the weather was sultry beyond all that I have since experienced. How I wished that I could be transported to a hospital at home, to enjoy the common care that in such places is bestowed upon the sick. Bitter tears flowed continually from my eyes over those young children. I had asked of Heaven a son, and there he lay helpless by the side of his almost equally helpless mother, who could not lift him up in her arms, or still his cries; while the pale, fair angel, with her golden curls, who had lately been the admiration of all who saw her, no longer recognized my voice, or was conscious of my presence. I felt that I could almost resign the long and eagerly hoped-for son, to win one more smile from that sweet suffering creature. Often did I weep myself to sleep, and wake to weep again with renewed anguish.

And my poor little Katie, herself under three years of age, how patiently she bore the loss of my care, and every comfort. How earnestly the dear thing strove to help me. She would sit on my sick-bed, and hold my hand, and ask me to look at her and speak to her; would inquire why Addie slept so long, and when she would awake again. Those innocent questions went like arrows to my heart.

Lieutenant ——, the husband of my dear Emilia, at length heard of my situation. His inestimable wife was from home, nursing her sick mother; but he sent his maid-servant up every day for a couple of hours, and the kind girl despatched a messenger nine miles through the woods to Dummer, to fetch her younger sister, a child of twelve years old.

Oh, how grateful I felt for these signal mercies; for my situation for nearly a week was one of the most pitiable that could be imagined. The sickness was so prevalent that help was not to be obtained for money; and without the assistance of that little girl, young as she was, it is more than probable that neither myself nor my children would ever have risen from that bed of sickness.

The conduct of our man Jacob, during this trying period, was marked with the greatest kindness and consideration. On the days that his master was confined to his bed with the fever, he used to place a vessel of cold water and a cup by his bedside, and put his honest English face in at my door to know if he could make a cup of tea, or toast a bit of bread for the mistress, before he went into the field.

Katie was indebted to him for all meals. He baked, and cooked, and churned, milked the cows, and made up the butter, as well and as carefully as the best female servant

could have done. As to poor John Monanghan, he was down with fever in the shanty, where four other men were all ill with the same terrible complaint.

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I was obliged to leave my bed and endeavour to attend to the wants of my young family long before I was really able. When I made my first attempt to reach the parlour I was so weak, that, at every step, I felt as if I should pitch forward to the ground, which seemed to undulate beneath my feet like the floor of a cabin in a storm at sea. My husband continued to suffer for many weeks with the ague; and when he was convalescent, all the children, even the poor babe, were seized with it, nor did it leave us until late in the spring of 1835.

THE EMIGRANT'S FAREWELL

Rise, Mary! meet me on the shore,
And tell our tale of sorrow o'er;
There must we meet to part no more—
  Rise, Mary, rise!

Come, dearest, come! tho' all in vain;
Once more beside you summer main
We'll plight our hopeless vows again—
  Unclose thine eyes.

My bark amidst the surge is toss'd,
I go, by evil fortunes cross'd,
My earthly hopes for ever lost—
  Love's dearest prize.

But when thy hand is clasp'd in mine,
I'll laugh at fortune, nor repine;
In life, in death, for ever thine—
  Then check these sighs.

They move a bosom steel'd to bear
Its own unwonted load of care,
That will not bend beneath despair—
  Rise, dearest, rise.

Life's but a troubled dream at best;
These comes a time when grief shall rest,
Kind, faithful hearts shall yet be bless'd
  'Neath brighter skies!

CHAPTER XVIII

A TRIP TO STONY LAKE

Oh Nature! in thy ever-varying face,
  By rocky shore, or 'neath the forest tree,
What love divine, what matchless skill, I trace!
  My full warm heart responsive thrills to thee.
Yea, in my throbbing bosom's inmost core,
  Thou reign'st supreme; and, in thy sternest mood,
Thy votary bends in rapture to adore
  The Mighty Maker, who pronounced thee good.
Thy broad, majestic brow still bears His seal;
And when I cease to love, oh, may I cease to feel.

My husband had long promised me a trip to Stony Lake, and in the summer of 1835, before the harvest commenced, he gave Mr. Y——, who kept the mill at the rapids below Clear Lake, notice of our intention, and the worthy old man and his family made due preparation for our reception. The little girls were to accompany us.

We were to start at sunrise, to avoid the heat of the day, to go up as far as Mr. Y——'s in our canoe, re-embark with his sons above the rapids in birch-bark canoes, go as far up the lake as we could accomplish by daylight, and return at night; the weather being very warm, and the moon at full. Before six o'clock we were all seated in the little craft, which spread her white sail to a foaming breeze, and sped merrily over the blue waters. The lake on which our clearing stood was about a mile and a half in length, and about three quarters of a mile in breadth; a mere pond, when compared with the Bay of Quinte, Ontario, and the inland seas of Canada. But it was *our* lake, and, consequently, it had ten thousand beauties in our eyes, which would scarcely have attracted the observation of a stranger.

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At the head of the Katchawanook, the lake is divided by a long neck of land, that forms a small bay on the right-hand side, and a very brisk rapid on the left. The banks are formed of large masses of limestone; and the cardinal-flower and the tiger-lily seem to have taken an especial fancy to this spot, and to vie with each other in the display of their gorgeous colours.

It is an excellent place for fishing; the water is very deep close to the rocky pavement that forms the bank, and it has a pebbly bottom. Many a magic hour, at rosy dawn, or evening grey, have I spent with my husband on this romantic spot; our canoe fastened to a bush, and ourselves intent upon ensnaring the black bass, a fish of excellent flavour that abounds in this place.

Our paddles soon carried us past the narrows, and through the rapid water, the children sitting quietly at the bottom of the boat, enchanted with all they heard and saw, begging papa to stop and gather water-lilies, or to catch one of the splendid butterflies that hovered over us; and often the little Addie darted her white hand into the water to grasp at the shadow of the gorgeous insects as they skimmed along the waves.

After passing the rapids, the river widened into another small lake, perfectly round in form, and having in its centre a tiny green island, in the midst of which stood, like a shattered monument of bygone storms, one blasted, black ash-tree.

The Indians call this lake Bessikakoon, but I do not know the exact meaning of the word. Some say that it means “the Indian’s grave,” others “the lake of the one island.” It is certain that an Indian girl is buried beneath that blighted tree; but I never could learn the particulars of her story, and perhaps there was no tale connected with it. She might have fallen a victim to disease during the wanderings of her tribe, and been buried on that spot; or she might have been drowned, which would account for her having been buried away from the rest of her people.

This little lake lies in the heart of the wilderness. There is but one clearing upon its shores, and that had been made by lumberers many years before; the place abounded with red cedar. A second growth of young timber had grown up in this spot, which was covered also with raspberry-bushes—several hundred acres being entirely overgrown with this delicious berry.

It was here annually that we used to come in large picnic parties, to collect this valuable fruit for our winter preserves, in defiance of black-flies, mosquitoes, snakes, and even bears, all which have been encountered by berry-pickers upon this spot, as busy and as active as themselves, gathering an ample repast from Nature’s bounteous lap.

And, oh! what beautiful wild shrubs and flowers grew up in that neglected spot! Some of the happiest hours I spent in the bush are connected with reminiscences of “Irving’s shanty,” for so the raspberry-grounds were called. The clearing could not be seen from

the shore. You had to scramble through a cedar-swamp to reach the sloping ground which produced the berries.

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The mill at the Clear Lake rapids was about three miles distant from our own clearing; and after stemming another rapid, and passing between two beautiful wooded islands, the canoe rounded a point, and the rude structure was before us.

A wilder and more romantic spot than that which the old hunter had chosen for his homestead in the wilderness could scarcely be imagined. The waters of Clear Lake here empty themselves through a narrow, deep, rocky channel, not exceeding a quarter of a mile in length, and tumble over a limestone ridge of ten or twelve feet in height, which extends from one bank of the river to the other. The shores on either side are very steep, and the large oak-trees which have anchored their roots in every crevice of the rock, throw their fantastic arms far over the foaming waterfall, the deep green of their massy foliage forming a beautiful contrast with the white, flashing waters that foam over the shoot at least fifty feet below the brow of the limestone rock. By a flight of steps cut in the banks we ascended to the platform above the river on which Mr. Y——'s house stood.

It was a large, rough-looking, log building, surrounded by barns and sheds of the same primitive material. The porch before the door was covered with hops, and the room of general resort, into which it immediately opened, was of large dimensions, the huge fire-place forming the most striking feature. On the hearth-stone, hot as was the weather, blazed a great fire, encumbered with all sorts of culinary apparatus, which, I am inclined to think, had been called into requisition for our sole benefit and accommodation.

The good folks had breakfasted long before we started from home, but they would not hear of our proceeding to Stony Lake until after we had dined. It was only eight o'clock a.m., and we had still four hours to dinner, which gave us ample leisure to listen to the old man's stories, ramble round the premises, and observe all the striking features of the place.

Mr. Y—— was a Catholic, and the son of a respectable farmer from the south of Ireland. Some few years before, he had emigrated with a large family of seven sons and two daughters, and being fond of field sports, and greatly taken with the beauty of the locality in which he had pitched his tent in the wilderness, he determined to raise a mill upon the dam which Nature had provided to his hands, and wait patiently until the increasing immigration should settle the townships of Smith and Douro, render the property valuable, and bring plenty of grist to the mill.

He was not far wrong in his calculations; and though, for the first few years, he subsisted entirely by hunting, fishing, and raising what potatoes and wheat he required for his own family, on the most fertile spots he could find on his barren lot, very little corn passed through the mill.

At the time we visited his place, he was driving a thriving trade, and all the wheat that was grown in the neighbourhood was brought by water to be ground at Y——'s mill.

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He had lost his wife a few years after coming to the country; but his two daughters, Betty and Norah, were excellent housewives, and amply supplied her loss. From these amiable women we received a most kind and hearty welcome, and every comfort and luxury within their reach.

They appeared a most happy and contented family. The sons—a fine, hardy, independent set of fellows—were regarded by the old man with pride and affection. Many were his anecdotes of their prowess in hunting and fishing.

His method of giving them an aversion to strong drink while very young amused me greatly, but it is not every child that could have stood the test of his experiment.

“When they were little chaps, from five to six years of age, I made them very drunk,” he said; “so drunk that it brought on severe headache and sickness, and this so disgusted them with liquor, that they never could abide the sight of it again. I have only one drunkard among the seven; and he was such a weak, puling crathur, that I dared not try the same game with him, lest it should kill him. ’Tis his nature, I suppose, and he can’t help it; but the truth is, that to make up for the sobriety of all the rest, he is killing himself with drink.”

Norah gave us an account of her catching a deer that had got into the enclosure the day before.

“I went out,” she said, “early in the morning, to milk the cows, and I saw a fine young buck struggling to get through a pale of the fence, in which having entangled his head and horns, I knew, by the desperate efforts he was making to push aside the rails, that if I was not quick in getting hold of him, he would soon be gone.”

“And did you dare to touch him?”

“If I had had Mat’s gun I would have shot him, but he would have made his escape long before I could run to the house for that, so I went boldly up to him and got him by the hind legs; and though he kicked and struggled dreadfully, I held on till Mat heard me call, and ran to my help, and cut his throat with his hunting-knife. So you see,” she continued, with a good-natured laugh, “I can beat our hunters hollow—they hunt the deer, but I can catch a buck with my hands.”

While we were chatting away, great were the preparations making by Miss Betty and a very handsome American woman, who had recently come thither as a help. One little barefooted garsoon was shelling peas in an Indian basket, another was stringing currants into a yellow pie-dish, and a third was sent to the rapids with his rod and line, to procure a dish of fresh fish to add to the long list of bush dainties that were preparing for our dinner.

It was in vain that I begged our kind entertainers not to put themselves to the least trouble on our account, telling them that we were now used to the woods, and contented with anything; they were determined to exhaust all their stores to furnish forth the entertainment. Nor can it be wondered at, that, with so many dishes to cook, and pies and custards to bake, instead of dining at twelve, it was past two o'clock before we were conducted to the dinner-table. I was vexed and disappointed at the delay, as I wanted to see all I could of the spot we were about to visit before night and darkness compelled us to return.

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The feast was spread in a large outhouse, the table being formed of two broad deal boards laid together, and supported by rude carpenter's stools. A white linen cloth, a relic of better days, concealed these arrangements. The board was covered with an indescribable variety of roast and boiled, of fish, flesh, and fowl. My readers should see a table laid out in a wealthy Canadian farmer's house before they can have any idea of the profusion displayed in the entertainment of two visitors and their young children.

Besides venison, pork, chickens, ducks, and fish of several kinds, cooked in a variety of ways, there was a number of pumpkin, raspberry, cherry, and currant pies, with fresh butter and green cheese (as the new cream-cheese is called), molasses, preserves, and pickled cucumbers, besides tea and coffee—the latter, be it known, I had watched the American woman boiling in the frying-pan. It was a black-looking compound, and I did not attempt to discuss its merits. The vessel in which it had been prepared had prejudiced me, and rendered me very sceptical on that score.

We were all very hungry, having tasted nothing since five o'clock in the morning, and contrived, out of the variety of good things before us, to make an excellent dinner.

I was glad, however, when we rose to prosecute our intended trip up the lake. The old man, whose heart was now thoroughly warmed with whiskey, declared that he meant to make one of the party, and Betty, too, was to accompany us; her sister Norah kindly staying behind to take care of the children.

We followed a path along the top of the high ridge of limestone rock, until we had passed the falls and the rapids above, when we found Pat and Mat Y—— waiting for us on the shore below, in two beautiful new birch-bark canoes, which they had purchased the day before from the Indians.

Miss Betty, Mat, and myself, were safely stowed into one, while the old miller, and his son Pat, and my husband, embarked in the other, and our steersmen pushed off into the middle of the deep and silent stream; the shadow of the tall woods, towering so many feet above us, casting an inky hue upon the waters.

The scene was very imposing, and after paddling for a few minutes in shade and silence, we suddenly emerged into light and sunshine, and Clear Lake, which gets its name from the unrivalled brightness of its waters, spread out its azure mirror before us. The Indians regard this sheet of water with peculiar reverence. It abounds in the finest sorts of fish, the salmon-trout, the delicious white fish, maskinonge, and black and white bass. There is no island in this lake, no rice beds, nor stick nor stone to break its tranquil beauty, and, at the time we visited it, there was but one clearing upon its shores.

The log hut of the squatter P——, commanding a beautiful prospect up and down the lake, stood upon a bold slope fronting the water; all the rest was unbroken forest.

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We had proceeded about a mile on our pleasant voyage, when our attention was attracted by a singular natural phenomenon, which Mat Y—— called the battery.

On the right-hand side of the shore rose a steep, perpendicular wall of limestone, that had the appearance of having been laid by the hand of man, so smooth and even was its surface. After attaining a height of about fifty feet, a natural platform of eight or ten yards broke the perpendicular line of the rock, when another wall, like the first, rose to a considerable height, terminating in a second and third platform of the same description.

Fire, at some distant period, had run over these singularly beautiful terraces, and a second growth of poplars and balm-of-gileads, relieved, by their tender green and light, airy foilage, the sombre indigo tint of the heavy pines that nodded like the plumes of a funeral-hearse over the fair young dwellers on the rock.

The water is forty feet deep at the base of this precipice, which is washed by the waves. After we had passed the battery, Mat Y—— turned to me and said, “That is a famous place for bears; many a bear have I shot among those rocks.”

This led to a long discussion on the wild beasts of the country.

“I do not think that there is much danger to be apprehended from them,” said he; “but I once had an ugly adventure with a wolf two winters ago, on this lake.”

I was all curiosity to hear the story, which sounded doubly interesting told on the very spot, and while gliding over those lovely waters.

“We were lumbering at the head of Stony Lake, about eight miles from here, my four brothers, myself, and several other hands. The winter was long and severe; although it was the first week in March, there was not the least appearance of a thaw, and the ice on these lakes was as firm as ever. I had been sent home to fetch a yoke of oxen to draw the saw-logs down to the water, our chopping being all completed, and the logs ready for rafting.

“I did not think it necessary to encumber myself with my rifle, and was, therefore, provided with no weapon of defence but the long gad I used to urge on the cattle. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon when I rounded Sandy Point, that long point which is about a mile a-head of us on the left shore, when I first discovered that I was followed, but at a great distance, by a large wolf. At first, I thought little of the circumstance, beyond a passing wish that I had brought my gun. I knew that he would not attack me before dark, and it was still two long hours to sundown; so I whistled, and urged on my oxen, and soon forgot the wolf—when, on stopping to repair a little damage to the peg of the yoke, I was surprised to find him close at my heels. I turned, and ran towards him, shouting as loud as I could, when he slunk back, but showed no

inclination to make off. Knowing that he must have companions near, by his boldness, I shouted as

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loud as I could, hoping that my cries might be heard by my brothers, who would imagine that the oxen had got into the ice, and would come to my assistance. I was now winding my way through the islands in Stony Lake; the sun was setting red before me, and I had still three miles of my journey to accomplish. The wolf had become so impudent that I kept him off by pelting him with snowballs; and once he came so near that I struck him with the gad. I now began to be seriously alarmed, and from time to time, shouted with all my strength; and you may imagine my joy when these cries were answered by the report of a gun. My brothers had heard me, and the discharge of a gun, for a moment, seemed to daunt the wolf. He uttered a long howl, which was answered by the cries of a large pack of the dirty brutes from the wood. It was only just light enough to distinguish objects, and I had to stop and face my enemy, to keep him at bay.

"I saw the skeleton forms of half-a-dozen more of them slinking among the bushes that skirted a low island; and tired and cold, I gave myself and the oxen up for lost, when I felt the ice tremble on which I stood, and heard men running at a little distance. 'Fire your guns!' I cried out, as loud as I could. My order was obeyed, and such a yelling and howling immediately filled the whole forest as would have chilled your very heart. The thievish varmints instantly fled away into the bush.

"I never felt the least fear of wolves until that night; but when they meet in large bands, like cowardly dogs, they trust to their numbers, and grow fierce. If you meet with one wolf, you may be certain that the whole pack are at no great distance."

We were fast approaching Sandy Point, a long white ridge of sand, running half across the lake, and though only covered with scattered groups of scrubby trees and brush, it effectually screened Stony Lake from our view. There were so many beautiful flowers peeping through the dwarf, green bushes, that, wishing to inspect them nearer, Mat kindly ran the canoe ashore, and told me that he would show me a pretty spot, where an Indian, who had been drowned during a storm off that point, was buried. I immediately recalled the story of Susan Moore's father, but Mat thought that he was interred upon one of the islands farther up.

"It is strange," he said, "that they are such bad swimmers. The Indian, though unrivalled by us whites in the use of the paddle, is an animal that does not take readily to the water, and those among them who can swim seldom use it as a recreation."

Pushing our way through the bushes, we came to a small opening in the underwood, so thickly grown over with wild Canadian roses in full blossom, that the air was impregnated with a delightful odour. In the centre of this bed of sweets rose the humble mound that protected the bones of the red man from the ravenous jaws of the wolf and the wild cat. It was completely covered with stones, and from among the crevices had

sprung a tuft of blue harebells, waving as wild and free as if they grew among the bonny red heather on the glorious hills of the North, or shook their tiny bells to the breeze on the broom-encircled commons of England.

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The harebell had always from a child been with me a favourite flower; and the first sight of it in Canada, growing upon that lonely grave, so flooded my soul with remembrances of the past, that, in spite of myself, the tears poured freely from my eyes. There are moments when it is impossible to repress those outgushings of the heart—

"Those flood-gates of the soul that sever,
In passion's tide to part for ever."

If Mat and his sister wondered at my tears, they must have suspected the cause, for they walked to a little distance, and left me to the indulgence of my feelings. I gathered those flowers, and placed them in my bosom, and kept them for many a day; they had become holy, when connected with sacred home recollections, and the never-dying affections of the heart which the sight of them recalled.

A shout from our companions in the other canoe made us retrace our steps to the shore. They had already rounded the point, and were wondering at our absence.

Oh, what a magnificent scene of wild and lonely grandeur burst upon us as we swept round the little peninsula, and the whole majesty of Stony Lake broke upon us at once; another Lake of the Thousand Isles, in miniature, and in the heart of the wilderness! Imagine a large sheet of water, some fifteen miles in breadth and twenty-five in length, taken up by islands of every size and shape, from the lofty naked rock of red granite to the rounded hill, covered with oak-trees to its summit; while others were level with the waters, and of a rich emerald green, only fringed with a growth of aquatic shrubs and flowers. Never did my eyes rest on a more lovely or beautiful scene. Not a vestige of man, or of his works, was there. The setting sun that cast such a gorgeous flood of light upon this exquisite panorama, bringing out some of these lofty islands in strong relief, and casting others into intense shade, shed no cheery beam upon church spire or cottage pane. We beheld the landscape, savage and grand in its primeval beauty.

As we floated among the channels between these rocky picturesque isles, I asked Mat how many of them there were.

"I never could succeed," he said, "in counting them all. One Sunday Pat and I spent a whole day in going from one to the other, to try and make out how many there were, but we could only count up to one hundred and forty before we gave up the task in despair. There are a great many of them; more than any one would think—and, what is very singular, the channel between them is very deep, sometimes above forty feet, which accounts for the few rapids to be found in this lake. It is a glorious place for hunting; and the waters, undisturbed by steam-boats, abound in all sorts of fish.

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“Most of these islands are covered with huckleberries; while grapes, high and low-bush cranberries, blackberries, wild cherries, gooseberries, and several sorts of wild currants grow here in profusion. There is one island among these groups (but I never could light upon the identical one) where the Indians yearly gather their wampum-grass. They come here to collect the best birch-bark for their canoes, and to gather wild onions. In short, from the game, fish, and fruit which they collect among the islands of this lake, they chiefly depend for their subsistence. They are very jealous of the settlers in the country coming to hunt and fish here, and tell many stories of wild beasts and rattlesnakes that abound along its shores, but I, who have frequented the lake for years, was never disturbed by anything, beyond the adventure with the wolf, which I have already told you. The banks of this lake are all steep and rocky, and the land along the shore is barren, and totally unfit for cultivation.

“Had we time to run up a few miles further, I could have showed you some places well worth a journey to look at; but the sun is already down, and it will be dark before we get back to the mill.”

The other canoe now floated alongside, and Pat agreed with his brother that it was high time to return. With reluctance I turned from this strangely fascinating scene. As we passed under one bold rocky island, Mat said, laughingly, “That is Mount Rascal.”

“How did it obtain that name?”

“Oh, we were out here berrying, with our good priest, Mr. B——. This island promised so fair, that we landed upon it, and, after searching for an hour, we returned to the boat without a single berry, upon which Mr. B—— named it ‘Mount Rascal.’”

The island was so beautiful, it did not deserve the name, and I christened it “Oak Hill,” from the abundance of oak-trees which clothed its steep sides. The wood of this oak is so heavy and hard that it will not float in the water, and it is in great request for the runners of lumber-sleighs, which have to pass over very bad roads.

The breeze, which had rendered our sail up the lakes so expeditious and refreshing, had stiffened into a pretty high wind, which was dead against us all the way down. Betty now knelt in the bow and assisted her brother, squaw fashion, in paddling the canoe; but, in spite of all their united exertions, it was past ten o’clock before we reached the mill. The good Norah was waiting tea for us. She had given the children their supper four hours ago, and the little creatures, tired with using their feet all day, were sound asleep upon her bed.

After supper, several Irish songs were sung, while Pat played upon the fiddle, and Betty and Mat enlivened the company with an Irish jig.

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It was midnight when the children were placed on my cloak at the bottom of the canoe, and we bade adieu to this hospitable family. The wind being dead against us, we were obliged to dispense with the sail, and take to our paddles. The moonlight was as bright as day, the air warm and balmy; and the aromatic, resinous smell exuded by the heat from the balm-of-gilead and the pine-trees in the forest, added greatly to our sense of enjoyment as we floated past scenes so wild and lonely—isles that assumed a mysterious look and character in that witching hour. In moments like these, I ceased to regret my separation from my native land; and, filled with the love of Nature, my heart forgot for the time the love of home. The very spirit of peace seemed to brood over the waters, which were broken into a thousand ripples of light by every breeze that stirred the rice blossoms, or whispered through the shivering aspen-trees. The far-off roar of the rapids, softened by distance, and the long, mournful cry of the night-owl, alone broke the silence of the night. Amid these lonely wilds the soul draws nearer to God, and is filled to overflowing by the overwhelming sense of His presence.

It was two o'clock in the morning when we fastened the canoe to the landing, and Moodie carried up the children to the house. I found the girl still up with my boy, who had been very restless during our absence. My heart reproached me, as I caught him to my breast, for leaving him so long; in a few minutes he was consoled for past sorrows, and sleeping sweetly in my arms.

A CANADIAN SONG

Come, launch the light canoe;
The breeze is fresh and strong;
The summer skies are blue,
And 'tis joy to float along;
Away o'er the waters,
The bright-glancing waters,
The many-voiced waters,
As they dance in light and song.

When the great Creator spoke,
On the long unmeasured night
The living day-spring broke,
And the waters own'd His might;
The voice of many waters,
Of glad, rejoicing waters,
Of living, leaping waters,
First hailed the dawn of light.

Where foaming billows glide
To earth's remotest bound;

The rushing ocean tide
  Rolls on the solemn sound;
    God’s voice is in the waters;
    The deep, mysterious waters,
    The sleepless, dashing waters,
  Still breathe its tones around.

CHAPTER XIX

The “Ould dhragoon”

[I am indebted to my husband for this sketch.]

Behold that man, with lanky locks,
Which hang in strange confusion o’er his brow;
And nicely scan his garments, rent and patch’d,
In colours varied, like a pictured map;
And watch his restless glance—now grave, now gay—
As saddening thought, or merry humour’s

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flash
  Sweeps o’er the deep-mark’d lines which care hath left;
  As when the world is steep’d in blackest night,
  The forked lightning flashes through the sky,
  And all around leaps into life and light,
  To sink again in darkness blacker still.
  Yes! look upon that face lugubrious, long,
  As thoughtfully he stands with folded arms
  Amid his realm of charr’d and spectral stumps,
  Which once were trees, but now, with sprawling roots,
  Cling to the rocks which peep above the soil.
  Ay! look again,
  And say if you discern the faintest trace
  Of warrior bold;—the gait erect and proud,
  The steady glance that speaks the fearless soul,
  Watchful and prompt to do what man can do
  When duty calls. All wreck’d and reckless now;—
  But let the trumpet’s soul-inspiring sound
  Wake up the brattling echoes of the woods,
  Then watch his kindling eye—his eagle glance—
  While thoughts of glorious fields, and battles won,
  And visions bright of joyous, hopeful youth
  Sweep o’er his soul. A soldier now once more—
  Touch’d by the magic sound, he rears his head,
  Responsive to the well-known martial note,
  And stands again a hero ’mid his rags.

It is delightful to observe a feeling of contentment under adverse circumstances. We may smile at the rude and clumsy attempts of the remote and isolated backwoodsman to attain something like comfort, but happy he who, with the buoyant spirits of the light-hearted Irishman, contrives to make himself happy even when all others would be miserable.

A certain degree of dissatisfaction with our present circumstances is necessary to stimulate us to exertion, and thus to enable us to secure future comfort; but where the delusive prospect of future happiness is too remote for any reasonable hope of ultimate attainment, then surely it is true wisdom to make the most of the present, and to cultivate a spirit of happy contentment with the lot assigned to us by Providence.

“Ould Simpson,” or the “Ould Dhragoon,” as he was generally called, was a good sample of this happy character; and I shall proceed to give the reader a sketch of his history, and a description of his establishment. He was one of that unfortunate class of

discharged soldiers who are tempted to sell their pensions often far below their true value, for the sake of getting a lot of land in some remote settlement, where it is only rendered valuable by the labour of the settler, and where they will have the unenviable privilege of expending the last remains of their strength in clearing a patch of land for the benefit of some grasping storekeeper who has given them credit while engaged in the work.

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The old dragoon had fixed his abode on the verge of an extensive beaver-meadow, which was considered a sort of natural curiosity in the neighbourhood; and where he managed, by cutting the rank grass in the summer time, to support several cows, which afforded the chief subsistence of his family. He had also managed, with the assistance of his devoted partner, Judy, to clear a few acres of poor rocky land on the sloping margin of the level meadow, which he planted year after year with potatoes. Scattered over this small clearing, here and there might be seen the but-end of some half-burnt hemlock tree, which had escaped the general combustion of the log heaps, and now formed a striking contrast to the white limestone rocks which showed their rounded surfaces above the meagre soil.

The “ould dhragoon” seemed, moreover, to have some taste for the picturesque, and by way of ornament, had left standing sundry tall pines and hemlocks neatly girdled to destroy their foliage, the shade of which would have been detrimental to the “blessed praties” which he designed to grow in his clearing, but which, in the meantime, like martyrs at the stake, stretched their naked branches imploringly towards the smiling heavens. As he was a kind of hermit, from choice, and far removed from other settlers, whose assistance is so necessary in new settlements, old Simpson was compelled to resort to the most extraordinary contrivances while clearing his land. Thus, after felling the trees, instead of chopping them into lengths, for the purpose of facilitating the operation of piling them preparatory to burning, which would have cost him too much labour, he resorted to the practice of “niggering,” as it is called; which is simply laying light pieces of round timber across the trunks of the trees, and setting fire to them at the point of contact, by which means the trees are slowly burned through.

It was while busily engaged in this interesting operation that I first became acquainted with the subject of this sketch.

Some twenty or thirty little fires were burning briskly in different parts of the blackened field, and the old fellow was watching the slow progress of his silent “niggers,” and replacing them from time to time as they smouldered away. After threading my way among the uncouth logs, blazing and smoking in all directions, I encountered the old man, attired in an old hood, or bonnet, of his wife Judy, with his patched canvas trousers rolled up to his knees; one foot bare, and the other furnished with an old boot, which from its appearance had once belonged to some more aristocratic foot. His person was long, straight, and sinewy, and there was a light springiness and elasticity in his step which would have suited a younger man, as he skipped along with a long handspike over his shoulder. He was singing a stave from the “Enniskillen Dragoon” when I came up with him.

“With his silver-mounted pistols, and his long carbine,
Long life to the brave Inniskillen dragoon.”

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His face would have been one of the most lugubrious imaginable, with his long, tangled hair hanging confusedly over it, in a manner which has been happily compared to a “bewitched haystack,” had it not been for a certain humorous twitch or convulsive movement, which affected one side of his countenance, whenever any droll idea passed through his mind. It was with a twitch of this kind, and a certain indescribable twinkle of his somewhat melancholy eye, as he seemed intuitively to form a hasty conception of the oddity of his appearance to a stranger unused to the bush, that he welcomed me to his clearing. He instantly threw down his handspike, and leaving his “niggers” to finish their work at their leisure, insisted on our going to his house to get something to drink.

On the way, I explained to him the object of my visit, which was to mark out, or “blaze,” the sidelines of a lot of land I had received as part of a military grant, immediately adjoining the beaver-meadow, and I asked him to accompany me, as he was well acquainted with the different lots.

“Och! by all manner of manes, and welcome; the dhevil a foot of the way but I know as well as my own clearing; but come into the house, and get a dhrink of milk, an’ a bite of bread an’ butther, for sorrow a dhrop of the whiskey has crossed my teeth for the last month; an’ it’s but poor intertainment for man or baste I can offer you, but shure you’re heartily welcome.”

The precincts of the homestead were divided and subdivided into an infinity of enclosures, of all shapes and sizes. The outer enclosure was a bush fence, formed of trees felled on each other in a row, and the gaps filled up with brushwood. There was a large gate, swung with wooden hinges, and a wooden latch to fasten it; the smaller enclosures were made with round poles, tied together with bark. The house was of the rudest description of “shanty,” with hollowed basswood logs, fitting into each other somewhat in the manner of tiles for a roof, instead of shingles. No iron was to be seen, in the absence of which there was plenty of leathern hinges, wooden latches for locks, and bark-strings instead of nails. There was a large fireplace at one end of the shanty, with a chimney, constructed of split laths, plastered with a mixture of clay and cowdung. As for windows, these were luxuries which could well be dispensed with; the open door was an excellent substitute for them in the daytime, and at night none were required. When I ventured to object to this arrangement, that he would have to keep the door shut in the winter time, the old man replied, in the style so characteristic of his country, “Shure it will be time enough to think of that when the could weather sets in.” Everything about the house wore a Robinson Crusoe aspect, and though there was not any appearance of original plan or foresight, there was no lack of ingenious contrivance to meet every want as it arose.

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Judy dropped us a low curtsey as we entered, which was followed by a similar compliment from a stout girl of twelve, and two or three more of the children, who all seemed to share the pleasure of their parents in receiving strangers in their unpretending tenement. Many were the apologies that poor Judy offered for the homely cheer she furnished us, and great was her delight at the notice we took of the "childher." She set little Biddy, who was the pride of her heart, to reading the Bible; and she took down a curious machine from a shelf, which she had "conthrived out of her own head," as she said, for teaching the children to read. This was a flat box, or frame, filled with sand, which saved paper, pens, and ink. Poor Judy had evidently seen better days, but, with a humble and contented spirit, she blessed God for the food and scanty raiment their labour afforded them. Her only sorrow was the want of "idication" for the children.

She would have told us a long story about her trials and sufferings, before they had attained their present comparative comfort and independence, but, as we had a tedious scramble before us, through cedar-swamps, beaver-meadows, and piny ridges, the "ould dhragoon" cut her short, and we straightway started on our toilsome journey.

Simpson, in spite of a certain dash of melancholy in his composition, was one of those happy fellows of the "light heart and thin pair of breeches" school, who, when they meet with difficulty or misfortune, never stop to measure its dimensions, but hold in their breath, and run lightly over, as in crossing a bog, where to stand still is to sink.

Off, then, we went, with the "ould dhragoon" skipping and bounding on before us, over fallen trees and mossy rocks; now ducking under the low, tangled branches of the white cedar, then carefully piloting us along rotten logs, covered with green moss, to save us from the discomfort of wet feet. All this time he still kept one of his feet safely ensconced in the boot, while the other seemed to luxuriate in the water, as if there was something amphibious in his nature.

We soon reached the beaver-meadow, which extended two or three miles; sometimes contracting into a narrow gorge, between the wooded heights, then spreading out again into an ample field of verdure, and presenting everywhere the same unvarying level surface, surrounded with rising grounds, covered with the dense unbroken forest, as if its surface had formerly been covered by the waters of a lake; which in all probability has been the case at some not very remote period. In many places the meadow was so wet that it required a very large share of faith to support us in passing over its surface; but our friend, the dragoon, soon brought us safe through all dangers to a deep ditch, which he had dug to carry off the superfluous water from the part of the meadow which he owned. When we had obtained firm footing on the opposite side, we sat down to rest ourselves before commencing the operation of "blazing," or marking the trees with our axes, along the side-line of my lot. Here the mystery of the boot was explained. Simpson very coolly took it off from the hitherto favoured foot, and drew it on the other.

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He was not a bit ashamed of his poverty, and candidly owned that this was the only boot he possessed, and he was desirous of giving each of his feet fair play.

Nearly the whole day was occupied in completing our job, in which the “dhragoon” assisted us, with the most hearty good-will, enlivening us with his inexhaustible fund of good-humour and drollery. It was nearly dark when we got back to his “shanty,” where the kind-hearted Judy was preparing a huge pot of potatoes and other “combustibles,” as Simpson called the other eatables, for our entertainment.

Previous to starting on our surveying expedition, we had observed Judy very earnestly giving some important instructions to one of her little boys, on whom she seemed to be most seriously impressing the necessity of using the utmost diligence. The happy contentment which now beamed in poor Judy’s still comely countenance bespoke the success of the messenger. She could not “call up spirits from the vasty deep” of the cellar, but she had procured some whiskey from her next-door neighbour—some five or six miles off, and there it stood somewhat ostentatiously on the table in a “greybeard,” with a “corn cob,” or ear of Indian corn, stripped of its grain, for a cork, smiling most benevolently on the family circle, and looking a hundred welcomes to the strangers.

An indescribably enlivening influence seemed to exude from every pore of that homely earthen vessel, diffusing mirth and good-humour in all directions. The old man jumped and danced about on the rough floor of the “shanty”; and the children sat giggling and nudging each other in a corner, casting a timid look, from time to time, at their mother, for fear she might check them for being “over bould.”

“Is it crazy ye are intirely, ye ould omadhawn!” said Judy, whose notions of propriety were somewhat shocked with the undignified levity of her partner; “the likes of you I never seed; ye are too foolidge intirely. Have done now wid your diviltries, and set the stools for the gintlemens, while I get the supper for yes.”

Our plentiful though homely meal was soon discussed, for hunger, like a good conscience, can laugh at luxury; and the “greybeard” made its appearance, with the usual accompaniments of hot water and maple sugar, which Judy had scraped from the cake, and placed in a saucer on the table before us.

The “ould dhragoon,” despising his wife’s admonitions, gave way freely to his feelings, and knew no bounds to his hilarity. He laughed and joked, and sang snatches of old songs picked up in the course of his service at home and abroad. At length Judy, who looked on him as a “raal janius,” begged him to “sing the gintlemens the song he made when he first came to the counthry.” Of course we ardently seconded the motion, and nothing loth, the old man, throwing himself back on his stool, and stretching out his long neck, poured forth the following ditty, with which I shall conclude my hasty sketch of the “ould dhragoon":—

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Och! it’s here I’m intirely contínted,
  In the wild woods of swate ’Mericay;
God’s blessing on him that invínted
  Big ships for our crossing the say!

Here praties grow bigger nor turnips;
  And though cruel hard is our work,
In ould Ireland we’d nothing but praties,
  But here we have praties and pork.

I live on the banks of a meadow,
  Now see that my maning you take;
It bates all the bogs of ould Ireland—
  Six months in the year it’s a lake.

Bad luck to the beavers that dammed it!
  I wish them all kilt for their pains;
For shure though the craters are clever,
  Tis sartin they’ve drown’d my domains.

I’ve built a log hut of the timber
  That grows on my charmin’ estate;
And an illigant root-house erected,
  Just facing the front of my gate.

And I’ve made me an illigant pig-sty,
  Well litter’d wid straw and wid hay;
And it’s there, free from noise of the chilther,
  I sleep in the heat of the day.

It’s there I’m intirely at aise, sir,
  And enjoy all the comforts of home;
I stretch out my legs as I plase, sir,
  And dhrame of the pleasures to come.

Shure, it’s pleasant to hear the frogs croakin’,
  When the sun’s going down in the sky,
And my Judy sits quietly smokin’
  While the praties are boil’d till they’re dhry.

Och! thin, if you love indepindence,
  And have money your passage to pay,
You must quit the ould counthry intirely,
  And start in the middle of May.

J.W.D.M.

CHAPTER XX

DISAPPOINTED HOPES

Stern Disappointment, in thy iron grasp
The soul lies stricken. So the timid deer,
Who feels the foul fangs of the felon wolf
Clench'd in his throat, grown desperate for life,
Turns on his foes, and battles with the fate
That hems him in—and only yields in death.

The summer of '35 was very wet; a circumstance so unusual in Canada that I have seen no season like it during my sojourn in the country. Our wheat crop promised to be both excellent and abundant; and the clearing and seeding sixteen acres, one way or another, had cost us more than fifty pounds, still, we hoped to realise something handsome by the sale of the produce; and, as far as appearances went, all looked fair. The rain commenced about a week before the crop was fit for the sickle, and from that time until nearly the end of September was a mere succession of thunder showers; days of intense heat, succeeded by floods of rain. Our fine crop shared the fate of all other fine crops in the country; it was totally spoiled; the wheat grew in the sheaf, and we could scarcely save enough to supply us with bad, sticky bread; the rest was exchanged at the distillery for whiskey, which was the only produce which could be obtained for it. The storekeepers would not look at it, or give either money or goods for such a damaged article.

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My husband and I had worked hard in the field; it was the first time I had ever tried my hand at field-labour, but our ready money was exhausted, and the steam-boat stock had not paid us one farthing; we could not hire, and there was no help for it. I had a hard struggle with my pride before I would consent to render the least assistance on the farm, but reflection convinced me that I was wrong—that Providence had placed me in a situation where I was called upon to work—that it was not only my duty to obey that call, but to exert myself to the utmost to assist my husband, and help to maintain my family.

Ah, glorious poverty! thou art a hard taskmaster, but in thy soul-ennobling school, I have received more godlike lessons, have learned more sublime truths, than ever I acquired in the smooth highways of the world!

The independent in soul can rise above the seeming disgrace of poverty, and hold fast their integrity, in defiance of the world and its selfish and unwise maxims. To them, no labour is too great, no trial too severe; they will unflinchingly exert every faculty of mind and body, before they will submit to become a burden to others.

The misfortunes that now crowded upon us were the result of no misconduct or extravagance on our part, but arose out of circumstances which we could not avert nor control. Finding too late the error into which we had fallen, in suffering ourselves to be cajoled and plundered out of our property by interested speculators, we braced our minds to bear the worst, and determined to meet our difficulties calmly and firmly, nor suffer our spirits to sink under calamities which energy and industry might eventually repair. Having once come to this resolution, we cheerfully shared together the labours of the field. One in heart and purpose, we dared remain true to ourselves, true to our high destiny as immortal creatures, in our conflict with temporal and physical wants.

We found that manual toil, however distasteful to those unaccustomed to it, was not after all such a dreadful hardship; that the wilderness was not without its rose, the hard face of poverty without its smile. If we occasionally suffered severe pain, we as often experienced great pleasure, and I have contemplated a well-hoed ridge of potatoes on that bush farm, with as much delight as in years long past I had experienced in examining a fine painting in some well-appointed drawing-room.

I can now look back with calm thankfulness on that long period of trial and exertion—-with thankfulness that the dark clouds that hung over us, threatening to blot us from existence, when they did burst upon us, were full of blessings. When our situation appeared perfectly desperate, then were we on the threshold of a new state of things, which was born out of that very distress.

In order to more fully illustrate the necessity of a perfect and child-like reliance upon the mercies of God—who, I most firmly believe, never deserts those who have placed their trust in Him—I will give a brief sketch of our lives during the years 1836 and 1837.

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Still confidently expecting to realise an income, however small, from the steam-boat stock, we had involved ourselves considerably in debt, in order to pay our servants and obtain the common necessaries of life; and we owed a large sum to two Englishmen in Dummer, for clearing ten more acres upon the farm. Our utter inability to meet these demands weighed very heavily upon my husband's mind. All superfluities in the way of groceries were now given up, and we were compelled to rest satisfied upon the produce of the farm. Milk, bread, and potatoes during the summer became our chief, and often for months, our only fare. As to tea and sugar, they were luxuries we could not think of, although I missed the tea very much; we rang the changes upon peppermint and sage, taking the one herb at our breakfast, the other at our tea, until I found an excellent substitute for both in the root of the dandelion.

The first year we came to this country, I met with an account of dandelion coffee, published in the New York Albion, given by a Dr. Harrison, of Edinburgh, who earnestly recommended it as an article of general use.

"It possesses," he says, "all the fine flavour and exhilarating properties of coffee, without any of its deleterious effects. The plant being of a soporific nature, the coffee made from it when drank at night produces a tendency to sleep, instead of exciting wakefulness, and may be safely used as a cheap and wholesome substitute for the Arabian berry, being equal in substance and flavour to the best Mocha coffee."

I was much struck with this paragraph at the time, and for several years felt a great inclination to try the Doctor's coffee; but something or other always came in the way, and it was put off till another opportunity. During the fall of '35, I was assisting my husband in taking up a crop of potatoes in the field, and observing a vast number of fine dandelion roots among the potatoes, it brought the dandelion coffee back to my memory, and I determined to try some for our supper. Without saying anything to my husband, I threw aside some of the roots, and when we left work, collecting a sufficient quantity for the experiment, I carefully washed the roots quite clean, without depriving them of the fine brown skin which covers them, and which contains the aromatic flavour, which so nearly resembles coffee that it is difficult to distinguish it from it while roasting.

I cut my roots into small pieces, the size of a kidney-bean, and roasted them on an iron baking-pan in the stove-oven, until they were as brown and crisp as coffee. I then ground and transferred a small cupful of the powder to the coffee-pot, pouring upon it scalding water, and boiling it for a few minutes briskly over the fire. The result was beyond my expectations. The coffee proved excellent—far superior to the common coffee we procured at the stores.

To persons residing in the bush, and to whom tea and coffee are very expensive articles of luxury, the knowledge of this valuable property of a plant scattered so abundantly through their fields, would prove highly beneficial. For years we used no other article;

and my Indian friends who frequented the house gladly adopted the root, and made me show them the whole process of manufacturing it into coffee.

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Experience taught me that the root of the dandelion is not so good when applied to this purpose in the spring as it is in the fall. I tried it in the spring, but the juice of the plant, having contributed to the production of leaves and flowers, was weak, and destitute of the fine bitter flavour so peculiar to coffee. The time of gathering the potato crop is the best suited for collecting and drying the roots of the dandelion; and as they always abound in the same hills, both may be accomplished at the same time. Those who want to keep a quantity for winter use may wash and cut up the roots, and dry them on boards in the sun. They will keep for years, and can be roasted when required.

Few of our colonists are acquainted with the many uses to which this neglected but most valuable plant may be applied. I will point out a few which have come under my own observation, convinced as I am that the time will come when this hardy weed, with its golden flowers and curious seed-vessels, which form a constant plaything to the little children rolling about and luxuriating among the grass, in the sunny month of May, will be transplanted into our gardens, and tended with due care.

The dandelion planted in trenches, and blanched to a beautiful cream-colour with straw, makes an excellent salad, quite equal to endive, and is more hardy and requires less care.

In many parts of the United States, particularly in new districts where vegetables are scarce, it is used early in the spring, and boiled with pork as a substitute for cabbage. During our residence in the bush we found it, in the early part of May, a great addition to the dinner-table. In the township of Dummer, the settlers boil the tops, and add hops to the liquor, which they ferment, and from which they obtain excellent beer. I have never tasted this simple beverage, but I have been told by those who use it that it is equal to the table-beer used at home.

Necessity has truly been termed the mother of invention, for I contrived to manufacture a variety of dishes almost out of nothing, while living in her school. When entirely destitute of animal food, the different variety of squirrels supplied us with pies, stews, and roasts. Our barn stood at the top of the hill near the bush, and in a trap set for such “small deer,” we often caught from ten to twelve a day.

The flesh of the black squirrel is equal to that of the rabbit, and the red, and even the little chipmunk, is palatable when nicely cooked. But from the lake, during the summer, we derived the larger portion of our food. The children called this piece of water “Mamma’s pantry”; and many a good meal has the munificent Father given to his poor dependent children from its well-stored depths. Moodie and I used to rise at daybreak, and fish for an hour after sunrise, when we returned, he to the field, and I to dress the little ones, clean up the house, assist with the milk, and prepare the breakfast.

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Oh, how I enjoyed these excursions on the lake; the very idea of our dinner depending upon our success added double zest to our sport!

One morning we started as usual before sunrise; a thick mist still hung like a fine veil upon the water when we pushed off, and anchored at our accustomed place. Just as the sun rose, and the haze parted and drew up like a golden sheet of transparent gauze, through which the dark woods loomed out like giants, a noble buck dashed into the water, followed by four Indian hounds.

We then discovered a canoe, full of Indians, just below the rapids, and another not many yards from us, that had been concealed by the fog. It was a noble sight, that gallant deer exerting all his energy, and stemming the water with such matchless grace, his branching horns held proudly aloft, his broad nostrils distended, and his fine eye fixed intently upon the opposite shore. Several rifle-balls whizzed past him, the dogs followed hard upon his track, but my very heart leaped for joy when, in spite of all his foes, his glossy hoofs spurned the opposite bank and he plunged headlong into the forest.

My beloved partner was most skilful in trolling for bass and maskinonge. His line he generally fastened to the paddle, and the motion of the oar gave a life-like vibration to the queer-looking mice and dragon-flies I used to manufacture from squirrel fur, or scarlet and white cloth, to tempt the finny wanderers of the wave.

When too busy himself to fish for our meals, little Katie and I ventured out alone in the canoe, which we anchored in any promising fishing spot, by fastening a harrow tooth to a piece of rope, and letting it drop from the side of little vessel. By the time she was five years old, my little mermaid could both steer and paddle the light vessel, and catch small fish, which were useful for soup.

During the winter of ’36, we experienced many privations. The ruffian squatter P——, from Clear Lake, drove from the barn a fine young bull we were rearing, and for several weeks all trace of the animal was lost. We had almost forgotten the existence of poor Whiskey, when a neighbor called and told Moodie that his yearling was at P——’s, and that he would advise him to get it back as soon as possible.

Moodie had to take some wheat to Y——’s mill, and as the squatter lived only a mile further, he called at his house; and there, sure enough, he found the lost animal. With the greatest difficulty he succeeded in regaining his property, but not without many threats of vengeance from the parties who had stolen it. To these he paid no regard; but a few days after, six fat hogs, on which we depended for all our winter store of animal food, were driven into the lake, and destroyed.

The death of these animals deprived us of three barrels of pork, and half-starved us through the winter. That winter of ’36, how heavily it wore away! The grown flour,

frosted potatoes, and scant quantity of animal food rendered us all weak, and the children suffered much from the ague.

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One day, just before the snow fell, Moodie had gone to Peterborough for letters; our servant was sick in bed with the ague, and I was nursing my little boy, Dunbar, who was shaking with the cold fit of his miserable fever, when Jacob put his honest, round, rosy face in at the door.

“Give me the master’s gun, ma’am; there’s a big buck feeding on the rice-bed near the island.”

I took down the gun, saying, “Jacob, you have no chance; there is but one charge of buck-shot in the house.”

“One chance is better nor none,” said Jacob, as he commenced loading the gun. “Who knows what may happen to oie? Mayhap oie may chance to kill ’un; and you and the measter and the wee bairns may have zummut zavory for zupper yet.”

Away walked Jacob with Moodie’s “Manton” over his shoulder. A few minutes after, I heard the report of the gun, but never expected to see anything of the game; when Jacob suddenly bounced into the room, half-wild with delight.

“Thae beast iz dead az a door-nail. Zure, how the measter will laugh when he zees the fine buck that oie a’zhot.”

“And have you really shot him?”

“Come and zee! ’Tis worth your while to walk down to the landing to look at ’un.”

Jacob got a rope, and I followed him to the landing, where, sure enough, lay a fine buck, fastened in tow of the canoe. Jacob soon secured him by the hind legs to the rope he had brought; and, with our united efforts, we at last succeeded in dragging our prize home. All the time he was engaged in taking off the skin, Jacob was anticipating the feast that we were to have; and the good fellow chuckled with delight when he hung the carcass quite close to the kitchen door, that his “measter” might run against it when he came home at night. This event actually took place. When Moodie opened the door, he struck his head against the dead deer.

“What have you got here?”

“A fine buck, zur,” said Jacob, bringing forward the light, and holding it up in such a manner that all the merits of the prize could be seen at a glance.

“A fine one, indeed! How did we come by it?”

“It was zhot by oie,” said Jacob, rubbing his hands in a sort of ecstacy. “Thae beast iz the first oie ever zhot in my life. He! he! he!”

“You shot that fine deer, Jacob?—and there was only one charge in the gun! Well done; you must have taken good aim.”

“Why, zur, oie took no aim at all. Oie just pointed the gun at the deer, and zhut my oeys an let fly at ’un. ’Twas Providence kill’d ’un, not oie.”

“I believe you,” said Moodie; “Providence has hitherto watched over us and kept us from actual starvation.”

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The flesh of the deer, and the good broth that I was able to obtain from it, greatly assisted in restoring our sick to health; but long before that severe winter terminated we were again out of food. Mrs. —— had given to Katie, in the fall, a very pretty little pig, which she had named Spot. The animal was a great favorite with Jacob and the children, and he always received his food from their hands at the door, and followed them all over the place like a dog. We had a noble hound called Hector, between whom and the pet pig there existed the most tender friendship. Spot always shared with Hector the hollow log which served him for a kennel, and we often laughed to see Hector lead Spot round the clearing by his ear. After bearing the want of animal food until our souls sickened at the bad potatoes and grown flour bread, we began—that is the elders of the family—to cast very hungry eyes upon Spot; but no one liked to propose having him killed. At last Jacob spoke his mind upon the subject.

“Oi’ve heard, zur, that the Jews never eat pork; but we Christians dooz, and are right glad ov the chance. Now, zur, oi’ve been thinking that ’tis no manner ov use our keeping that beast Spot. If he wor a zow, now, there might be zome zenze in the thing; and we all feel weak for a morzel of meat. S’poze I kill him? He won’t make a bad piece of pork.”

Moodie seconded the move; and, in spite of the tears and prayers of Katie, her uncouth pet was sacrificed to the general wants of the family; but there were two members of the house who disdained to eat a morsel of the victim; poor Katie and the dog Hector. At the self-denial of the first I did not at all wonder, for she was a child full of sensibility and warm affections, but the attachment of the brute creature to his old playmate filled us all with surprise. Jacob first drew our attention to the strange fact.

“That dog,” he said, as we were passing through the kitchen while he was at dinner, “do teach uz Christians a lesson how to treat our friends. Why, zur, he’ll not eat a morzel of Spot. Oie have tried and tempted him in all manner ov ways, and he only do zneer and turn up his nose when oie hould him a bit to taste.” He offered the animal a rib of the fresh pork as he finished speaking, and the dog turned away with an expression of aversion, and on a repetition of the act, walked from the table.

Human affection could scarcely have surpassed the love felt by this poor animal for his playfellow. His attachment to Spot, that could overcome the pangs of hunger—for, like the rest of us, he was half-starved—must have been strong indeed.

Jacob’s attachment to us, in its simplicity and fidelity, greatly resembled that of the dog; and sometimes, like the dog, he would push himself in where he was not wanted, and gratuitously give his advice, and make remarks which were not required.

Mr. K——, from Cork, was asking Moodie many questions about the partidges of the country; and, among other things, he wanted to know by what token you were able to discover their favourite haunts. Before Moodie could answer this last query a voice

responded, through a large crack in the boarded wall which separated us from the kitchen, “They always bides where they’s drum.” This announcement was received with a burst of laughter that greatly disconcerted the natural philosopher in the kitchen.

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On the 21st of May of this year, my second son, Donald, was born. The poor fellow came in hard times. The cows had not calved, and our bill of fare, now minus the deer and Spot, only consisted of bad potatoes and still worse bread. I was rendered so weak by want of proper nourishment that my dear husband, for my sake, overcame his aversion to borrowing, and procured a quarter of mutton from a friend. This, with kindly presents from neighbours—often as badly off as ourselves—a loin of a young bear, and a basket, containing a loaf of bread, some tea, some fresh butter, and oatmeal, went far to save my life.

Shortly after my recovery, Jacob—the faithful, good Jacob—was obliged to leave us, for we could no longer afford to pay wages. What was owing to him had to be settled by sacrificing our best cow, and a great many valuable articles of clothing from my husband's wardrobe. Nothing is more distressing than being obliged to part with articles of dress which you know that you cannot replace. Almost all my clothes had been appropriated to the payment of wages, or to obtain garments for the children, excepting my wedding dress, and the beautiful baby-linen which had been made by the hands of dear and affectionate friends for my first-born. These were now exchanged for coarse, warm flannels, to shield her from the cold.

Moodie and Jacob had chopped eight acres during the winter, but these had to be burnt off and logged-up before we could put in a crop of wheat for the ensuing fall. Had we been able to retain this industrious, kindly English lad, this would have been soon accomplished; but his wages, at the rate of thirty pounds per annum, were now utterly beyond our means.

Jacob had formed an attachment to my pretty maid, Mary Pine, and before going to the Southern States, to join an uncle who resided in Louisville, an opulent tradesman, who had promised to teach him his business, Jacob thought it as well to declare himself. The declaration took place on a log of wood near the back-door, and from my chamber window I could both hear and see the parties, without being myself observed. Mary was seated very demurely at one end of the log, twisting the strings of her checked apron, and the loving Jacob was busily whittling the other extremity of their rustic seat. There was a long silence. Mary stole a look at Jacob, and he heaved a tremendous sigh, something between a yawn and a groan. "Meary," he said, "I must go."

"I knew that afore," returned the girl.

"I had zummat to zay to you, Meary. Do you think you will miss oie?" (looking very affectionately, and twitching nearer.)

"What put that into your head, Jacob?" This was said very demurely.

“Oie thowt, may be, Meary, that your feelings might be zummat loike my own. I feel zore about the heart, Meary, and it’s all com’ of parting with you. Don’t you feel queerish, too?”

“Can’t say that I do, Jacob. I shall soon see you again.” (pulling violently at her apron-string.)

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“Meary, oi’m afear’d you don’t feel like oie.”

“P’r’aps not—women can’t feel like men. I’m sorry that you are going, Jacob, for you have been very kind and obliging, and I wish you well.”

“Meary,” cried Jacob, growing desperate at her coyness, and getting quite close up to her, “will you marry oie? Say yeez or noa?”

This was coming close to the point. Mary drew farther from him, and turned her head away.

“Meary,” said Jacob, seizing upon the hand that held the apron-string. “Do you think you can better yoursel’? If not—why, oie’m your man. Now, do just turn about your head and answer oie.”

The girl turned round, and gave him a quick, shy glance, then burst out into a simpering laugh.

“Meary, will you take oie?” (jogging her elbow.)

“I will,” cried the girl, jumping up from the log, and running into the house.

“Well, that bargain’s made,” said the lover, rubbing his hands; “and now oie’ll go and bid measter and missus good-buoy.”

The poor fellow’s eyes were full of tears, for the children, who loved him very much, clung, crying, about his knees. “God bless yees all,” sobbed the kind-hearted creature. “Doan’t forget Jacob, for he’ll neaver forget you. Good-buoy!”

Then turning to Mary, he threw his arms round her neck, and bestowed upon her fair cheek the most audible kiss I ever heard.

“And doan’t you forget me, Meary. In two years oie will be back to marry you; and may be oie may come back a rich man.”

Mary, who was an exceedingly pretty girl, shed some tears at the parting; but in a few days she was as gay as ever, and listening with great attention to the praises bestowed upon her beauty by an old bachelor, who was her senior by five-and-twenty years. But then he had a good farm, a saddle mare, and plenty of stock, and was reputed to have saved money. The saddle mare seemed to have great weight in old Ralph T——h’s wooing, and I used laughingly to remind Mary of her absent lover, and beg her not to marry Ralph T——h’s mare.

THE CANADIAN HUNTER'S SONG

The northern lights are flashing,
  On the rapids' restless flow;
And o'er the wild waves dashing,
  Swift darts the light canoe.
    The merry hunters come.
      "What cheer?—what cheer?"—
      "We've slain the deer!"
    "Hurrah!—You're welcome home!"

The blithesome horn is sounding,
  And the woodman's loud halloo;
And joyous steps are bounding
  To meet the birch canoe.
    "Hurrah!—The hunters come."
      And the woods ring out
      To their merry shout
    As they drag the dun deer home!

The hearth is brightly burning,
  The rustic board is spread;
To greet the sire returning
  The children leave their bed.
    With laugh and shout they come—
      That merry band—
      To grasp his hand,
    And bid him welcome home!

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CHAPTER XXI

THE LITTLE STUMPY MAN

There was a little man—
I'll sketch him if I can,
For he clung to mine and me
Like the old man of the sea;
And in spite of taunt and scoff
We could not pitch him off,
For the cross-grained, waspish elf
Cared for no one but himself.

Before I dismiss for ever the troubles and sorrows of 1836, I would fain introduce to the notice of my readers some of the odd characters with whom we became acquainted during that period. The first that starts vividly to my recollection is the picture of a short, stumpy, thickset man—a British sailor, too—who came to stay one night under our roof, and took quiet possession of his quarters for nine months, and whom we are obliged to tolerate from the simple fact that we could not get rid of him.

During the fall, Moodie had met this individual (whom I will call Mr. Malcolm) in the mail-coach, going up to Toronto. Amused with his eccentric and blunt manners, and finding him a shrewd, clever fellow in conversation, Moodie told him that if ever he came into his part of the world he should be glad to renew their acquaintance. And so they parted, with mutual good-will, as men often part who have travelled a long journey in good fellowship together, without thinking it probable they should ever meet again.

The sugar season had just commenced with the spring thaw; Jacob had tapped a few trees in order to obtain sap to make molasses for the children, when his plans were frustrated by the illness of my husband, who was again attacked with the ague. Towards the close of a wet, sloppy day, while Jacob was in the wood, chopping, and our servant gone to my sister, who was ill, to help to wash, as I was busy baking bread for tea, my attention was aroused by a violent knocking at the door, and the furious barking of our dog, Hector. I ran to open it, when I found Hector's teeth clenched in the trousers of a little, dark, thickset man, who said in a gruff voice—

"Call off your dog. What the devil do you keep such an infernal brute about the house for? Is it to bite people who come to see you?"

Hector was the best-behaved, best-tempered animal in the world; he might have been called a gentlemanly dog. So little was there of the unmannerly puppy in his behaviour, that I was perfectly astonished at his ungracious conduct. I caught him by the collar, and not without some difficulty, succeeded in dragging him off.

“Is Captain Moodie within?” said the stranger.

“He is, sir. But he is ill in bed—too ill to be seen.”

“Tell him a friend” (he laid a strong stress upon the last word), “a particular friend must speak to him.”

I now turned my eyes to the face of the speaker with some curiosity. I had taken him for a mechanic, from his dirty, slovenly appearance; and his physiognomy was so unpleasant that I did not credit his assertion that he was a friend of my husband, for I was certain that no man who possessed such a forbidding aspect could be regarded by Moodie as a friend. I was about to deliver his message, but the moment I let go Hector’s collar, the dog was at him again.

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“Don’t strike him with your stick,” I cried, throwing my arms over the faithful creature. “He is a powerful animal, and if you provoke him, he will kill you.”

I at last succeeded in coaxing Hector into the girl’s room, where I shut him up, while the stranger came into the kitchen, and walked to the fire to dry his wet clothes.

I immediately went into the parlour, where Moodie was lying upon a bed near the stove, to deliver the stranger’s message; but before I could say a word, he dashed in after me, and going up to the bed, held out his broad, coarse hand, with “How are you, Mr. Moodie? You see I have accepted your kind invitation sooner than either you or I expected. If you will give me house-room for the night, I shall be obliged to you.”

This was said in a low, mysterious voice; and Moodie, who was still struggling with the hot fit of his disorder, and whose senses were not a little confused, stared at him with a look of vague bewilderment. The countenance of the stranger grew dark.

“You cannot have forgotten me—my name is Malcolm.”

“Yes, sir; I remember you now,” said the invalid holding out his burning, feverish hand. “To my home, such as it is, you are welcome.”

I stood by in wondering astonishment, looking from one to the other, as I had no recollection of ever hearing my husband mention the name of the stranger; but as he had invited him to share our hospitality, I did my best to make him welcome though in what manner he was to be accommodated puzzled me not a little. I placed the arm-chair by the fire, and told him that I would prepare tea for him as soon as I could.

“It may be as well to tell you, Mrs. Moodie,” said he sulkily, for he was evidently displeased by my husband’s want of recognition on his first entrance, “that I have had no dinner.”

I signed to myself, for I well knew that our larder boasted of no dainties; and from the animal expression of our guest’s face, I rightly judged that he was fond of good living.

By the time I had fried a rasher of salt pork, and made a pot of dandelion coffee, the bread I had been preparing was baked; but grown flour will not make light bread, and it was unusually heavy. For the first time I felt heartily ashamed of our humble fare. I was sure that he for whom it was provided was not one to pass it over in benevolent silence. “He might be a gentleman,” I thought, “but he does not look like one;” and a confused idea of who he was, and where Moodie had met him, began to float through my mind. I did not like the appearance of the man, but I consoled myself that he was only to stay for one night, and I could give up my bed for that one night, and sleep on a bed on the floor by my sick husband. When I re-entered the parlour to cover the table, I found

Moodie fallen asleep, and Mr. Malcolm reading. As I placed the tea-things on the table, he raised his head, and regarded me with a gloomy stare. He was a strange-looking

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creature; his features were tolerably regular, his complexion dark, with a good colour, his very broad and round head was covered with a perfect mass of close, black, curling hair, which, in growth, texture, and hue, resembled the wiry, curly hide of a water-dog. His eyes and mouth were both well-shaped, but gave, by their sinister expression, an odious and doubtful meaning to the whole of his physiognomy. The eyes were cold, insolent, and cruel, and as green as the eyes of a cat. The mouth bespoke a sullen, determined, and sneering disposition, as if it belonged to one brutally obstinate, one who could not by any gentle means be persuaded from his purpose. Such a man in a passion would have been a terrible wild beast; but the current of his feelings seemed to flow in a deep, sluggish channel, rather than in a violent or impetuous one; and, like William Penn, when he reconnoitred his unwelcome visitors through the keyhole of the door, I looked at my strange guest, and liked him not. Perhaps my distant and constrained manner made him painfully aware of the fact, for I am certain that, from the first hour of our acquaintance, a deep-rooted antipathy existed between us, which time seemed rather to strengthen than diminish.

He ate of his meal sparingly, and with evident disgust, the only remarks which dropped from him were—

“You make bad bread in the bush. Strange, that you can’t keep your potatoes from the frost! I should have thought that you could have had things more comfortable in the woods.”

“We have been very unfortunate,” I said, “since we came to the woods. I am sorry that you should be obliged to share the poverty of the land. It would have given me much pleasure could I have set before you a more comfortable meal.”

“Oh, don’t mention it. So that I get good pork and potatoes I shall be contented.”

What did these words imply?—an extension of his visit? I hoped that I was mistaken; but before I could lose any time in conjecture my husband awoke. The fit had left him, and he rose and dressed himself, and was soon chatting cheerfully with his guest.

Mr. Malcolm now informed him that he was hiding from the sheriff of the N—— district’s officers, and that it would be conferring upon him a great favour if he would allow him to remain at his house for a few weeks.

“To tell you the truth, Malcolm,” said Moodie, “we are so badly off that we can scarcely find food for ourselves and the children. It is out of our power to make you comfortable, or to keep an additional hand, without he is willing to render some little help on the farm. If you can do this, I will endeavour to get a few necessaries on credit, to make your stay more agreeable.”

To this proposition Malcolm readily assented, not only because it released him from all sense of obligation, but because it gave him a privilege to grumble.

Finding that his stay might extend to an indefinite period, I got Jacob to construct a rude bedstead out of two large chests that had transported some of our goods across the Atlantic, and which he put in a corner of the parlour. This I provided with a small hair-mattress, and furnished with what bedding I could spare.

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For the first fornight of his sojourn, our guest did nothing but lie upon that bed, and read, and smoke, and drink whiskey-and-water from morning until night. By degrees he let out part of his history; but there was a mystery about him which he took good care never to clear up. He was the son of an officer in the navy, who had not only attained a very high rank in the service, but, for his gallant conduct, had been made a Knight-Companion of the Bath.

He had himself served his time as a midshipman on board his father's flag-ship, but had left the navy and accepted a commission in the Buenos-Ayrean service during the political struggles in that province; he had commanded a sort of privateer under the government, to whom, by his own account, he had rendered many very signal services. Why he left South America and came to Canada he kept a profound secret. He had indulged in very vicious and dissipated courses since he came to the province, and by his own account had spent upwards of four thousand pounds, in a manner not over creditable to himself. Finding that his friends would answer his bills no longer, he took possession of a grant of land obtained through his father's interest, up in Harvey, a barren township on the shores of Stony Lake; and, after putting up his shanty, and expending all his remaining means, he found that he did not possess one acre out of the whole four hundred that would yield a crop of potatoes. He was now considerably in debt, and the lands, such as they were, had been seized, with all his effects, by the sheriff, and a warrant was out for his own apprehension, which he contrived to elude during his sojourn with us. Money he had none; and, beyond the dirty fearnought blue seaman's jacket which he wore, a pair of trousers of the coarse cloth of the country, an old black vest that had seen better days, and two blue-checked shirts, clothes he had none. He shaved but once a week, never combed his hair, and never washed himself. A dirtier or more slovenly creature never before was dignified by the title of a gentleman. He was, however, a man of good education, of excellent abilities, and possessed a bitter, sarcastic knowledge of the world; but he was selfish and unprincipled in the highest degree.

His shrewd observations and great conversational powers had first attracted my husband's attention, and, as men seldom show their bad qualities on a journey, he thought him a blunt, good fellow, who had travelled a great deal, and could render himself a very agreeable companion by a graphic relation of his adventures. He could be all this, when he chose to relax from his sullen, morose mood; and, much as I disliked him, I have listened with interest for hours to his droll descriptions of South American life and manners.

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Naturally indolent, and a constitutional grumbler, it was with the greatest difficulty that Moodie could get him to do anything beyond bringing a few pails of water from the swamp for the use of the house, and he often passed me carrying water up from the lake without offering to relieve me of the burden. Mary, the betrothed of Jacob, called him a perfect “beast”; but he, returning good for evil, considered *her* a very pretty girl, and paid her so many uncouth attentions that he roused the jealousy of honest Jake, who vowed that he would give him a good “loomping” if he only dared to lay a finger upon his sweetheart. With Jacob to back her, Mary treated the “zea-bear,” as Jacob termed him, with vast disdain, and was so saucy to him that, forgetting his admiration, he declared he would like to serve her as the Indians had done a scolding woman in South America. They attacked her house during the absence of her husband, cut out her tongue, and nailed it to the door, by way of knocker; and he thought that all women who could not keep a civil tongue in their head should be served in the same manner.

“And what should be done to men who swear and use ondacent language?” quoth Mary, indignantly. “Their tongues should be slit, and given to the dogs. Faugh! You are such a nasty fellow that I don’t think Hector would eat your tongue.”

“I’ll kill that beast,” muttered Malcolm, as he walked away.

I remonstrated with him on the impropriety of bandying words with our servants. “You see,” I said, “the disrespect with which they treat you; and if they presume upon your familiarity, to speak to our guest in this contemptuous manner, they will soon extend the same conduct to us.”

“But, Mrs. Moodie, you should reprove them.”

“I cannot, sir, while you continue, by taking liberties with the girl, and swearing at the man, to provoke them to retaliation.”

“Swearing! What harm is there in swearing? A sailor cannot live without oaths.”

“But a gentleman might, Mr. Malcolm. I should be sorry to consider you in any other light.”

“Ah, you are such a prude—so methodistical—you make no allowance for circumstances! Surely, in the woods we may dispense with the hypocritical, conventional forms of society, and speak and act as we please.”

“So you seem to think; but you see the result.”

“I have never been used to the society of ladies, and I cannot fashion my words to please them; and I won’t, that’s more!” he muttered to himself as he strode off to Moodie in the field. I wished from my very heart that he was once more on the deck of his piratical South American craft.

One night he insisted on going out in the canoe to spear maskinonge with Moodie. The evening turned out very chill and foggy, and, before twelve, they returned, with only one fish, and half frozen with cold. Malcolm had got twinges of rheumatism, and he fussed, and sulked, and swore, and quarrelled with everybody and everything, until Moodie, who was highly amused by his petulance, advised him to go to his bed, and pray for the happy restoration of his temper.

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“Temper!” he cried, “I don’t believe there’s a good-tempered person in the world. It’s all hypocrisy! I never had a good-temper! My mother was an ill-tempered woman, and ruled my father, who was a confoundedly severe, domineering man. I was born in an ill-temper. I was an ill-tempered child; I grew up an ill-tempered man. I feel worse than ill-tempered now, and when I die it will be in an ill-temper.”

“Well,” quoth I, “Moodie has made you a tumbler of hot punch, which may help to drive out the cold and the ill-temper, and cure the rheumatism.”

“Ay; your husband’s a good fellow, and worth two of you, Mrs. Moodie. He makes some allowance for the weakness of human nature, and can excuse even my ill-temper.”

I did not choose to bandy words with him, and the next day the unfortunate creature was shaking with the ague. A more intractable, outrageous, *Im*-patient I never had the ill-fortune to nurse. During the cold fit, he did nothing but swear at the cold, and wished himself roasting; and during the fever, he swore at the heat, and wished that he was sitting, in no other garment than his shirt, on the north side of an iceberg. And when the fit at last left him, he got up, and ate such quantities of fat pork, and drank so much whiskey-punch, that you would have imagined he had just arrived from a long journey, and had not tasted food for a couple of days.

He would not believe that fishing in the cold night-air upon the water had made him ill, but raved that it was all my fault for having laid my baby down on his bed while it was shaking with the ague.

Yet, if there were the least tenderness mixed up in his iron nature, it was the affection he displayed for that young child. Dunbar was just twenty months old, with bright, dark eyes, dimpled cheeks, and soft, flowing, golden hair, which fell round his infant face in rich curls. The merry, confiding little creature formed such a contrast to his own surly, unyielding temper, that, perhaps, that very circumstance made the bond of union between them. When in the house, the little boy was seldom out of his arms, and whatever were Malcolm’s faults, he had none in the eyes of the child, who used to cling around his neck, and kiss his rough, unshaven cheeks with the greatest fondness.

“If I could afford it, Moodie,” he said one day to my husband, “I should like to marry. I want some one upon whom I could vent my affections.” And wanting that some one in the form of woman, he contented himself with venting them upon the child.

As the spring advanced, and after Jacob left us, he seemed ashamed of sitting in the house doing nothing, and therefore undertook to make us a garden, or “to make garden,” as the Canadians term preparing a few vegetables for the season. I procured the necessary seeds, and watched with no small surprise the industry with which our strange visitor commenced operations. He repaired the broken fence, dug the ground with the greatest care, and laid it out with a skill and neatness of which I had believed

him perfectly incapable. In less than three weeks, the whole plot presented a very pleasing prospect, and he was really elated by his success.

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“At any rate,” he said, “we shall no longer be starved on bad flour and potatoes. We shall have peas, and beans, and beets, and carrots, and cabbage in abundance; besides the plot I have reserved for cucumbers and melons.”

“Ah,” thought I; “does he, indeed, mean to stay with us until the melons are ripe?” and my heart died within me, for he not only was a great additional expense, but he gave a great deal of additional trouble, and entirely robbed us of all privacy, as our very parlour was converted into a bed-room for his accommodation; besides that, a man of his singularly dirty habits made a very disagreeable inmate.

The only redeeming point in his character, in my eyes, was his love for Dunbar. I could not entirely hate a man who was so fondly attached to my child. To the two little girls he was very cross, and often chased them from him with blows.

He had, too, an odious way of finding fault with everything. I never could cook to please him; and he tried in the most malicious way to induce Moodie to join in his complaints. All his schemes to make strife between us, however, failed, and were generally visited upon himself. In no way did he ever seek to render me the least assistance. Shortly after Jacob left us, Mary Pine was offered higher wages by a family at Peterborough, and for some time I was left with four little children, and without a servant. Moodie always milked the cows, because I never could overcome my fear of cattle; and though I had occasionally milked when there was no one else in the way, it was in fear and trembling.

Moodie had to go down to Peterborough; but before he went, he begged Malcolm to bring me what water and wood I required, and to stand by the cattle while I milked the cows, and he would himself be home before night.

He started at six in the morning, and I got the pail to go and milk. Malcolm was lying upon his bed, reading.

“Mr. Malcolm, will you be so kind as to go with me to the fields for a few minutes while I milk?”

“Yes!” (then, with a sulky frown), “but I want to finish what I am reading.”

“I will not detain you long.”

“Oh, no! I suppose about an hour. You are a shocking bad milker.”

“True; I never went near a cow until I came to this country; and I have never been able to overcome my fear of them.”

“More shame for you! A farmer’s wife, and afraid of a cow! Why, these little children would laugh at you.”

I did not reply, nor would I ask him again. I walked slowly to the field, and my indignation made me forget my fear. I had just finished milking, and with a brimming pail was preparing to climb the fence and return to the house, when a very wild ox we had came running with headlong speed from the wood. All my fears were alive again in a moment. I snatched up the pail, and, instead of climbing the fence and getting to the house, I ran with all the speed I could command down the steep hill towards the lake shore; my feet caught in a root of the many stumps in the path, and I fell to the ground, my pail rolling many yards a-head of me. Every drop of my milk was spilt upon the grass. The ox passed on. I gathered myself up and returned home. Malcolm was very fond of new milk, and he came to meet me at the door.

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“Hi! hi!—Where’s the milk?”

“No milk for the poor children to-day,” said I, showing him the inside of the pail, with a sorrowful shake of the head, for it was no small loss to them and me.

“How the devil’s that? So you were afraid to milk the cows. Come away, and I will keep off the buggaboos.”

“I did milk them—no thanks to your kindness, Mr. Malcolm—but—”

“But what?”

“The ox frightened me, and I fell and spilt all the milk.”

“Whew! Now don’t go and tell your husband that it was all my fault; if you had had a little patience, I would have come when you asked me, but I don’t choose to be dictated to, and I won’t be made a slave by you or any one else.”

“Then why do you stay, sir, where you consider yourself so treated?” said I. “We are all obliged to work to obtain bread; we give you the best share—surely the return we ask for it is but small.”

“You make me feel my obligations to you when you ask me to do anything; if you left it to my better feelings we should get on better.”

“Perhaps you are right. I will never ask you to do anything for me in future.”

“Oh, now, that’s all mock-humility. In spite of the tears in your eyes, you are as angry with me as ever; but don’t go to make mischief between me and Moodie. If you’ll say nothing about my refusing to go with you, I’ll milk the cows for you myself to-night.”

“And can you milk?” said I, with some curiosity.

“Milk! Yes; and if I were not so confoundedly low-spirited and—lazy, I could do a thousand other things too. But now, don’t say a word about it to Moodie.”

I made no promise; but my respect for him was not increased by his cowardly fear of reproof from Moodie, who treated him with a kindness and consideration which he did not deserve.

The afternoon turned out very wet, and I was sorry that I should be troubled with his company all day in the house. I was making a shirt for Moodie from some cotton that had been sent me from home, and he placed himself by the side of the stove, just opposite, and continued to regard me for a long time with his usual sullen stare. I really felt half afraid of him.

“Don’t you think me mad!” said he. “I have a brother deranged; he got a stroke of the sun in India, and lost his senses in consequence; but sometimes I think it runs in the family.”

What answer could I give to this speech, but mere evasive common-place!

“You won’t say what you really think,” he continued; “I know you hate me, and that makes me dislike you. Now what would you say if I told you I had committed a murder, and that it was the recollection of that circumstance that made me at times so restless and unhappy?”

I looked up in his face, not knowing what to believe.

“’Tis fact,” said he, nodding his head; and I hoped that he would not go mad, like his brother, and kill me.

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“Come, I’ll tell you all about it; I know the world would laugh at me for calling such an act *murder*; and yet I have been such a miserable man ever since, that I *feel* it was.

“There was a noted leader among the rebel Buenos-Ayreans, whom the government wanted much to get hold of. He was a fine, dashing, handsome fellow; I had often seen him, but we never came to close quarters. One night, I was lying wrapped up in my poncho at the bottom of my boat, which was rocking in the surf, waiting for two of my men, who were gone on shore. There came to the shore, this man and one of his people, and they stood so near the boat, that I could distinctly hear their conversation. I suppose it was the devil who tempted me to put a bullet through the man’s heart. He was an enemy to the flag under which I fought, but he was no enemy to me—I had no right to become his executioner; but still the desire to kill him, for the mere devilry of the thing, came so strongly upon me that I no longer tried to resist it. I rose slowly upon my knees; the moon was shining very bright at the time, both he and his companion were too earnestly engaged to see me, and I deliberately shot him through the body. He fell with a heavy groan back into the water; but I caught the last look he threw upon the moonlight skies before his eyes glazed in death. Oh, that look!—so full of despair, of unutterable anguish; it haunts me yet—it will haunt me for ever. I would not have cared if I had killed him in strife—but in cold blood, and he so unsuspicious of his doom! Yes, it was murder; I know by this constant tugging at my heart that it was murder. What do you say to it?”

“I should think as you do, Mr. Malcolm. It is a terrible thing to take away the life of a fellow-creature without the least provocation.”

“Ah! I know you would blame me; but he was an enemy after all; I had a right to kill him; I was hired by the government under whom I served to kill him; and who shall condemn me?”

“No one more than your own heart.”

“It is not the heart, but the brain, that must decide in questions of right and wrong,” said he. “I acted from impulse, and shot that man; had I reasoned upon it for five minutes, the man would be living now. But what’s done cannot be undone. Did I ever show you the work I wrote upon South America?”

“Are you an author,” said I, incredulously.

“To be sure I am. Murray offered me 100 pounds for my manuscript, but I would not take it. Shall I read to you some passages from it?”

I am sorry to say that his behaviour in the morning was uppermost in my thoughts, and I had no repugnance in refusing.

“No, don’t trouble yourself. I have the dinner to cook, and the children to attend to, which will cause a constant interruption; you had better defer it to some other time.”

“I shan’t ask you to listen to me again,” said he, with a look of offended vanity; but he went to his trunk, and brought out a large *Ms*., written on foolscap, which he commenced reading to himself with an air of great self-importance, glancing from time to time at me, and smiling disdainfully. Oh, how glad I was when the door opened, and the return of Moodie broke up this painful tete-a-tete.

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From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step. The very next day, Mr. Malcolm made his appearance before me, wrapped in a great-coat belonging to my husband, which literally came down to his heels. At this strange apparition, I fell a-laughing.

“For God’s sake, Mrs. Moodie, lend me a pair of inexpressibles. I have met with an accident in crossing the fence, and mine are torn to shreds—gone to the devil entirely.”

“Well, don’t swear. I’ll see what can be done for you.”

I brought him a new pair of fine, drab-colored kersey-mere trousers that had never been worn. Although he was eloquent in his thanks, I had no idea that he meant to keep them for his sole individual use from that day thenceforth. But after all, what was the man to do? He had no trousers, and no money, and he could not take to the woods. Certainly his loss was not our gain. It was the old proverb reversed.

The season for putting in the potatoes had now arrived. Malcolm volunteered to cut the sets, which was easy work that could be done in the house, and over which he could lounge and smoke; but Moodie told him that he must take his share in the field, that I had already sets enough saved to plant half-an-acre, and would have more prepared by the time they were required. With many growls and shrugs, he felt obliged to comply; and he performed his part pretty well, the execrations bestowed upon the mosquitoes and black-flies forming a sort of safety-valve to let off the concentrated venom of his temper. When he came in to dinner, he held out his hands to me.

“Look at these hands.”

“They are blistered with the hoe.”

“Look at my face.”

“You are terribly disfigured by the black-flies. But Moodie suffers just as much, and says nothing.”

“Bah!—The only consolation one feels for such annoyances is to complain. Oh, the woods!—the cursed woods!—how I wish I were out of them.” The day was very warm, but in the afternoon I was surprised by a visit from an old maiden lady, a friend of mine from C—. She had walked up with a Mr. Crowe, from Peterborough, a young, brisk-looking farmer, in breeches and top-boots, just out from the old country, who, naturally enough, thought he would like to roost among the woods.

He was a little, lively, good-natured manny, with a real Anglo-Saxon face,—rosy, high cheek-boned, with full lips, and a turned-up nose; and, like most little men, was a great talker, and very full of himself. He had belonged to the secondary class of farmers, and was very vulgar, both in person and manners. I had just prepared tea for my visitors, when Malcolm and Moodie returned from the field. There was no affectation about the

former. He was manly in his person, and blunt even to rudeness, and I saw by the quizzical look which he cast upon the spruce little Crowe that he was quietly quizzing him from head to heel. A neighbour had sent me a present

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of maple molasses, and Mr. Crowe was so fearful of spilling some of the rich syrup upon his drab shorts that he spread a large pocket-hankerchief over his knees, and tucked another under his chin. I felt very much inclined to laugh, but restrained the inclination as well as I could—and if the little creature would have sat still, I could have quelled my rebellious propensity altogether; but up he would jump at every word I said to him, and make me a low, jerking bow, often with his mouth quite full, and the treacherous molasses running over his chin.

Malcolm sat directly opposite to me and my volatile next-door neighbour. He saw the intense difficulty I had to keep my gravity, and was determined to make me laugh out. So, coming slyly behind my chair, he whispered in my ear, with the gravity of a judge, “Mrs. Moodie, that must have been the very chap who first jumped Jim Crowe.”

This appeal obliged me to run from the table. Moodie was astonished at my rudeness; and Malcolm, as he resumed his seat, made the matter worse by saying, “I wonder what is the matter with Mrs. Moodie; she is certainly very hysterical this afternoon.”

The potatoes were planted, and the season of strawberries, green-peas, and young potatoes come, but still Malcolm remained our constant guest. He had grown so indolent, and gave himself so many airs, that Moodie was heartily sick of his company, and gave him many gentle hints to change his quarters; but our guest was determined to take no hint. For some reason best known to himself, perhaps out of sheer contradiction, which formed one great element in his character, he seemed obstinately bent upon remaining where he was.

Moodie was busy under-bushing for a fall fallow. Malcolm spent much of his time in the garden, or lounging about the house. I had baked an eel-pie for dinner, which if prepared well is by no means an unsavoury dish. Malcolm had cleaned some green-peas and washed the first young potatoes we had drawn that season, with his own hands, and he was reckoning upon the feast he should have on the potatoes with childish glee. The dinner at length was put upon the table. The vegetables were remarkably fine, and the pie looked very nice.

Moodie helped Malcolm, as he always did, very largely, and the other covered his plate with a portion of peas and potatoes, when, lo and behold! my gentleman began making a very wry face at the pie.

“What an infernal dish!” he cried, pushing away his plate with an air of great disgust. “These eels taste as if they had been stewed in oil. Moodie, you should teach your wife to be a better cook.”

The hot blood burnt upon Moodie’s cheek. I saw indignation blazing in his eye.

“If you don’t like what is prepared for you, sir, you may leave the table, and my house, if you please. I will put up with your ungentlemanly and ungrateful conduct to Mrs. Moodie no longer.”

Out stalked the offending party. I thought, to be sure, we had got rid of him; and though he deserved what was said to him, I was sorry for him. Moodie took his dinner, quietly remarking, “I wonder he could find it in his heart to leave those fine peas and potatoes.”

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He then went back to his work in the bush, and I cleared away the dishes, and churned, for I wanted butter for tea.

About four o'clock Mr. Malcolm entered the room. "Mrs. Moodie," said he, in a more cheerful voice than usual, "where's the boss?"

"In the wood, under-bushing." I felt dreadfully afraid that there would be blows between them.

"I hope, Mr. Malcolm, that you are not going to him with any intention of a fresh quarrel."

"Don't you think I have been punished enough by losing my dinner?" said he, with a grin. "I don't think we shall murder one another." He shouldered his axe, and went whistling away.

After striving for a long while to stifle my foolish fears, I took the baby in my arms, and little Dunbar by the hand, and ran up to the bush where Moodie was at work.

At first I only saw my husband, but the strokes of an axe at a little distance soon guided my eyes to the spot where Malcolm was working away, as if for dear life. Moodie smiled, and looked at me significantly.

"How could the fellow stomach what I said to him? Either great necessity or great meanness must be the cause of his knocking under. I don't know whether most to pity or despise him."

"Put up with it, dearest, for this once. He is not happy, and must be greatly distressed."

Malcolm kept aloof, ever and anon casting a furtive glance towards us; at last little Dunbar ran to him, and held up his arms to be kissed. The strange man snatched him to his bosom, and covered him with caresses. It might be love to the child that had quelled his sullen spirit, or he might really have cherished an affection for us deeper than his ugly temper would allow him to show. At all events, he joined us at tea as if nothing had happened, and we might truly say that he had obtained a new lease of his long visit.

But what could not be effected by words or hints of ours was brought about a few days after by the silly observation of a child. He asked Katie to give him a kiss, and he would give her some raspberries he had gathered in the bush.

"I don't want them. Go away; I don't like you, you little stumpy man!"

His rage knew no bounds. He pushed the child from him, and vowed that he would leave the house that moment—that she could not have thought of such an expression herself; she must have been taught it by us. This was an entire misconception on his

part; but he would not be convinced that he was wrong. Off he went, and Moodie called after him, “Malcolm, as I am sending to Peterborough to-morrow, the man shall take in your trunk.” He was too angry even to turn and bid us good-bye; but we had not seen the last of him yet.

Two months after, we were taking tea with a neighbour, who lived a mile below us on the small lake. Who should walk in but Mr. Malcolm? He greeted us with great warmth for him, and when we rose to take leave, he rose and walked home by our side. “Surely the little stumpy man is not returning to his old quarters?” I am still a babe in the affairs of men. Human nature has more strange varieties than any one menagerie can contain, and Malcolm was one of the oddest of her odd species.

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That night he slept in his old bed below the parlour window, and for three months afterwards he stuck to us like a beaver.

He seemed to have grown more kindly, or we had got more used to his eccentricities, and let him have his own way; certainly he behaved himself much better.

He neither scolded the children nor interfered with the maid, nor quarrelled with me. He had greatly discontinued his bad habit of swearing, and he talked of himself and his future prospects with more hope and self-respect. His father had promised to send him a fresh supply of money, and he proposed to buy of Moodie the clergy reserve, and that they should farm the two places on shares. This offer was received with great joy, as an unlooked-for means of paying our debts, and extricating ourselves from present and overwhelming difficulties, and we looked upon the little stumpy man in the light of a benefactor.

So matters continued until Christmas Eve, when our visitor proposed walking into Peterborough, in order to give the children a treat of raisins to make a Christmas pudding.

“We will be quite merry to-morrow,” he said. “I hope we shall eat many Christmas dinners together, and continue good friends.”

He started, after breakfast, with the promise of coming back at night; but night came, the Christmas passed away, months and years fled away, but we never saw the little stumpy man again!

He went away that day with a stranger in a waggon from Peterborough, and never afterwards was seen in that part of Canada. We afterwards learned that he went to Texas, and it is thought that he was killed at St. Antonio; but this is mere conjecture. Whether dead or living, I feel convinced that—

“We ne’er shall look upon his like again.”

OH, THE DAYS WHEN I WAS YOUNG!

Oh, the days when I was young,
  A playful little boy,
When my piping treble rung
  To the notes of early joy.
Oh, the sunny days of spring,
  When I sat beside the shore,
And heard the small birds sing;—
  Shall I never hear them more?

And the daisies scatter’d round,
  Half hid amid the grass,
Lay like gems upon the ground,
  Too gay for me to pass.
How sweet the milkmaid sung,
  As she sat beside her cow,
How clear her wild notes rung;—
  There’s no music like it now.

As I watch’d the ship’s white sail
  ’Mid the sunbeams on the sea,
Spreading canvas to the gale—
  How I long’d with her to be.
I thought not of the storm,
  Nor the wild cries on her deck,
When writhed her graceful form
  ’Mid the hurricane and wreck.

And I launch’d my little ship,
  With her sails and hold beneath;
Deep laden on each trip,
  With berries from the heath.
Ah, little did I know,
  When I long’d to be a man,
Of the gloomy cares and woe,
  That meet in life’s brief span.

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Oh, the happy nights I lay
  With my brothers in their beds,
Where we soundly slept till day
  Shone brightly o’er our heads.
And the blessed dreams that came
  To fill my heart with joy.
Oh, that I now could dream,
  As I dreamt, a little boy.

The sun shone brighter then,
  And the moon more soft and clear,
For the wiles of crafty men
  I had not learn’d to fear;
But all seemed fair and gay
  As the fleecy clouds above;
I spent my hours in play,
  And my heart was full of love.

I loved the heath-clad hill,
  And I loved the silent vale,
With its dark and purling rill
  That murmur’d in the gale.
Of sighs I’d none to share,
  They were stored for riper years,
When I drain’d the dregs of care
  With many bitter tears.

My simple daily fare,
  In my little tiny mug,
How fain was I to share
  With Cato on the rug.
Yes, he gave his honest paw,
  And he lick’d my happy face,
He was true to Nature’s law,
  And I thought it no disgrace.

There’s a voice so soft and clear,
  And a step so gay and light,
That charms my listening ear
  In the visions of the night.
And my father bids me haste,
  In the deep, fond tones of love,
And leave this dreary waste,
  For brighter realms above.

Now I am old and grey,
  My bones are rack'd with pain,
And time speeds fast away—
  But why should I complain?
There are joys in life's young morn
  That dwell not with the old.
Like the flowers the wind hath torn,
  From the strem, all bleak and cold.

The weary heart may mourn
  O'er the wither'd hopes of youth,
But the flowers so rudely shorn
  Still leave the seeds of truth.
And there's hope for hoary men
  When they're laid beneath the sod;
For we'll all be young again
  When we meet around our God.

J.W.D.M.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FIRE

Now, Fortune, do thy worst! For many years,
Thou, with relentless and unsparing hand,
Hast sternly pour'd on our devoted heads
The poison'd phials of thy fiercest wrath.

The early part of the winter of 1837, a year never to be forgotten in the annals of Canadian history, was very severe. During the month of February, the thermometer often ranged from eighteen to twenty-seven degrees below zero. Speaking of the coldness of one particular day, a genuine brother Jonathan remarked, with charming simplicity, that it was thirty degrees below zero that morning, and it would have been much colder if the thermometer had been longer.

The morning of the seventh was so intensely cold that everything liquid froze in the house. The wood that had been drawn for the fire was green, and it ignited too slowly to satisfy the shivering impatience of women and children; I vented mine in audibly grumbling over the wretched fire, at which I in vain endeavoured to thaw frozen bread, and to dress crying children.

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It so happened that an old friend, the maiden lady before alluded to, had been staying with us for a few days. She had left us for a visit to my sister, and as some relatives of hers were about to return to Britain by the way of New York, and had offered to convey letters to friends at home, I had been busy all the day before preparing a packet for England.

It was my intention to walk to my sister's with this packet, directly the important affair of breakfast had been discussed; but the extreme cold of the morning had occasioned such delay that it was late before the breakfast-things were cleared away.

After dressing, I found the air so keen that I could not venture out without some risk to my nose, and my husband kindly volunteered to go in my stead.

I had hired a young Irish girl the day before. Her friends were only just located in our vicinity, and she had never seen a stove until she came to our house. After Moodie left, I suffered the fire to die away in the Franklin stove in the parlour, and went into the kitchen to prepare bread for the oven.

The girl, who was a good-natured creature, had heard me complain bitterly of the cold, and the impossibility of getting the green wood to burn, and she thought that she would see if she could not make a good fire for me and the children, against my work was done. Without saying one word about her intention, she slipped out through a door that opened from the parlour into the garden, ran round to the wood-yard, filled her lap with cedar chips, and, not knowing the nature of the stove, filled it entirely with the light wood.

Before I had the least idea of my danger, I was aroused from the completion of my task by the crackling and roaring of a large fire, and a suffocating smell of burning soot. I looked up at the kitchen cooking-stove. All was right there. I knew I had left no fire in the parlour stove; but not being able to account for the smoke and the smell of buring, I opened the door, and to my dismay found the stove red hot, from the front plate to the topmost pipe that let out the smoke through the roof.

My first impulse was to plunge a blanket, snatched from the servant's bed, which stood in the kitchen, into cold water. This I thrust into the stove, and upon it threw cold water, until all was cool below. I then ran up to the loft, and by exhausting all the water in the house, even to that contained in the boilers upon the fire, contrived to cool down the pipes which passed through the loft. I then sent the girl out of doors to look at the roof, which, as a very deep fall of snow had taken place the day before, I hoped would be completely covered, and safe from all danger of fire.

She quickly returned, stamping and tearing her hair, and making a variety of uncouth outcries, from which I gathered that the roof was in flames.

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This was terrible news, with my husband absent, no man in the house, and a mile and a quarter from any other habitation. I ran out to ascertain the extent of the misfortune, and found a large fire burning in the roof between the two stove pipes. The heat of the fires had melted off all the snow, and a spark from the burning pipe had already ignited the shingles. A ladder, which for several months had stood against the house, had been moved two days before to the barn, which was at the top of the hill, near the road; there was no reaching the fire through that source. I got out the dining-table, and tried to throw water upon the roof by standing on a chair placed upon it, but I only expended the little water that remained in the boiler, without reaching the fire. The girl still continued weeping and lamenting.

“You must go for help,” I said. “Run as fast as you can to my sister’s, and fetch your master.”

“And lave you, ma’arm, and the childher alone wid the burnin’ house?”

“Yes, yes! Don’t stay one moment.”

“I have no shoes, ma’arm, and the snow is so deep.”

“Put on your master’s boots; make haste, or we shall be lost before help comes.”

The girl put on the boots and started, shrieking “Fire!” the whole way. This was utterly useless, and only impeded her progress by exhausting her strength. After she had vanished from the head of the clearing into the wood, and I was left quite alone, with the house burning over my head, I paused one moment to reflect what had best be done.

The house was built of cedar logs; in all probability it would be consumed before any help could arrive. There was a brisk breeze blowing up from the frozen lake, and the thermometer stood at eighteen degrees below zero. We were placed between the two extremes of heat and cold, and there was as much danger to be apprehended from the one as the other. In the bewilderment of the moment, the direful extent of the calamity never struck me; we wanted but this to put the finishing stroke to our misfortunes, to be thrown naked, houseless, and penniless, upon the world. “What shall I save first?” was the thought just then uppermost in my mind. Bedding and clothing appeared the most essentially necessary, and without another moment’s pause, I set to work with a right good will to drag all that I could from my burning home.

While little Agnes, Dunbar, and baby Donald filled the air with their cries, Katie, as if fully conscious of the importance of exertion, assisted me in carrying out sheets and blankets, and dragging trunks and boxes some way up the hill, to be out of the way of the burning brands when the roof should fall in.

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How many anxious looks I gave to the head of the clearing as the fire increased, and the large pieces of burning pine began to fall through the boarded ceiling, about the lower rooms where we were at work. The children I had kept under a large dresser in the kitchen, but it now appeared absolutely necessary to remove them to a place of safety. To expose the young, tender things to the direful cold was almost as bad as leaving them to the mercy of the fire. At last I hit upon a plan to keep them from freezing. I emptied all the clothes out of a large, deep chest of drawers, and dragged the empty drawers up the hill; these I lined with blankets, and placed a child in each drawer, covering it well over with the bedding, giving to little Agnes the charge of the baby to hold between her knees, and keep well covered until help should arrive. Ah, how long it seemed coming!

The roof was now burning like a brush-heap, and, unconsciously, the child and I were working under a shelf, upon which were deposited several pounds of gunpowder which had been procured for blasting a well, as all our water had to be brought up hill from the lake. This gunpowder was in a stone jar, secured by a paper stopper; the shelf upon which it stood was on fire, but it was utterly forgotten by me at the time; and even afterwards, when my husband was working on the burning loft over it.

I found that I should not be able to take many more trips for goods. As I passed out of the parlour for the last time, Katie looked up at her father's flute, which was suspended upon two brackets, and said—

"Oh, dear mamma! do save papa's flute; he will be so sorry to lose it."

God bless the dear child for the thought! the flute was saved; and, as I succeeded in dragging out a heavy chest of cloths, and looked up once more despairingly to the road, I saw a man running at full speed. It was my husband. Help was at hand, and my heart uttered a deep thanksgiving as another and another figure came upon the scene.

I had not felt the intense cold, although without cap, or bonnet, or shawl; with my hands bare and exposed to the bitter, biting air. The intense excitement, the anxiety to save all I could, had so totally diverted my thoughts from myself, that I had felt nothing of the danger to which I had been exposed; but now that help was near, my knees trembled under me, I felt giddy and faint, and dark shadows seemed dancing before my eyes.

The moment my husband and brother-in-law entered the house, the latter exclaimed,

"Moodie, the house is gone; save what you can of your winter stores and furniture."

Moodie thought differently. Prompt and energetic in danger, and possessing admirable presence of mind and coolness when others yield to agitation and despair, he sprang upon the burning loft and called for water. Alas, there was none!

“Snow, snow; hand me up pailsful of snow!”

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Oh! it was bitter work filling those pails with frozen snow; but Mr. T—— and I worked at it as fast as we were able.

The violence of the fire was greatly checked by covering the boards of the loft with this snow. More help had now arrived. Young B—— and S—— had brought the ladder down with them from the barn, and were already cutting away the burning roof, and flinging the flaming brands into the deep snow.

“Mrs. Moodie, have you any pickled meat?”

“We have just killed one of our cows, and salted it for winter stores.”

“Well, then, fling the beef into the snow, and let us have the brine.”

This was an admirable plan. Wherever the brine wetted the shingles, the fire turned from it, and concentrated into one spot.

But I had not time to watch the brave workers on the roof. I was fast yielding to the effects of over-excitement and fatigue, when my brother’s team dashed down the clearing, bringing my excellent old friend, Miss B——, and the servant-girl.

My brother sprang out, carried me back into the house, and wrapped me up in one of the large blankets scattered about. In a few minutes I was seated with the dear children in the sleigh, and on the way to a place of warmth and safety.

Katie alone suffered from the intense cold. The dear little creature’s feet were severely frozen, but were fortunately restored by her uncle discovering the fact before she approached the fire, and rubbing them well with snow.

In the meanwhile, the friends we had left so actively employed at the house succeeded in getting the fire under before it had destroyed the walls. The only accident that occurred was to a poor dog, that Moodie had called Snarleyowe. He was struck by a burning brand thrown from the house, and crept under the barn and died.

Beyond the damage done to the building, the loss of our potatoes and two sacks of flour, we had escaped in a manner almost miraculous. This fact shows how much can be done by persons working in union, without bustle and confusion, or running in each other’s way. Here were six men, who, without the aid of water, succeeded in saving a building, which, at first sight, almost all of them had deemed past hope. In after years, when entirely burnt out in a disastrous fire that consumed almost all we were worth in the world, some four hundred persons were present, with a fire-engine to second their endeavours, yet all was lost. Every person seemed in the way; and though the fire was discovered immediately after it took place, nothing was done beyond saving some of the furniture.

Our party was too large to be billetted upon one family. Mrs. T—— took compassion upon Moodie, myself, and the baby, while their uncle received the three children to his hospitable home.

It was some weeks before Moodie succeeded in repairing the roof, the intense cold preventing any one from working in such an exposed situation.

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The news of our fire travelled far and wide. I was reported to have done prodigies, and to have saved the greater part of our household goods before help arrived. Reduced to plain prose, these prodigies shrink into the simple, and by no means marvellous fact, that during the excitement I dragged out chests which, under ordinary circumstances, I could not have moved; and that I was unconscious, both of the cold and the danger to which I was exposed while working under a burning roof, which, had it fallen, would have buried both the children and myself under its ruins.

These circumstances appeared far more alarming, as all real danger does, after they were past. The fright and over-exertion gave my health a shock from which I did not recover for several months, and made me so fearful of fire, that from that hour it haunts me like a nightmare. Let the night be ever so serene, all stoves must be shut up, and the hot embers covered with ashes, before I dare retire to rest; and the sight of a burning edifice, so common a spectacle in large towns in this country, makes me really ill. This feeling was greatly increased after a second fire, when, for some torturing minutes, a lovely boy, since drowned, was supposed to have perished in the burning house.

Our present fire led to a new train of circumstances, for it was the means of introducing to Moodie a young Irish gentleman, who was staying at my brother's house. John E—— was one of the best and gentlest of human beings. His father, a captain in the army, had died while his family were quite young, and had left his widow with scarcely any means beyond the pension she received at her husband's death, to bring up and educate a family of five children. A handsome, showy woman, Mrs. E—— soon married again; and the poor lads were thrown upon the world. The eldest, who had been educated for the Church, first came to Canada in the hope of getting some professorship in the college, or of opening a classical school. He was a handsome, gentlemanly, well-educated young man, but constitutionally indolent—a natural defect which seemed common to all the males of the family, and which was sufficiently indicated by their soft, silky, fair hair and milky complexions. R—— had the good sense to perceive that Canada was not the country for him. He spent a week under our roof, and we were much pleased with his elegant tastes and pursuits; but my husband strongly advised him to try and get a situation as a tutor in some family at home. This he afterwards obtained. He became tutor and travelling companion to the young Lord M ——, and has since got an excellent living.

John, who had followed his brother to Canada without the means of transporting himself back again, was forced to remain, and was working with Mr. S—— for his board. He proposed to Moodie working his farm upon shares; and as we were unable to hire a man, Moodie gladly closed with his offer; and, during the time he remained with us, we had every reason to be pleased with the arrangement.

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It was always a humiliating feeling to our proud minds, that hirelings should witness our dreadful struggle with poverty, and the strange shifts we were forced to make in order to obtain even food. But John E—— had known and experienced all that we had suffered, in his own person, and was willing to share our home with all its privations. Warm-hearted, sincere, and truly affectionate—a gentleman in word, thought, and deed—we found his society and cheerful help a great comfort. Our odd meals became a subject of merriment, and the peppermint and sage tea drank with a better flavour when we had one who sympathised in all our trials, and shared all our toils, to partake of it with us.

The whole family soon became attached to our young friend; and after the work of the day was over, greatly we enjoyed an hour's fishing on the lake. John E—— said that we had no right to murmur, as long as we had health, a happy home, and plenty of fresh fish, milk, and potatoes. Early in May, we received an old Irishwoman into our service, who for four years proved a most faithful and industrious creature. And what with John E—— to assist my husband on the farm, and old Jenny to help me to nurse the children, and manage the house, our affairs, if they were no better in a pecuniary point of view, at least presented a more pleasing aspect at home. We were always cheerful, and sometimes contented and even happy.

How great was the contrast between the character of our new inmate and that of Mr. Malcolm! The sufferings of the past year had been greatly increased by the intolerable nuisance of his company, while many additional debts had been contracted in order to obtain luxuries for him which we never dreamed of purchasing for ourselves. Instead of increasing my domestic toils, John did all in his power to lessen them; and it always grieved him to see me iron a shirt, or wash the least article of clothing for him. "You have too much to do already; I cannot bear to give you the least additional work," he would say. And he generally expressed the greatest satisfaction at my method of managing the house, and preparing our simple fare. The little ones he treated with the most affectionate kindness, and gathered the whole flock about his knees the moment he came in to his meals.

On a wet day, when no work could be done abroad, Moodie took up his flute, or read aloud to us, while John and I sat down to work. The young emigrant, early cast upon the world and his own resources, was an excellent hand at the needle. He would make or mend a shirt with the greatest precision and neatness, and cut out and manufacture his canvas trousers and loose summer-coats with as much adroitness as the most experienced tailor; darn his socks, and mend his boots and shoes, and often volunteered to assist me in knitting the coarse yarn of the country into socks for the children, while he made them moccasins from the dressed deer-skins that we obtained from the Indians.

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Scrupulously neat and clean in his person, the only thing which seemed to ruffle his calm temper was the dirty work of logging; he hated to come in from the field with his person and clothes begrimed with charcoal and smoke. Old Jenny used to laugh at him for not being able to eat his meals without first washing his hands and face.

“Och! my dear heart, yer too particular intirely; we’ve no time in the woods to be clane.” She would say to him, in answer to his request for soap and a towel, “An’ is it soap yer a-wantin’? I tell yer that that same is not to the fore; bating the throuble of makin’, it’s little soap that the misthress can get to wash the clothes for us and the childher, widout yer wastin’ it in makin’ yer purty skin as white as a leddy’s. Do, darlint, go down to the lake and wash there; that basin is big enough, any how.” And John would laugh, and go down to the lake to wash, in order to appease the wrath of the old woman. John had a great dislike to cats, and even regarded with an evil eye our old pet cat, Peppermint, who had taken a great fancy to share his bed and board.

“If I tolerate our own cat,” he would say, “I will not put up with such a nuisance as your friend Emilia sends us in the shape of her ugly Tom. Why, where in the world do you think I found that beast sleeping last night?”

I expressed my ignorance.

“In our potato-pot. Now, you will agree with me that potatoes dressed with cat’s hair is not a very nice dish. The next time I catch Master Tom in the potato-pot, I will kill him.”

“John, you are not in earnest. Mrs. —— would never forgive any injury done to Tom, who is a great favourite.”

“Let her keep him at home, then. Think of the brute coming a mile through the woods to steal from us all he can find, and then sleeping off the effects of his depredations in the potato-pot.”

I could not help laughing, but I begged John by no means to annoy Emilia by hurting her cat.

The next day, while sitting in the parlour at work, I heard a dreadful squall, and rushed to the rescue. John was standing, with a flushed cheek, grasping a large stick in his hand, and Tom was lying dead at his feet.

“Oh, the poor cat!”

“Yes, I have killed him; but I am sorry for it now. What will Mrs. —— say?”

“She must not know it. I have told you the story of the pig that Jacob killed. You had better bury it with the pig.”

John was really sorry for having yielded, in a fit of passion, to do so cruel a thing; yet a few days after he got into a fresh scrape with Mrs. ——'s animals.

The hens were laying, up at the barn. John was very fond of fresh eggs, but some strange dog came daily and sucked the eggs. John had vowed to kill the first dog he found in the act. Mr. —— had a very fine bull-dog, which he valued very highly; but with Emilia, Chowder was an especial favourite. Bitterly had she bemoaned the fate of Tom, and many were the inquiries she made of us as to his sudden disappearance.

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One afternoon John ran into the room. “My dear Mrs. Moodie, what is Mrs. ——’s dog like?”

“A large bull-dog, brindled black and white.”

“Then, by Jove, I’ve shot him!”

“John, John! you mean me to quarrel in earnest with my friend. How could you do it?”

“Why, how the deuce should I know her dog from another? I caught the big thief in the very act of devouring the eggs from under your sitting hen, and I shot him dead without another thought. But I will bury him, and she will never find it out a bit more than she did who killed the cat.”

Some time after this, Emilia returned from a visit at P——. The first thing she told me was the loss of the dog. She was so vexed at it, she had had him advertised, offering a reward for his recovery.

I, of course, was called upon to sympathise with her, which I did with a very bad grace. “I did not like the beast,” I said; “he was cross and fierce, and I was afraid to go up to her house while he was there.”

“Yes; but to lose him so. It is so provoking; and him such a valuable animal. I could not tell how deeply she felt the loss. She would give four dollars to find out who had stolen him.”

How near she came to making the grand discovery the sequel will show.

Instead of burying him with the murdered pig and cat, John had scratched a shallow grave in the garden, and concealed the dead brute.

After tea, Emilia requested to look at the garden; and I, perfectly unconscious that it contained the remains of the murdered Chowder, led the way. Mrs. —— whilst gathering a handful of fine green-peas, suddenly stooped, and looking earnestly at the ground, called to me—

“Come here, Susanna, and tell me what has been buried here. It looks like the tail of a dog.”

She might have added, “of my dog.” Murder, it seems, will out. By some strange chance, the grave that covered the mortal remains of Chowder had been disturbed, and the black tail of the dog was sticking out.

“What can it be?” said I, with an air of perfect innocence. “Shall I call Jenny, and dig it up?”

“Oh, no, my dear; it has a shocking smell, but it does look very much like Chowder’s tail.”

“Impossible! How could it come among my peas?”

“True. Besides, I saw Chowder, with my own eyes, yesterday, following a team; and George C—— hopes to recover him for me.”

“Indeed! I am glad to hear it. How these mosquitoes sting. Shall we go back to the house?”

While we returned to the house, John, who had overheard the whole conversation, hastily disinterred the body of Chowder, and placed him in the same mysterious grave with Tom and the pig.

Moodie and his friend finished logging-up the eight acres which the former had cleared the previous winter; besides putting in a crop of peas and potatoes, and an acre of Indian corn, reserving the fallow for fall wheat, while we had the promise of a splendid crop of hay off the sixteen acres that had been cleared in 1834. We were all in high spirits and everything promised fair, until a very trifling circumstance again occasioned us much anxiety and trouble, and was the cause of our losing most of our crop.

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Moodie was asked to attend a bee, which was called to construct a corduroy-bridge over a very bad piece of road. He and J. E—— were obliged to go that morning with wheat to the mill, but Moodie lent his yoke of oxen for the work.

The driver selected for them at the bee was the brutal M——y, a man noted for his ill-treatment of cattle, especially if the animals did not belong to him. He gave one of the oxen such a severe blow over the loins with a handspike that the creature came home perfectly disabled, just as we wanted his services in the hay-field and harvest.

Moodie had no money to purchase, or even to hire a mate for the other ox; but he and John hoped that by careful attendance upon the injured animal he might be restored to health in a few days. They conveyed him to a deserted clearing, a short distance from the farm, where he would be safe from injury from the rest of the cattle; and early every morning we went in the canoe to carry poor Duke a warm mash, and to watch the progress of his recovery.

Ah, ye who revel in this world's wealth, how little can you realise the importance which we, in our poverty, attached to the life of this valuable animal! Yes, it even became the subject of prayer, for the bread for ourselves and our little ones depended greatly upon his recovery. We were doomed to disappointment. After nursing him with the greatest attention and care for some weeks, the animal grew daily worse, and suffered such intense agony, as he lay groaning upon the ground, unable to rise, that John shot him to put him out of pain.

Here, then, were we left without oxen to draw in our hay, or secure our other crops. A neighbour, who had an odd ox, kindly lent us the use of him, when he was not employed on his own farm; and John and Moodie gave their own work for the occasional loan of a yoke of oxen for a day. But with all these drawbacks, and in spite of the assistance of old Jenny and myself in the field, a great deal of the produce was damaged before it could be secured. The whole summer we had to labour under this disadvantage. Our neighbours were all too busy to give us any help, and their own teams were employed in saving their crops. Fortunately, the few acres of wheat we had to reap were close to the barn, and we carried the sheaves thither by hand; old Jenny proving an invaluable help, both in the harvest and hay-field.

Still, with all these misfortunes, Providence watched over us in a signal manner. We were never left entirely without food. Like the widow's cruise of oil, our means, though small, were never suffered to cease entirely. We had been for some days without meat, when Moodie came running in for his gun. A great she-bear was in the wheat-field at the edge of the wood, very busily employed in helping to harvest the crop. There was but one bullet, and a charge or two of buckshot, in the house; but Moodie started to the wood with the single bullet

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in his gun, followed by a little terrier dog that belonged to John E——. Old Jenny was busy at the wash-tub, but the moment she saw her master running up the clearing, and knew the cause, she left her work, and snatching up the carving-knife, ran after him, that in case the bear should have the best of the fight, she would be there to help "the masther." Finding her shoes incommode her, she flung them off, in order to run faster. A few minutes after, came the report of the gun, and I heard Moodie halloo to E——, who was cutting stakes for a fence in the wood. I hardly thought it possible that he could have killed the bear, but I ran to the door to listen. The children were all excitement, which the sight of the black monster, borne down the clearing upon two poles, increased to the wildest demonstrations of joy. Moodie and John were carrying the prize, and old Jenny, brandishing her carving-knife, followed in the rear.

The rest of the evening was spent in skinning, and cutting up, and salting the ugly creature, whose flesh filled a barrel with excellent meat, in flavour resembling beef, while the short grain and juicy nature of the flesh gave to it the tenderness of mutton. This was quite a Godsend, and lasted us until we were able to kill two large, fat hogs, in the fall.

A few nights after, Moodie and I encountered the mate of Mrs. Bruin, while returning from a visit to Emilia, in the very depth of the wood.

We had been invited to meet our friend's father and mother, who had come up on a short visit to the woods; and the evening passed away so pleasantly that it was near midnight before the little party of friends separated. The moon was down. The wood, through which we had to return, was very dark; the ground being low and swampy, and the trees thick and tall. There was, in particular, one very ugly spot, where a small creek crossed the road. This creek could only be passed by foot-passengers scrambling over a fallen tree, which, in a dark night, was not very easy to find.

I begged a torch of Mr. ——; but no torch could be found. Emilia laughed at my fears; still, knowing what a coward I was in the bush of a night, she found up about an inch of candle, which was all that remained from the evening's entertainment. This she put into an old lanthorn.

"It will not last you long; but it will carry you over the creek."

This was something gained, and off we set.

It was so dark in the bush, that our dim candle looked like a solitary red spark in the intense surrounding darkness, and scarcely served to show us the path.

We went chatting along, talking over the news of the evening, Hector running on before us, when I saw a pair of eyes glare upon us from the edge of the swamp, with the green, bright light emitted by the eyes of a cat.

“Did you see those terrible eyes, Moodie?” and I clung, trembling, to his arm.

“What eyes?” said he, feigning ignorance. “It’s too dark to see anything. The light is nearly gone, and, if you don’t quicken your pace, and cross the tree before it goes out, you will, perhaps, get your feet wet by falling into the creek.”

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“Good Heavens! I saw them again; and do just look at the dog.”

Hector stopped suddenly, and, stretching himself along the ground, his nose resting between his forepaws, began to whine and tremble. Presently he ran back to us, and crept under our feet. The cracking of branches, and the heavy tread of some large animal, sounded close beside us.

Moodie turned the open lanthorn in the direction from whence the sounds came, and shouted as loud as he could, at the same time endeavouring to urge forward the fear-stricken dog, whose cowardice was only equalled by my own.

Just at that critical moment the wick of the candle flickered a moment in the socket, and expired. We were left, in perfect darkness, alone with the bear—for such we supposed the animal to be.

My heart beat audibly; a cold perspiration was streaming down my face, but I neither shrieked nor attempted to run. I don’t know how Moodie got me over the creek. One of my feet slipped into the water, but, expecting, as I did every moment, to be devoured by master Bruin, that was a thing of no consequence. My husband was laughing at my fears, and every now and then he turned towards our companion, who continued following us at no great distance, and gave him an encouraging shout. Glad enough was I when I saw the gleam of the light from our little cabin window shine out among the trees; and, the moment I got within the clearing I ran, without stopping until I was safely within the house. John was sitting up for us, nursing Donald. He listened with great interest to our adventure with the bear, and thought that Bruin was very good to let us escape without one affectionate hug.

“Perhaps it would have been otherwise had he known, Moodie, that you had not only killed his good lady, but were dining sumptuously off her carcass every day.”

The bear was determined to have something in return for the loss of his wife. Several nights after this, our slumbers were disturbed, about midnight, by an awful yell, and old Jenny shook violently at our chamber door.

“Masther, masther, dear! Get up wid you this moment, or the bear will desthroy the cattle intirely.”

Half asleep, Moodie sprang from his bed, seized his gun, and ran out. I threw my large cloak round me, struck a light, and followed him to the door. The moment the latter was unclosed, some calves that we were rearing rushed into the kitchen, closely followed by the larger beasts, who came bellowing headlong down the hill, pursued by the bear.

It was a laughable scene, as shown by that paltry tallow-candle. Moodie, in his night-shirt, taking aim at something in the darkness, surrounded by the terrified animals; old

Jenny, with a large knife in her hand, holding on to the white skirts of her master's garment, making outcry loud enough to frighten away all the wild beasts in the bush—-herself almost in a state of nudity.

"Och, masther, dear! don't timpt the ill-conditioned crathur wid charging too near; think of the wife and the childher. Let me come at the rampaging baste, an' I'll stick the knife into the heart of him."

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Moodie fired. The bear retreated up the clearing, with a low growl. Moodie and Jenny pursued him some way, but it was too dark to discern any object at a distance. I, for my part, stood at the open door, laughing until the tears ran down my cheeks, at the glaring eyes of the oxen, their ears erect, and their tails carried gracefully on a level with their backs, as they stared at me and the light, in blank astonishment. The noise of the gun had just roused John E—— from his slumbers. He was no less amused than myself, until he saw that a fine yearling heifer was bleeding, and found, upon examination, that the poor animal, having been in the claws of the bear, was dangerously, if not mortally hurt.

“I hope,” he cried, “that the brute has not touched my foal!” I pointed to the black face of the filly peeping over the back of an elderly cow.

“You see, John, that Bruin preferred veal; there’s your ‘horsey,’ as Dunbar calls her, safe, and laughing at you.”

Moodie and Jenny now returned from the pursuit of the bear. E—— fastened all the cattle into the back yard, close to the house. By daylight he and Moodie had started in chase of Bruin, whom they tracked by his blood some way into the bush; but here he entirely escaped their search.

THE BEARS OF CANADA

Oh! *Bear* me from this savage land of *bears*,
For ’tis indeed *unbearable* to me:
I’d rather cope with vilest worldly cares,
Or writhe with cruel sickness of the sea.
Oh! *Bear* me to my own *bear* land of hills,[1]
Where I’d be sure brave *bear*-legg’d lads to see—
bear cakes, *bear* rocks, and whiskey stills,
And *bear*-legg’d nymphs, to smile once more on me.

I’d *bear* the heat, I’d *bear* the freezing air
Of equatorial realm or Arctic sea,
I’d sit all *bear* at night, and watch the Northern *bear*,
And bless my soul that he was far from me.
I’d *bear* the poor-rates, tithes, and all the ills
John Bull must *bear*, (who takes them all, poor sinner!
As patients do, when forced to gulp down pills,
And water-gruel drink in lieu of dinner).

I’d *bear* the *bareness* of all barren lands
Before I’d *bear* the *bearishness* of this;

bare head, *bear* feet, *bear* legs, *bear* hands,
bear everything, but want of social bliss.
But should I die in this drear land of *bears*,
Oh! ship me off, my friends, discharge the sable wearers,
For if you don’t, in spite of priests and prayers,
The *bears* will come, and eat up corpse and *bearers*.

J.W.D.M.

[1] The Orkney Isles.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE OUTBREAK

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Can a corrupted stream pour through the land
Health-giving waters? Can the slave, who lures
His wretched followers with the hope of gain,
Feel in his bosom the immortal fire
That bound a Wallace to his country's cause,
And bade the Thracian shepherd cast away
Rome's galling yoke; while the astonish'd world—
Rapt into admiration at the deed—
Paus'd, ere she crush'd, with overwhelming force,
The man who fought to win a glorious grave?

The long-protracted harvest was at length brought to a close. Moodie had procured another ox from Dummer, by giving a note at six months date for the payment; and he and John E—— were in the middle of sowing their fall crop of wheat, when the latter received a letter from the old country, which conveyed to him intelligence of the death of his mother, and of a legacy of two hundred pounds. It was necessary for him to return to claim the property, and though we felt his loss severely, we could not, without great selfishness, urge him to stay. John had formed an attachment to a young lady in the country, who, like himself, possessed no property. Their engagement, which had existed several years, had been dropped, from its utter hopelessness, by mutual consent. Still the young people continued to love each other, and to look forward to better days, when their prospects might improve so far that E—— would be able to purchase a bush farm, and raise a house, however lowly, to shelter his Mary.

He, like our friend Malcolm, had taken a fancy to buy a part of our block of land, which he could cultivate in partnership with Moodie, without being obliged to hire, when the same barn, cattle, and implements would serve for both. Anxious to free himself from the thraldom of debts which pressed him sore, Moodie offered to part with two hundred acres at less than they cost us, and the bargain was to be considered as concluded directly the money was forthcoming.

It was a sorrowful day when our young friend left us; he had been a constant inmate in the house for nine months, and not one unpleasant word had ever passed between us. He had rendered our sojourn in the woods more tolerable by his society, and sweetened our bitter lot by his friendship and sympathy. We both regarded him as a brother, and parted with him with sincere regret. As to old Jenny, she lifted up her voice and wept, consigning him to the care and protection of all the saints in the Irish calendar.

For several days after John left us, a deep gloom pervaded the house. Our daily toil was performed with less cheerfulness and alacrity; we missed him at the evening board, and at the evening fire; and the children asked each day, with increasing earnestness, when dear E—— would return.

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Moodie continued sowing his fall wheat. The task was nearly completed, and the chill October days were fast verging upon winter, when towards the evening of one of them he contrived—I know not how—to crawl down from the field at the head of the hill, faint and pale, and in great pain. He had broken the small bone of his leg. In dragging, among the stumps, the heavy machine (which is made in the form of the letter V, and is supplied with large iron teeth), had hitched upon a stump, and being swung off again by the motion of the oxen, had come with great force against his leg. At first he was struck down, and for some time was unable to rise; but at length he contrived to unyoke the team, and crawled partly on his hands and knees down the clearing.

What a sad, melancholy evening that was! Fortune seemed never tired of playing us some ugly trick. The hope which had so long sustained me seemed about to desert me altogether; when I saw him on whom we all depended for subsistence, and whose kindly voice ever cheered us under the pressure of calamity, smitten down helpless, all my courage and faith in the goodness of the Divine Father seemed to forsake me, and I wept long and bitterly.

The next morning I went in search of a messenger to send to Peterborough for the doctor; but though I found and sent the messenger, the doctor never came. Perhaps he did not like to incur the expense of a fatiguing journey with small chance of obtaining a sufficient remuneration.

Our dear sufferer contrived, with assistance, to bandage his leg; and after the first week of rest had expired, he amused himself with making a pair of crutches, and in manufacturing Indian paddles for the canoe, axe-handles, and yokes for the oxen. It was wonderful with what serenity he bore this unexpected affliction.

Buried in the obscurity of those woods, we knew nothing, heard nothing of the political state of the country, and were little aware of the revolution which was about to work a great change for us and for Canada.

The weather continued remarkably mild. The first great snow, which for years had ordinarily fallen between the 10th and 15th of November, still kept off. November passed on, and as all our firewood had to be chopped by old Jenny during the lameness of my husband, I was truly grateful to God for the continued mildness of the weather.

On the 4th of December—that great day of the outbreak—Moodie was determined to take advantage of the open state of the lake to carry a large grist up to Y——'s mill. I urged upon him the danger of a man attempting to manage a canoe in rapid water, who was unable to stand without crutches; but Moodie saw that the children would need bread, and he was anxious to make the experiment.

Finding that I could not induce him to give up the journey, I determined to go with him. Old Wittals, who happened to come down that morning, assisted in placing the bags of

wheat in the little vessel, and helped to place Moodie at the stern. With a sad, foreboding spirit I assisted to push off from the shore.

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The air was raw and cold, but our sail was not without its pleasure.

The lake was very full from the heavy rains, and the canoe bounded over the waves with a free, springy motion. A slight frost had hung every little bush and spray along the shores with sparkling crystals. The red pigeon-berries, shining through their coating of ice, looked like cornelian beads set in silver, and strung from bush to bush. We found the rapids at the entrance of Bessikakoon Lake very hard to stem, and were so often carried back by the force of the water, that, cold as the air was, the great exertion which Moodie had to make use of to obtain the desired object brought the perspiration out in big drops upon his forehead. His long confinement to the house and low diet had rendered him very weak.

The old miller received us in the most hearty and hospitable manner; and complimented me upon my courage in venturing upon the water in such cold, rough weather. Norah was married, but the kind Betty provided us an excellent dinner, while we waited for the grist to be ground.

It was near four o'clock when we started on our return. If there had been danger in going up the stream, there was more in coming down. The wind had changed, the air was frosty, keen, and biting, and Moodie's paddle came up from every dip into the water loaded with ice. For my part, I had only to sit still at the bottom of the canoe, as we floated rapidly down with wind and tide. At the landing we were met by old Jenny, who had a long story to tell us, of which we could make neither head nor tail—how some gentleman had called during our absence, and left a large paper, all about the Queen and the Yankees; that there was war between Canada and the States; that Toronto had been burnt, and the governor killed, and I know not what other strange and monstrous statements. After much fatigue, Moodie climbed the hill, and we were once more safe by our own fireside. Here we found the elucidation of Jenny's marvelous tales: a copy of the Queen's proclamation, calling upon all loyal gentlemen to join in putting down the unnatural rebellion.

A letter from my sister explained the nature of the outbreak, and the astonishment with which the news had been received by all the settlers in the bush. My brother and my sister's husband had already gone off to join some of the numerous bands of gentlemen who were collecting from all quarters to march to the aid of Toronto, which it was said was besieged by the rebel force. She advised me not to suffer Moodie to leave home in his present weak state; but the spirit of my husband was aroused, he instantly obeyed what he considered the imperative call of duty, and told me to prepare him a few necessaries, that he might be ready to start early in the morning.

Little sleep visited our eyes that night. We talked over the strange news for hours; our coming separation, and the probability that if things were as bad as they appeared to be, we might never meet again. Our affairs were in such a desperate condition that Moodie anticipated that any change must be for the better; it was impossible for them to

be worse. But the poor, anxious wife thought only of a parting which to her put a finishing stroke to all her misfortunes.

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Before the cold, snowy morning broke, we were all stirring. The children, who had learned that their father was preparing to leave them, were crying and clinging round his knees. His heart was too deeply affected to eat; the meal passed over in silence, and he rose to go. I put on my hat and shawl to accompany him through the wood as far as my sister Mrs. T——'s. The day was like our destiny, cold, dark, and lowering. I gave the dear invalid his crutches, and we commenced our sorrowful walk. Then old Jenny's lamentations burst forth, as, flinging her arms round my husband's neck, she kissed and blessed him after the fashion of her country.

"Och hone! Och hone!" she cried, wringing her hands, "masther dear, why will you lave the wife and the childher? The poor crathur is breakin' her heart intirely at partin' wid you. Shure an' the war is nothin' to you, that you must be goin' into danger; an' you wid a broken leg. Och hone! Och hone! Come back to your home—you will be kilt, and thin what will become of the wife and the wee bairns?"

Her cries and lamentations followed us into the wood. At my sister's, Moodie and I parted; and with a heavy heart I retraced my steps through the wood. For once, I forgot all my fears. I never felt the cold. Sad tears were flowing over my cheeks; when I entered the house, hope seemed to have deserted me, and for upwards of an hour I lay upon the bed and wept.

Poor Jenny did her best to comfort me, but all joy had vanished with him who was my light of life.

Left in the most absolute uncertainty as to the real state of public affairs, I could only conjecture what might be the result of this sudden outbreak. Several poor settlers called at the house during the day, on their way down to Peterborough, but they brought with them the most exaggerated accounts. There had been a battle, they said, with the rebels, and the loyalists had been defeated; Toronto was besieged by sixty thousand men, and all the men in the backwoods were ordered to march instantly to the relief of the city.

In the evening, I received a note from Emilia, who was at Peterborough, in which she informed me that my husband had borrowed a horse of Mr. S——, and had joined a large party of two hundred volunteers, who had left that morning for Toronto; that there had been a battle with the insurgents; that Colonel Moodie had been killed, and the rebels had retreated; and that she hoped my husband would return in a few days.

The honest backwoodsman, perfectly ignorant of the abuses that had led to the present position of things, regarded the rebels as a set of monsters, for whom no punishment was too severe, and obeyed the call to arms with enthusiasm. The leader of the insurgents must have been astonished at the rapidity with which a large force was collected, as if by magic, to repel his designs. A great number of these volunteers were half-pay officers, many of whom had fought in

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the continental wars with the armies of Napoleon, and would have been found a host in themselves. I must own that my British spirit was fairly aroused, and as I could not aid in subduing the enemies of my beloved country with my arm, I did what little I could to serve the good cause with my pen. It may probably amuse my readers, to give them a few specimens of these loyal staves, which were widely circulated through the colony at the time.

AN ADDRESS TO THE FREEMEN OF CANADA

Canadians! will you join the band—
  The factious band—who dare oppose
The regal power of that bless'd land
  From whence your boasted freedom flows?
Brave children of a noble race,
  Guard well the altar and the hearth;
And never by your deeds disgrace
  The British sires who gave you birth.

What though your bones may never lie
  Beneath dear Albion's hallow'd sod,
Spurn the base wretch who dare defy,
  In arms, his country and his God!
Whose callous bosom cannot feel
  That he who acts a traitor's part,
Remorselessly uplifts the steel
  To plunge it in a parent's heart.

Canadians! will you see the flag,
  Beneath whose folds your fathers bled,
Supplanted by the vilest rag[1]
  That ever host to rapine led?
Thou emblem of a tyrant's sway,
  Thy triple hues are dyed in gore;
Like his, thy power has pass'd away—
  Like his, thy short-lived triumph's o'er.

Ay! Let the trampled despot's fate
  Forewarn the rash, misguided band
To sue for mercy, ere too late,
  Nor scatter ruin o'er the land.
The baffled traitor, doomed to bear

A people’s hate, his colleagues’ scorn,
Defeated by his own despair,
Will curse the hour that he was born!

By all the blood for Britain shed
On many a glorious battle-field,
To the free winds her standard spread,
Nor to these base insurgents yield.
With loyal bosoms beating high,
In your good cause securely trust;
“God and Victoria!” be your cry,
And crush the traitors to the dust.

[1] The tri-coloured flag assumed by the rebels.

This outpouring of a national enthusiasm, which I found it impossible to restrain, was followed by

THE OATH OF THE CANADIAN VOLUNTEERS

Huzza for England!—May she claim
Our fond devotion ever;
And, by the glory of her name,
Our brave forefathers’ honest fame,
We swear—no foe shall sever
Her children from their parent’s side;
Though parted by the wave,
In weal or woe, whate’er betide,
We swear to die, or save
Her honour from the rebel band
Whose crimes pollute our injured land!

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Let the foe come—we will not shrink
  To meet them if they dare;
Well must they fight, ere rashly think
To rend apart one sacred link
  That binds our country fair
To that dear isle, from whence we sprung;
  Which gave our fathers birth;
Whose glorious deeds her bards have sung;
  The unrivall'd of the earth.
The highest privilege we claim,
To own her sway—to bear her name.

Then, courage, loyal volunteers!
  God will defend the right;
That thought will banish slavish fears,
That blessed consciousness still cheers
  The soldier in the fight.
The stars for us shall never burn,
  The stripes may frighten slaves,
The Briton's eye will proudly turn
  Where Britain's standard waves.
Beneath its folds, if Heaven requires,
We'll die, as died of old our sires!

In a week, Moodie returned. So many volunteers had poured into Toronto that the number of friends was likely to prove as disastrous as that of enemies, on account of the want of supplies to maintain them all. The companies from the back townships had been remanded, and I received with delight my own again. But this re-union did not last long. Several regiments of militia were formed to defend the colony, and to my husband was given the rank of captain in one of those then stationed in Toronto.

On the 20th of January, 1838, he bade us a long adieu. I was left with old Jenny and the children to take care of the farm. It was a sad, dull time. I could bear up against all trials with him to comfort and cheer me, but his long-continued absence cast a gloom upon my spirit not easily to be shaken off. Still his very appointment to this situation was a signal act of mercy. From his full pay, he was enabled to liquidate many pressing debts, and to send home from time to time sums of money to procure necessaries for me and the little ones. These remittances were greatly wanted; but I demurred before laying them out for comforts which we had been so long used to dispense with. It seemed almost criminal to purchase any article of luxury, such as tea or sugar, while a debt remained unpaid.

The Y——y's were very pressing for the thirty pounds that we owed them for the clearing; but they had such a firm reliance upon the honour of my husband, that, poor

and pressed for money as they were, they never sued us. I thought it would be a pleasing surprise to Moodie, if, with the sums of money which I occasionally received from him, I could diminish this debt, which had always given him the greatest uneasiness; and, my resolution once formed, I would not allow any temptation to shake it.

The money was always transmitted to Dummer. I only reserved the sum of two dollars a month, to pay a little lad to chop wood for us. After a time, I began to think the Y——-y's were gifted with secondsight; for I never received a money-letter, but the very next day I was sure to see some of the family.

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Just at this period I received a letter from a gentleman, requesting me to write for a magazine (the Literary Garland) just started in Montreal, with promise to remunerate me for my labours. Such an application was like a gleam of light springing up in the darkness; it seemed to promise the dawning of a brighter day. I had never been able to turn my thoughts towards literature during my sojourn in the bush. When the body is fatigued with labour, unwonted and beyond its strength, the mind is in no condition for mental occupation.

The year before, I had been requested by an American author, of great merit, to contribute to the North American Review, published for several years in Philadelphia; and he promised to remunerate me in proportion to the success of the work. I had contrived to write several articles after the children were asleep, though the expense even of the stationery and the postage of the manuscripts was severely felt by one so destitute of means; but the hope of being of the least service to those dear to me cheered me to the task. I never realised anything from that source; but I believe it was not the fault of the editor. Several other American editors had written to me to furnish them with articles; but I was unable to pay the postage of heavy packets to the States, and they could not reach their destination without being paid to the frontier. Thus, all chance of making anything in that way had been abandoned. I wrote to Mr. L——, and frankly informed him how I was situated. In the most liberal manner, he offered to pay the postage on all manuscripts to his office, and left me to name my own terms of remuneration. This opened up a new era in my existence; and for many years I have found in this generous man, to whom I am still personally unknown, a steady friend. I actually shed tears of joy over the first twenty-dollar bill I received from Montreal. It was my own; I had earned it with my own hand; and it seemed to my delighted fancy to form the nucleus out of which a future independence for my family might arise. I no longer retired to bed when the labours of the day were over. I sat up, and wrote by the light of a strange sort of candles, that Jenny called “sluts,” and which the old woman manufactured out of pieces of old rags, twisted together and dipped in pork lard, and stuck in a bottle. They did not give a bad light, but it took a great many of them to last me for a few hours.

The faithful old creature regarded my writings with a jealous eye. “An’, shure, it’s killin’ yerself that you are intirely. You were thin enough before you took to the pen; scribblin’ an’ scrabblin’ when you should be in bed an’ asleep. What good will it be to the childhren, dear heart! If you die afore your time, by wastin’ your strength afther that fashion?”

Jenny never could conceive the use of books. “Sure, we can live and die widout them. It’s only a waste of time botherin’ your brains wid the like of them; but, thanks goodness! the lard will soon be all done, an’ thin we shall hear you spakin’ again, instead of sittin’ there doubled up all night, desthroying your eyes wid porin’ over the dirthy writin’.”

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As the sugar-making season drew near, Jenny conceived the bold thought of making a good lump of sugar, that the “childher” might have something to “ate” with their bread during the summer. We had no sugar-kettle, but a neighbour promised to lend us his, and to give us twenty-eight troughs, on condition that we gave him half the sugar we made. These terms were rather hard, but Jenny was so anxious to fulfil the darling object that we consented. Little Sol. and the old woman made some fifty troughs more, the trees were duly tapped, a shanty in the bush was erected of small logs and brush and covered in at the top with straw; and the old woman and Solomon, the hired boy, commenced operations.

The very first day, a terrible accident happened to us; a large log fell upon the sugar-kettle—the borrowed sugar-kettle—and cracked it, spilling all the sap, and rendering the vessel, which had cost four dollars, useless. We were all in dismay. Just at that time Old Wittals happened to pass, on his way to Peterborough. He very good-naturedly offered to get the kettle repaired for us; which, he said, could be easily done by a rivet and an iron hoop. But where was the money to come from? I thought awhile. Katie had a magnificent coral and bells, the gift of her godfather; I asked the dear child if she would give it to buy another kettle for Mr. T——. She said, “I would give ten times as much to help mamma.”

I wrote a little note to Emilia, who was still at her father’s; and Mr. W——, the storekeeper, sent us a fine sugar-kettle back by Wittals, and also the other mended, in exchange for the useless piece of finery. We had now two kettles at work, to the joy of Jenny, who declared that it was a lucky fairy who had broken the old kettle.

While Jenny was engaged in boiling and gathering the sap in the bush, I sugared off the syrup in the house; an operation watched by the children with intense interest. After standing all day over the hot stove-fire, it was quite a refreshment to breathe the pure air at night. Every evening I ran up to see Jenny in the bush, singing and boiling down the sap in the front of her little shanty. The old woman was in her element, and afraid of nothing under the stars; she slept beside her kettles at night, and snapped her fingers at the idea of the least danger. She was sometimes rather despotic in her treatment of her attendant, Sol. One morning, in particular, she bestowed upon the lad a severe cuffing.

I ran up the clearing to the rescue, when my ears were assailed by the “boo-hooing” of the boy.

“What has happened? Why do you beat the child, Jenny?”

“It’s jist, thin, I that will bate him—the unlucky omadhawn! Has not he spilt and spiled two buckets of syrup, that I have been the live-long night bilin’. Sorra wid him; I’d like to strip the skin off him, I would! Musha! but ’tis enough to vex a saint.”

“Ah, Jenny!” blubbered the poor boy, “but you have no mercy. You forget that I have but one eye, and that I could not see the root which caught my foot and threw me down.”

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“Faix! an’ ’tis a pity that you have the one eye, when you don’t know how to make a betther use of it,” muttered the angry dame, as she picked up the pails, and, pushing him on before her, beat a retreat into the bush.

I was heartily sick of the sugar-making, long before the season was over; however, we were well paid for our trouble. Besides one hundred and twelve pounds of fine soft sugar, as good as Muscovado, we had six gallons of molasses, and a keg containing six gallons of excellent vinegar.

Fifty pounds went to Mr. T——, for the use of his kettle; and the rest (with the exception of a cake for Emilia, which I had drained in a wet flannel bag until it was almost as white as loaf sugar), we kept for our own use. There was no lack, this year, of nice preserves and pickled cucumbers, dainties found in every native Canadian establishment.

Besides gaining a little money with my pen, I practised a method of painting birds and butterflies upon the white, velvety surface of the large fungi that grow plentifully upon the bark of the sugar-maple. These had an attractive appearance; and my brother, who was a captain in one of the provisional regiments, sold a great many of them among the officers, without saying by whom they were painted. One rich lady in Peterborough, long since dead, ordered two dozen to send as curiosities to England. These, at one shilling each, enabled me to buy shoes for the children, who, during our bad times, had been forced to dispense with these necessary coverings. How often, during the winter season, have I wept over their little chapped feet, literally washing them with my tears! But these days were to end; Providence was doing great things for us; and Hope raised at last her drooping head to regard with a brighter glance the far-off future.

Slowly the winter rolled away; but he to whom every thought turned was still distant from his humble home. The receipt of an occasional letter from him was my only solace during his long absence, and we were still too poor to indulge often in this luxury. My poor Katie was as anxious as her mother to hear from her father; and when I did get the long-looked-for prize, she would kneel down before me, her little elbows resting on my knees, her head thrown back, and tears trickling down her innocent cheeks, eagerly drinking in every word.

The spring brought us plenty of work; we had potatoes and corn to plant, and the garden to cultivate. By lending my oxen for two days’ work, I got Wittals, who had no oxen, to drag me in a few acres of oats, and to prepare the land for potatoes and corn. The former I dropped into the earth, while Jenny covered them up with the hoe.

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Our garden was well dug and plentifully manured, the old woman bringing the manure, which had lain for several years at the barn door, down to the plot, in a large Indian basket placed upon a hand-sleigh. We had soon every sort of vegetable sown, with plenty of melons and cucumbers, and all our beds promised a good return. There were large flights of ducks upon the lake every night and morning; but though we had guns, we did not know how to use them. However, I thought of a plan, which I flattered myself might prove successful; I got Sol to plant two stakes in the shallow water, near the rice beds, and to these I attached a slender rope made by braiding long strips of the inner bark of the basswood together; to these again I fastened, at regular intervals, about a quarter of a yard of whipcord, headed by a strong perch-hook. These hooks I baited with fish offal, leaving them to float just under the water. Early next morning, I saw a fine black duck fluttering upon the line. The boy ran down with the paddles, but before he could reach the spot, the captive got away by carrying the hook and line with him. At the next stake he found upon the hooks a large eel and a cat-fish.

I had never before seen one of those whiskered, toad-like natives of the Canadian waters (so common to the Bay of Quinte, where they grow to a great size), that I was really terrified at the sight of the hideous beast, and told Sol to throw it away. In this I was very foolish, for they are esteemed good eating in many parts of Canada; but to me, the sight of the reptile-like thing is enough—it is uglier, and far more disgusting-looking than a toad.

When the trees came into leaf, and the meadows were green and flushed with flowers, the poor children used to talk constantly to me of their father's return; their innocent prattle made me very sad. Every evening we walked into the wood, along the path that he must come whenever he did return home, to meet him, and though it was a vain hope, and the walk was taken just to amuse the little ones, I used to be silly enough to feel deeply disappointed when we returned alone. Donald, who was a mere baby when his father left us, could just begin to put words together. "Who is papa?" "When will he come?" "Will he come by the road?" "Will he come in a canoe?" The little creature's curiosity to see this unknown father was really amusing; and oh! how I longed to present the little fellow, with his rosy cheeks and curling hair, to his father; he was so fair, so altogether charming in my eyes. Emilia had called him Cedric the Saxon; and he well suited the name, with his frank, honest disposition, and large, loving blue eyes.

June had commenced; the weather was very warm, and Mr. T—— had sent for the loan of old Jenny to help him for a day with his potatoes. I had just prepared dinner when the old woman came shrieking like a mad thing down the clearing, and waving her hands towards me. I could not imagine what had happened.

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“Ninny’s mad!” whispered Dunbar; “she’s the old girl for making a noise.”

“Joy! Joy!” bawled out the old woman, now running breathlessly toward us. “The masther’s come—the masther’s come!”

“Where?—where?”

“Jist above in the wood. Goodness gracious! I have run to let you know—so fast—that my heart—is like to—break.”

Without stopping to comfort poor Jenny, off started the children and myself, at the very top of our speed; but I soon found that I could not run—I was too much agitated. I got to the head of the bush, and sat down upon a fallen tree. The children sprang forward like wild kids, all but Donald, who remained with his old nurse. I covered my face with my hands; my heart, too, was beating audibly; and now that he was come, and was so near me, I scarcely could command strength to meet him. The sound of happy young voices roused me up; the children were leading him along in triumph; and he was bending down to them, all smiles, but hot and tired with his long journey. It was almost worth our separation, that blissful meeting. In a few minutes he was at home, and the children upon his knees. Katie stood silently holding his hand, but Addie and Dunbar had a thousand things to tell him. Donald was frightened at his military dress, but he peeped at him from behind my gown, until I caught and placed him in his father’s arms.

His leave of absence only extended to a fortnight. It had taken him three days to come all the way from Lake Erie, where his regiment was stationed, at Point Abino; and the same time would be consumed in his return. He could only remain with us eight days. How soon they fled away! How bitter was the thought of parting with him again! He had brought money to pay the Y——y’s. How surprised he was to find their large debt more than half liquidated. How gently did he chide me for depriving myself and the children of the little comforts he had designed for us, in order to make this sacrifice. But never was self-denial more fully rewarded; I felt happy in having contributed in the least to pay a just debt to kind and worthy people. You must become poor yourself before you can fully appreciate the good qualities of the poor—before you can sympathise with them, and fully recognise them as your brethren in the flesh. Their benevolence to each other, exercised amidst want and privation, as far surpasses the munificence of the rich towards them, as the exalted philanthropy of Christ and his disciples does the Christianity of the present day. The rich man gives from his abundance; the poor man shares with a distressed comrade his all.

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One short, happy week too soon fled away, and we were once more alone. In the fall, my husband expected the regiment in which he held his commission would be reduced, which would again plunge us into the same distressing poverty. Often of a night I revolved these things in my mind, and perplexed myself with conjectures as to what in future was to become of us. Although he had saved all he could from his pay, it was impossible to pay several hundreds of pounds of debt; and the steam-boat stock still continued a dead letter. To remain much longer in the woods was impossible, for the returns from the farm scarcely fed us; and but for the clothing sent us by friends from home, who were not aware of our real difficulties, we should have been badly off indeed.

I pondered over every plan that thought could devise; at last, I prayed to the Almighty to direct me as to what would be the best course for us to pursue. A sweet assurance stole over me, and soothed my spirit, that God would provide for us, as He had hitherto done—that a great deal of our distress arose from want of faith. I was just sinking into a calm sleep when the thought seemed whispered into my soul, “Write to the Governor; tell him candidly all you have suffered during your sojourn in this country; and trust to God for the rest.”

At first I paid little heed to this suggestion; but it became so importunate that at last I determined to act upon it as if it were a message sent from heaven. I rose from my bed, struck a light, sat down, and wrote a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir George Arthur, a simple statement of facts, leaving it to his benevolence to pardon the liberty I had taken in addressing him.

I asked of him to continue my husband in the militia service, in the same regiment in which he now held the rank of captain, which, by enabling him to pay our debts, would rescue us from our present misery. Of the political character of Sir George Arthur I knew nothing. I addressed him as a man and a Christian, and I acknowledge, with the deepest and most heartfelt gratitude, the generous kindness of his conduct towards us.

Before the day dawned, my letter was ready for the post. The first secret I ever had from my husband was the writing of that letter; and, proud and sensitive as he was, and averse to asking the least favour of the great, I was dreadfully afraid that the act I had just done would be displeasing to him; still, I felt resolutely determined to send it. After giving the children their breakfast, I walked down and read it to my brother-in-law, who was not only much pleased with its contents, but took it down himself to the post-office.

Shortly after, I received a letter from my husband, informing me that the regiment had been reduced, and that he should be home in time to get in the harvest. Most anxiously I awaited a reply to my application to the Governor; but no reply came.

The first week in August our dear Moodie came home, and brought with him, to our no small joy, J. E——, who had just returned from Ireland. E—— had been disappointed

about the money, which was subject to litigation; and, tired of waiting at home until the tedious process of the law should terminate, he had come back to the woods, and, before night, was reinstated in his old quarters.

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His presence made Jenny all alive; she dared him at once to a trial of skill with her in the wheat-field, which E—— prudently declined. He did not expect to stay longer in Canada than the fall, but, whilst he did stay, he was to consider our house his home.

That harvest was the happiest we ever spent in the bush. We had enough of the common necessaries of life. A spirit of peace and harmony pervaded our little dwelling, for the most affectionate attachment existed among its members. We were not troubled with servants, for the good old Jenny we regarded as an humble friend, and were freed, by that circumstance, from many of the cares and vexations of a bush life. Our evening excursions on the lake were doubly enjoyed after the labours of the day, and night brought us calm and healthful repose.

The political struggles that convulsed the country were scarcely echoed in the depths of those old primeval forests, though the expulsion of Mackenzie from Navy Island, and the burning of the Caroline by Captain Drew, had been discussed on the farthest borders of civilisation. With a tribute to the gallant conduct of that brave officer, I will close this chapter:—

THE BURNING OF THE CAROLINE

A sound is on the midnight deep—
  The voice of waters vast;
And onward, with resistless sweep,
  The torrent rushes past,
In frantic chase, wave after wave,
The crowding surges press, and rave
  Their mingled might to cast
Adown Niagara's giant steep;
The fretted billows foaming leap
  With wild tumultuous roar;
The clashing din ascends on high,
In deaf'ning thunders to the sky,
  And shakes the rocky shore.

Hark! what strange sounds arise—
  'Tis not stern Nature's voice—
In mingled chorus to the skies!
  The waters in their depths rejoice.
Hark! on the midnight air
  A frantic cry uprose;
The yell of fierce despair,
  The shout of mortal foes;
And mark yon sudden glare,

Whose red, portentous gleam
Flashes on rock and stream
With strange, unearthly light;
What passing meteor’s beam
Lays bare the brow of night?

From yonder murky shore
What demon vessel glides,
Stemming the unstemm’d tides,
Where maddening breakers roar
In hostile surges round her path,
Or hiss, recoiling from her prow,
That reeling, staggers to their wrath;
While distant shores return the glow
That brightens from her burning frame,
And all above—around—below—
Is wrapt in ruddy flame?

Sail on!—sail on!—No mortal hand
Directs that vessel’s blazing course;
The vengeance of an injured land
Impels her with resistless force
’Midst breaking wave and fiery gleam,
O’er-canopied with clouds of smoke;

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Midway she stems the raging stream,
  And feels the rapids' thundering stroke;
Now buried deep, now whirl'd on high,
  She struggles with her awful doom,—
With frantic speed now hurries by
  To find a watery tomb.

Lo, poised upon the topmost surge,
  She shudders o'er the dark abyss;
The foaming waters round her hiss
  And hoarse waves ring her funeral dirge;
The chafing billows round her close;
  But ere her burning planks are riven,
Shoots up one ruddy spout of fire,—
  Her last farewell to earth and heaven.
Down, down to endless night she goes!
  So may the traitor's hope expire,
So perish all our country's foes!

Destruction's blazing star
  Has vanish'd from our sight;
The thunderbolt of war
  Is quench'd in endless night;
Nor sight, nor sound of fear
Startles the listening ear;
  Naught but the torrent's roar,
The dull, deep, heavy sound,
From out the dark profound,
  Echoes from shore to shore.
Where late the cry of blood
  Rang on the midnight air,
The mournful lapsing of the flood,
The wild winds in the lonely wood,
  Claim sole dominion there.

To thee, high-hearted Drew!
  And thy victorious band
Of heroes tried and true
A nation's thanks are due.
  Defender of an injured land!

Well hast thou taught the dastard foe
  That British honour never yields
To democratic influence, low,
  The glory of a thousand fields.

Justice to traitors, long delay'd,
  This night was boldly dealt by thee;
The debt of vengeance thou hast paid,
  And may the deed immortal be.
Thy outraged country shall bestow
  A lasting monument of fame,
The highest meed of praise below—
  A British patriot's deathless name!

CHAPTER XXIV

THE WHIRLWIND

[For the poem that heads this chapter, I am indebted to my brother, Mr. Strickland, of Douro, C.W.]

Dark, heavy clouds were gathering in the west,
  Wrapping the forest in funereal gloom;
Onward they roll'd, and rear'd each livid crest,
  Like Death's murk shadows frowning o'er earth's tomb.
From out the inky womb of that deep night
  Burst livid flashes of electric flame.
Whirling and circling with terrific might,
  In wild confusion on the tempest came.
Nature, awakening from her still repose,
  Shudders responsive to the whirlwind's shock,
Feels at her might heart convulsive throes,
  And all her groaning forests to earth's bosom rock.

But hark!—What means that hollow, rushing sound,
  That breaks the death-like stillness of the morn?
Red forked lightnings fiercely glare around,
  Sharp, crashing thunders on the winds are borne,
And see yon spiral column, black as night,
  Rearing triumphantly its wreathing form;
Ruin's abroad, and through the murky light—
  Drear desolation marks the spirit of the storm.

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S.S.

The 19th of August came, and our little harvest was all safely housed. Business called Moodie away for a few days to Cobourg. Jenny had gone to Dummer, to visit her friends, and J. E—— had taken a grist of the new wheat, which he and Moodie had threshed the day before, to the mill. I was consequently left alone with the children, and had a double portion of work to do. During their absence it was my lot to witness the most awful storm I ever beheld, and a vivid recollection of its terrors was permanently fixed upon my memory.

The weather had been intensely hot during the three preceding days, although the sun was entirely obscured by a blueish haze, which seemed to render the unusual heat of the atmosphere more oppressive. Not a breath of air stirred the vast forest, and the waters of the lake assumed a leaden hue. After passing a sleepless night, I arose, a little after day-break, to superintend my domestic affairs. E—— took his breakfast, and went off to the mill, hoping that the rain would keep off until after his return.

“It is no joke,” he said, “being upon these lakes in a small canoe, heavily laden, in a storm.”

Before the sun rose, the heavens were covered with hard-looking clouds, of a deep blue and black cast, fading away to white at their edges, and in the form resembling the long, rolling waves of a heavy sea—but with this difference, that the clouds were perfectly motionless, piled in long curved lines, one above the other, and so remained until four o’clock in the afternoon. The appearance of these clouds, as the sun rose above the horizon, was the most splendid that can be imagined, tinged up to the zenith with every shade of saffron, gold, rose-colour, scarlet, and crimson, fading away into the deepest violet. Never did the storm-fiend shake in the face of a day a more gorgeous banner; and, pressed as I was for time, I stood gazing like one entranced upon the magnificent pageant.

As the day advanced, the same blue haze obscured the sun, which frowned redly through his misty veil. At ten o’clock the heat was suffocating, and I extinguished the fire in the cooking-stove, determined to make our meals upon bread and milk, rather than add to the oppressive heat. The thermometer in the shade ranged from ninety-six to ninety-eight degrees, and I gave over my work and retired with the ones to the coolest part of the house. The young creatures stretched themselves upon the floor, unable to jump about or play; the dog lay panting in the shade; the fowls half-buried themselves in the dust, with open beaks and outstretched wings; all nature seemed to droop beneath the scorching heat.

Unfortunately for me, a gentlemen arrived about one o’clock from Kingston, to transact some business with my husband. He had not tasted food since six o’clock, and I was obliged to kindle the fire to prepare his dinner. It was one of the hardest tasks I ever

performed; I almost fainted with the heat, and most inhospitably rejoiced when his dinner was over, and I saw him depart. Shortly after, my friend Mrs. C—— and her brother called in, on their way from Peterborough.

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“How do you bear the heat?” asked Mrs. C——. “This is one of the hottest days I ever remember to have experienced in this part of the province. I am afraid that it will end in a hurricane, or what the Lower Canadians term ‘l’orage.’”

About four o’clock they rose to go. I urged them to stay longer. “No,” said Mrs. C——, “the sooner we get home the better. I think we can reach it before the storm breaks.”

I took Donald in my arms, and my eldest boy by the hand, and walked with them to the brow of the hill, thinking that the air would be cooler in the shade. In this I was mistaken. The clouds over our heads hung so low, and the heat was so great, that I was soon glad to retrace my steps.

The moment I turned round to face the lake, I was surprised at the change that had taken place in the appearance of the heavens. The clouds, that had before lain so motionless, were now in rapid motion, hurrying and chasing each other round the horizon. It was a strangely awful sight. Before I felt a breath of the mighty blast that had already burst on the other side of the lake, branches of trees, leaves, and clouds of dust were whirled across the lake, whose waters rose in long sharp furrows, fringed with foam, as if moved in their depths by some unseen but powerful agent.

Panting with terror, I just reached the door of the house as the hurricane swept up the hill, crushing and overturning everything in its course. Spell-bound, I stood at the open door, with clasped hands, unable to speak, rendered dumb and motionless by the terrible grandeur of the scene; while little Donald, who could not utter many intelligible words, crept to my feet, appealing to me for protection, while his rosy cheeks paled even to marble whiteness. The hurrying clouds gave to the heavens the appearance of a pointed dome, round which the lightning played in broad ribbons of fire. The roaring of the thunder, the rushing of the blast, the impetuous down-pouring of the rain, and the crash of falling trees were perfectly deafening; and in the midst of this uproar of the elements, old Jenny burst in, drenched with wet, and half-dead with fear.

“The Lord preserve us!” she cried, “this surely is the day of judgment. Fifty trees fell across my very path, between this an’ the creek. Mrs. C—— just reached her brother’s clearing a few minutes before a great oak fell on her very path. What thunther!—what lightning! Misthress, dear!—it’s turn’d so dark, I can only jist see yer face.”

Glad enough was I of her presence; for to be alone in the heart of a great forest, in a log hut, on such a night, was not a pleasing prospect. People gain courage by companionship, and in order to re-assure each other, struggle to conceal their fears.

“And where is Mr. E——?”

“I hope not on the lake. He went early this morning to get the wheat ground at the mill.”

“Och, the crathur! He’s surely drowned. What boat could stan’ such a scrimmage as this?”

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I had my fears for poor John; but as the chance that he had to wait at the mill till others were served was more than probable, I tried to still my apprehensions for his safety.

The storm soon passed over, after having levelled several acres of wood near the house and smitten down in its progress two gigantic pines in the clearing, which must have withstood the force of a thousand winters. Talking over the effects of this whirlwind with my brother, he kindly sent me the following very graphic description of a whirlwind which passed the town of Guelph in the summer of 1829.

[Written by Mr. Strickland, of Douro.] “In my hunting excursions and rambles through the Upper Canadian forests, I had frequently met with extensive wind-falls; and observed with some surprise that the fallen trees lay strewn in a succession of circles, and evidently appeared to have been twisted off the stumps. I also remarked that these wind-falls were generally narrow, and had the appearance of a road, slashed through the forest. From observations made at the time, and since confirmed, I have no doubt that Colonel Reid’s theory of storms is the correct one, *viz*., that all wind-storms move in a circular direction, and the nearer the centre the more violent the force of the wind. Having seen the effects of several similar hurricanes since my residence in Canada West, I shall proceed to describe one which happened in the township of Guelph during the early part of the summer of 1829.

“The weather, for the season of the year (May), had been hot and sultry, with scarcely a breath of wind stirring. I had heard distant thunder from an early hour in the morning, which, from the eastward, is rather an unusual occurrence. About 10 A.M., the sky had a most singular, and I must add a most awful appearance, presenting to the view a vast arch of rolling blackness, which seemed to gather strength and density as it approached the zenith. All at once the clouds began to work round in circles, as if chasing one another through the air. Suddenly the dark arch of clouds appeared to break up into detached masses, whirling and mixing through each other in dreadful commotion. The forked lightning was incessant, accompanied by heavy thunder. In a short time, the clouds seemed to converge to a point, which approached very near the earth, still whirling with great rapidity directly under this point; and apparently from the midst of the woods arose a black column, in the shape of a cone, which instantly joined itself to the depending cloud. The sight was now grand, and awful in the extreme. Picture to your imagination a vast column of smoke, of inky blackness, reaching from the earth to heaven, gyrating with fearful velocity—bright lightnings issuing from the vortex—the roar of the thunder—the rushing of the blast—the crash of timber—the limbs of trees, leaves and rubbish, mingled with clouds of dust, whirling through the air;—you then have a faint idea of the scene.

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“I had ample time for observation, as the hurricane commenced its devastating course about two miles from the town, through the centre of which it took its way, passing within fifty yards of where a number of persons, myself among the rest, were standing, watching its fearful progress.

“As the tornado approached, the trees seemed to fall like a pack of cards before its irresistible current. After passing through the clearing made around the village, the force of the wind gradually abated, and in a few minutes died away entirely.

“As soon as the storm was over, I went to see the damage it had done. From the point where I first observed the black column to rise from the woods and join the cloud, the trees were twisted in every direction. A belt of timber had been levelled to the ground about two miles in length, and about one hundred yards in breadth. At the entrance of the town it crossed the river Speed, and uprooted about six acres of wood, which had been thinned out, and left by Mr. Galt (late superintendent of the Canada Company), as an ornament to his house.

“The Eremosa road was completely blocked up for nearly half-a-mile, in the wildest confusion possible. In its progress through the town the storm unroofed several houses, levelled many fences to the ground, and entirely demolished a frame barn. Windows were dashed in; and, in one instance, the floor of a log house was carried through the roof. Some hair-breadth escapes occurred; but, luckily, no lives were lost.

“About twelve years since a similar storm occurred in the north part of the township of Douro, but was of much less magnitude. I heard an intelligent settler, who resided some years in the township of Madoc, state that, during his residence in that township, a similar hurricane to the one I have described, though of a much more awful character, passed through a part of Marmora and Madoc, and had been traced, in a north-easterly direction, upwards of forty miles into the unsurveyed lands; the uniform width of which appeared to be three quarters of a mile.

“It is very evident, from the traces which they have left behind them, that storms of this description have not been unfrequent in the wooded districts of Canada; and it becomes a matter of interesting consideration whether the clearing of our immense forests will not, in a great measure, remove the cause of these phenomena.”

A few minutes after our household had retired to rest, my first sleep was broken by the voice of J. E—, speaking to old Jenny in the kitchen. He had been overtaken by the storm, but had run his canoe ashore upon an island before its full fury burst, and turned it over the flour; while he had to brave the terrors of the pitiless tempest-buffeted by the wind, and drenched with torrents of rain. I got up and made him a cup of tea, while Jenny prepared a rasher of bacon and eggs for his supper.

Shortly after this, J. E—— bade a final adieu to Canada, with his cousin C. W——. He volunteered into the Scotch Greys, and we never saw him more; but I have been told that he was so highly respected by the officers of the regiment that they have subscribed for his commission; that he rose to the rank of lieutenant; accompanied the regiment to India, and was at the taking of Cabul; but from himself we never heard again.

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The 16th of October, my third son was born; and a few days after, my husband was appointed pay-master to the militia regiments in the V. District, with the rank and full pay of captain.

This was Sir George Arthur's doing. He returned no answer to my application, but he did not forget us.

As the time that Moodie might retain this situation was very doubtful, he thought it advisable not to remove me and the family until he could secure some permanent situation; by so doing, he would have a better opportunity of saving the greater part of his income to pay off his old debts.

This winter of 1839 was one of severe trial to me. Hitherto I had enjoyed the blessing of health; but both the children and myself were now doomed to suffer from dangerous attacks of illness. All the little things had malignant scarlet fever, and for several days I thought it would please the Almighty to take from me my two girls. This fever is so fatal to children in Canada that none of my neighbors dared approach the house. For three weeks Jenny and I were never undressed; our whole time was taken up nursing the five little helpless creatures through the successive states of their alarming disease. I sent for Dr. Taylor; but he did not come, and I was obliged to trust to the mercy of God, and my own judgment and good nursing. Though I escaped the fever, mental anxiety and fatigue brought on other illness, which for nearly ten weeks rendered me perfectly helpless. When I was again able to creep from my sick bed, the baby was seized with an illness, which Dr. B—— pronounced mortal. Against all hope, he recovered, but these severe mental trials rendered me weak and nervous, and more anxious than ever to be re-united to my husband. To add to these troubles, my sister and her husband sold their farm, and removed from our neighbourhood. Mr. —— had returned to England, and had obtained a situation in the Customs; and his wife, my friend Emilia, was keeping a school in the village; so that I felt more solitary than ever, thus deprived of so many kind, sympathising friends.

A SONG OF PRAISE TO THE CREATOR

Oh, thou great God! from whose eternal throne
  Unbounded blessings in rich bounty flow,
Like thy bright sun in glorious state alone,
  Thou reign'st supreme, while round thee as they go,
Unnumber'd worlds, submissive to thy sway,
With solemn pace pursue their silent way.

Benignant God! o'er every smiling land.
  Thy handmaid, Nature, meekly walks abroad,
Scattering thy bounties with unsparing hand,

While flowers and fruits spring up along her road.
How can thy creatures their weak voices raise
To tell thy deeds in their faint songs of praise?

When, darkling o’er the mountain’s summit hoar,
Portentous hangs the black and sulph’rous cloud,
When lightnings flash, and awful thunders roar,
Great Nature sings to thee her anthem loud.
The rocks reverberate her mighty song,
And crushing woods the pealing notes prolong.

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The storm is pass'd; o'er fields and woodlands gay,
Gemm'd with bright dew-drops from the eastern sky,
The morning sun now darts his golden ray,
The lark on fluttering wing is poised on high;
Too pure for earth, he wings his way above,
To pour his grateful song of joy and love.

Hark! from the bowels of the earth, a sound
Of awful import! From the central deep
The struggling lava rends the heaving ground,
The ocean-surges roar—the mountains leap—
They shoot aloft,—Oh, God! the fiery tide
Has burst its bounds, and rolls down Etna's side.

Thy will is done, great God! the conflict's o'er,
The silvery moonbeams glance along the sea;
The whispering waves half ripple on the shore,
And lull'd creation breathes a prayer to thee!
The night-flower's incense to their God is given,
And grateful mortals raise their thoughts to heaven.

J.W.D.M.

CHAPTER XXV

THE WALK TO DUMMER

We trod a weary path through silent woods,
Tangled and dark, unbroken by a sound
Of cheerful life. The melancholy shriek
Of hollow winds careering o'er the snow,
Or tossing into waves the green pine tops,
Making the ancient forest groan and sigh
Beneath their mocking voice, awoke alone
The solitary echoes of the place.

Reader! have you ever heard of a place situated in the forest-depths of this far western wilderness, called Dummer? Ten years ago, it might not inaptly have been termed "The last clearing in the world." Nor to this day do I know of any in that direction which extends beyond it. Our bush-farm was situated on the border-line of a neighbouring township, only one degree less wild, less out of the world, or nearer to the habitations of civilisation than the far-famed "English Line," the boast and glory of this terra incognita.

This place, so named by the emigrants who had pitched their tents in that solitary wilderness, was a long line of cleared land, extending upon either side for some miles through the darkest and most interminable forest. The English Line was inhabited chiefly by Cornish miners, who, tired of burrowing like moles underground, had determined to emigrate to Canada, where they could breathe the fresh air of Heaven, and obtain the necessaries of life upon the bosom of their mother earth. Strange as it may appear, these men made good farmers, and steady, industrious colonists, working as well above ground as they had toiled in their early days beneath it. All our best servants came from Dummer; and although they spoke a language difficult to be understood, and were uncouth in their manners and appearance, they were faithful and obedient, performing the tasks assigned to them with patient perseverance; good food and kind treatment rendering them always cheerful and contented.

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My dear old Jenny, that most faithful and attached of all humble domestic friends, came from Dummer, and I was wont to regard it with complacency for her sake. But Jenny was not English; she was a generous, warm-hearted daughter of the Green Isle—the Emerald gem set in the silver of ocean. Yes, Jenny was one of the poorest children of that impoverished but glorious country where wit and talent seem indigenous, springing up spontaneously in the rudest and most uncultivated minds; showing what the land could bring forth in its own strength, unaided by education, and unfettered by the conventional rules of society. Jenny was a striking instance of the worth, noble self-denial, and devotion which are often met withand, alas! but too often disregarded—in the poor and ignorant natives of that deeply-injured, and much abused land. A few words about my old favourite may not prove uninteresting to my readers.

Jenny Buchanan, or as she called it, Bohanon, was the daughter of a petty exciseman, of Scotch extraction (hence her industry) who, at the time of her birth, resided near the old town of Inniskillen. Her mother died a few months after she was born; and her father, within the twelve months, married again. In the meanwhile, the poor orphan babe had been adopted by a kind neighbour, the wife of a small farmer in the vicinity.

In return for coarse food and scanty clothing, the little Jenny became a servant-of-all-work. She fed the pigs, herded the cattle, assisted in planting potatoes and digging peat from the bog, and was undisputed mistress of the poultry-yard. As she grew up to womanhood, the importance of her labours increased. A better reaper in the harvest-field, or footer of turf in the bog, could not be found in the district, or a woman more thoroughly acquainted with the management of cows and the rearing of young cattle; but here poor Jenny's accomplishments terminated.

Her usefulness was all abroad. Within the house she made more dirt than she had the inclination or the ability to clear away. She could neither read, nor knit, nor sew; and although she called herself a Protestant, and a Church of England woman, she knew no more of religion, as revealed to man through the Word of God, than the savage who sinks to the grave in ignorance of a Redeemer. Hence she stoutly resisted all ideas of being a sinner, or of standing the least chance of receiving hereafter the condemnation of one.

"Och, sure thin," she would say, with simple earnestness of look and manner, almost irresistible. "God will never throuble Himsel' about a poor, hard-working crathur like me, who never did any harm to the manest of His makin'."

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One thing was certain, that a benevolent Providence had “throubled Himsel’” about poor Jenny in times past, for the warm heart of this neglected child of nature contained a stream of the richest benevolence, which, situated as she had been, could not have been derived from any other source. Honest, faithful, and industrious, Jenny became a law unto herself, and practically illustrated the golden rule of her blessed Lord, “to do unto others as we would they should do unto us.” She thought it was impossible that her poor services could ever repay the debt of gratitude that she owed to the family who had brought her up, although the obligation must have been entirely on their side. To them she was greatly attached—for them she toiled unceasingly; and when evil days came, and they were not able to meet the rent-day, or to occupy the farm, she determined to accompany them in their emigration to Canada, and formed one of the stout-hearted band that fixed its location in the lonely and unexplored wilds now known as the township of Dummer.

During the first year of their settlement, the means of obtaining the common necessaries of life became so precarious, that, in order to assist her friends with a little ready money, Jenny determined to hire out into some wealthy house as a servant. When I use the term wealth as applied to any bush-settler, it is of course only comparatively; but Jenny was anxious to obtain a place with settlers who enjoyed a small income independent of their forest means.

Her first speculation was a complete failure. For five long, hopeless years she served a master from whom she never received a farthing of her stipulated wages. Still her attachment to the family was so strong, and had become so much the necessity of her life, that the poor creature could not make up her mind to leave them. The children whom she had received into her arms at their birth, and whom she had nursed with maternal tenderness, were as dear to her as if they had been her own; she continued to work for them although her clothes were worn to tatters, and her own friends were too poor to replace them.

Her master, Captain N——, a handsome, dashing officer, who had served many years in India, still maintained the carriage and appearance of a gentleman, in spite of his mental and moral degradation arising from a constant state of intoxication; he still promised to remunerate at some future day her faithful services; and although all his neighbours well knew that his means were exhausted, and that that day would never come, yet Jenny, in the simplicity of her faith, still toiled on, in the hope that the better day he spoke of would soon arrive.

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And now a few words respecting this master, which I trust may serve as a warning to others. Allured by the bait that has been the ruin of so many of his class, the offer of a large grant of land, Captain N—— had been induced to form a settlement in this remote and untried township; laying out much, if not all, of his available means in building a log house, and clearing a large extent of barren and stony land. To this uninviting home he conveyed a beautiful young wife, and a small and increasing family. The result may be easily anticipated. The want of society—a dreadful want to a man of his previous habits—the absence of all the comforts and decencies of life, produced inaction, apathy, and at last, despondency, which was only alleviated by a constant and immoderate use of ardent spirits. As long as Captain N—— retained his half-pay, he contrived to exist. In an evil hour he parted with this, and quickly trod the downhill path to ruin.

And here I would remark that it is always a rash and hazardous step for any officer to part with his half-pay; although it is almost every day done, and generally followed by the same disastrous results. A certain income, however small, in a country where money is so hard to be procured, and where labour cannot be obtained but at a very high pecuniary remuneration, is invaluable to a gentleman unaccustomed to agricultural employment; who, without this reserve to pay his people, during the brief but expensive seasons of seed-time and harvest, must either work himself or starve. I have known no instance in which such sale has been attended with ultimate advantage; but, alas! too many in which it has terminated in the most distressing destitution. These government grants of land, to half-pay officers, have induced numbers of this class to emigrate to the backwoods of Canada, who are totally unfit for pioneers; but, tempted by the offer of finding themselves landholders of what, on paper, appear to them fine estates, they resign a certainty, to waste their energies, and die half-starved and broken-hearted in the depths of the pitiless wild.

If a gentleman so situated would give up all idea of settling on his grant, but hire a good farm in a favourable situation—that is, not too far from a market—and with his half-pay hire efficient labourers, of which plenty are now to be had, to cultivate the land, with common prudence and economy, he would soon obtain a comfortable subsistence for his family. And if the males were brought up to share the burthen and heat of the day, the expense of hired labour, as it yearly diminished, would add to the general means and well-being of the whole, until the hired farm became the real property of the industrious tenants. But the love of show, the vain boast of appearing richer and better-dressed than our neighbours, too often involves the emigrant's family in debt, from which they are seldom able to extricate themselves without sacrificing the means which would have secured their independence.

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This, although a long digression, will not, I hope, be without its use; and if this book is regarded not as a work of amusement but one of practical experience, written for the benefit of others, it will not fail to convey some useful hints to those who have contemplated emigration to Canada: the best country in the world for the industrious and well-principled man, who really comes out to work, and to better his condition by the labour of his hands; but a gulf of ruin to the vain and idle, who only set foot upon these shores to accelerate their ruin.

But to return to Captain N——. It was at this disastrous period that Jenny entered his service. Had her master adapted his habits and expenditure to his altered circumstances, much misery might have been spared, both to himself and his family. But he was a proud man—too proud to work, or to receive with kindness the offers of service tendered to him by his half-civilised, but well-meaning neighbours.

“Hang him!” cried an indignant English settler (Captain N—— was an Irishman), whose offer of drawing wood had been rejected with unmerited contempt. “Wait a few years, and we shall see what his pride will do for him. I *am* sorry for his poor wife and children; but for himself, I have no pity for him.”

This man had been uselessly insulted, at the very moment when he was anxious to perform a kind and benevolent action; when, like a true Englishman, his heart was softened by witnessing the sufferings of a young, delicate female and her infant family. Deeply affronted by the captain’s foolish conduct, he now took a malignant pleasure in watching his arrogant neighbour’s progress to ruin.

The year after the sale of his commission, Captain N—— found himself considerably in debt, “Never mind, Ella,” he said to his anxious wife; “the crops will pay all.”

The crops were a failure that year. Creditors pressed hard; the captain had no money to pay his workmen, and he would not work himself. Disgusted with his location, but unable to change it for a better; without friends in his own class (for he was the only gentleman then resident in the new township), to relieve the monotony of his existence with their society, or to afford him advice or assistance in his difficulties, the fatal whiskey-bottle became his refuge from gloomy thoughts.

His wife, an amiable and devoted creature, well-born, well-educated, and deserving of a better lot, did all in her power to wean him from the growing vice. But, alas! the pleadings of an angel, in such circumstances, would have had little effect upon the mind of such a man. He loved her as well as he could love anything, and he fancied that he loved his children, while he was daily reducing them, by his favourite vice, to beggary.

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For awhile, he confined his excesses to his own fireside, but this was only for as long a period as the sale of his stock and land would supply him with the means of criminal indulgence. After a time, all these resources failed, and his large grant of eight hundred acres of land had been converted into whiskey, except the one hundred acres on which his house and barn stood, embracing the small clearing from which the family derived their scanty supply of wheat and potatoes. For the sake of peace, his wife gave up all her ornaments and household plate, and the best articles of a once handsome and ample wardrobe, in the hope of hiding her sorrows from the world, and keeping her husband at home.

The pride, that had rendered him so obnoxious to his humbler neighbours, yielded at length to the inordinate craving for drink; the man who had held himself so high above his honest and industrious fellow-settlers, could now unblushingly enter their cabins and beg for a drop of whiskey. The feeling of shame once subdued, there was no end to his audacious mendacity. His whole time was spent in wandering about the country, calling upon every new settler, in the hope of being asked to partake of the coveted poison. He was even known to enter by the window of an emigrant's cabin, during the absence of the owner, and remain drinking in the house while a drop of spirits could be found in the cupboard. When driven forth by the angry owner of the hut, he wandered on to the distant town of P——, and lived there in a low tavern, while his wife and children were starving at home.

"He is the filthiest beast in the township," said the afore-mentioned neighbour to me; "it would be a good thing for his wife and children if his worthless neck were broken in one of his drunken sprees."

This might be the melancholy fact, but it was not the less dreadful on that account. The husband of an affectionate wife—the father of a lovely family—and his death to be a matter of rejoicing!—a blessing, instead of being an affliction!—an agony not to be thought upon without the deepest sorrow.

It was at this melancholy period of her sad history that Mrs. N—— found, in Jenny Buchanan, a help in her hour of need. The heart of the faithful creature bled for the misery which involved the wife of her degraded master, and the children she so dearly loved. Their want and destitution called all the sympathies of her ardent nature into active operation; they were long indebted to her labour for every morsel of food which they consumed. For them, she sowed, she planted, she reaped. Every block of wood which shed a cheering warmth around their desolate home was cut from the forest by her own hands, and brought up a steep hill to the house upon her back. For them, she coaxed the neighbours, with whom she was a general favourite, out of many a mess of eggs for their especial benefit; while with her cheerful songs, and hearty, hopeful disposition, she dispelled much of the cramping despair which chilled the heart of the unhappy mother in her deserted home.

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For several years did this great, poor woman keep the wolf from the door of her beloved mistress, toiling for her with the strength and energy of a man. When was man ever so devoted, so devoid of all selfishness, so attached to employers, yet poorer than herself, as this uneducated Irishwoman?

A period was at length put to her unrequited services. In a fit of intoxication her master beat her severely with the iron ramrod of his gun, and turned her, with abusive language, from his doors. Oh, hard return for all her unpaid labours of love! She forgave this outrage for the sake of the helpless beings who depended upon her care. He repeated the injury, and the poor creature returned almost heart-broken to her former home.

Thinking that his spite would subside in a few days, Jenny made a third effort to enter his house in her usual capacity; but Mrs. N—— told her, with many tears, that her presence would only enrage her husband, who had threatened herself with the most cruel treatment if she allowed the faithful servant again to enter the house. Thus ended her five years' service to this ungrateful master. Such was her reward!

I heard of Jenny's worth and kindness from the Englishman who had been so grievously affronted by Captain N——, and sent for her to come to me. She instantly accepted my offer, and returned with my messenger. She had scarcely a garment to cover her. I was obliged to find her a suit of clothes before I could set her to work. The smiles and dimples of my curly-headed, rosy little Donald, then a baby-boy of fifteen months, consoled the old woman for her separation from Ellie N——; and the good-will with which all the children (now four in number) regarded the kind old body, soon endeared to her the new home which Providence had assigned to her.

Her accounts of Mrs. N——, and her family, soon deeply interested me in her fate; and Jenny never went to visit her friends in Dummer without an interchange of good wishes passing between us.

The year of the Canadian rebellion came, and brought with it sorrow into many a bush dwelling. Old Jenny and I were left alone with the little children, in the depths of the dark forest, to help ourselves in the best way we could. Men could not be procured in that thinly-settled spot for love nor money, and I now fully realised the extent of Jenny's usefulness. Daily she yoked the oxen, and brought down from the bush fuel to maintain our fires, which she felled and chopped up with her own hands. She fed the cattle, and kept all things snug about the doors; not forgetting to load her master's two guns, "in case," as she said, "the ribels should attack us in our retrate."

The months of November and December of 1838 had been unnaturally mild for this iron climate; but the opening of the ensuing January brought a short but severe spell of frost and snow. We felt very lonely in our solitary dwelling, crouching round the blazing fire, that scarcely chased the cold from our miserable log-tenement, until this dreary period

was suddenly cheered by the unexpected presence of my beloved friend, Emilia, who came to spend a week with me in my forest home.

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She brought her own baby-boy with her, and an ample supply of buffalo robes, not forgetting a treat of baker's bread, and "sweeties" for the children. Oh, dear Emilia! best and kindest of women, though absent in your native land, long, long shall my heart cherish with affectionate gratitude all your visits of love, and turn to you as to a sister, tried, and found most faithful, in the dark hour of adversity, and, amidst the almost total neglect of those from whom nature claimed a tenderer and holier sympathy.

Great was the joy of Jenny at this accession to our family party; and after Mrs. S—— was well warmed, and had partaken of tea—the only refreshment we could offer her—-we began to talk over the news of the place.

"By-the-bye, Jenny," said she, turning to the old servant, who was undressing the little boy by the fire, "have you heard lately from poor Mrs. N——? We have been told that she and the family are in a dreadful state of destitution. That worthless man has left them for the States, and it is supposed that he has joined Mackenzie's band of ruffians on Navy Island; but whether this be true or false, he has deserted his wife and children, taking his eldest son along with him (who might have been of some service at home), and leaving them without money or food."

"The good Lord! What will become of the crathurs?" responded Jenny, wiping her wrinkled cheek with the back of her hard, brown hand. "An' thin they have not a sowl to chop and draw them firewood; an' the weather so oncommon savare. Och, hone! what has not that *baste* of a man to answer for?"

"I heard," continued Mrs. S——, "that they have tasted no food but potatoes for the last nine months, and scarcely enough of them to keep soul and body together; that they have sold their last cow; and the poor young lady and her second brother, a lad of only twelve years old, bring all the wood for the fire from the bush on a hand sleigh."

"Oh, dear!—oh, dear!" sobbed Jenny; "an' I not there to hilp them! An' poor Miss Mary, the tinder thing! Oh, 'tis hard, terribly hard upon the crathurs, an' they not used to the like."

"Can nothing be done for them?" said I.

"That is what we want to know," returned Emilia, "and that was one of my reasons for coming up to D——. I wanted to consult you and Jenny upon the subject. You, who are an officer's wife, and I, who am both an officer's wife and daughter, ought to devise some plan of rescuing this poor, unfortunate lady and her family from her present forlorn situation."

The tears sprang to my eyes, and I thought, in the bitterness of my heart, upon my own galling poverty, that my pockets did not contain even a single copper, and that I had scarcely garments enough to shield me from the inclemency of the weather. By

unflinching industry, and taking my part in the toil of the field, I had bread for myself and family, and this was more than poor Mrs. N—— possessed; but it appeared impossible for me to be of any assistance to the unhappy sufferer, and the thought of my incapacity gave me severe pain. It was only in moments like the present that I felt the curse of poverty.

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“Well,” continued my friend, “you see, Mrs. Moodie, that the ladies of P—— are all anxious to do what they can for her; but they first want to learn if the miserable circumstances in which she is said to be placed are true. In short, my dear friend, they want you and me to make a pilgrimage to Dummer, to see the poor lady herself; and then they will be guided by our report.”

“Then let us lose no time in going upon our own mission of mercy.”

“Och, my dear heart, you will be lost in the woods!” said old Jenny. “It is nine long miles to the first clearing, and that through a lonely, blazed path. After you are through the beaver-meadow, there is not a single hut for you to rest or warm yourselves. It is too much for the both of yees; you will be frozen to death on the road.”

“No fear,” said my benevolent friend; “God will take care of us, Jenny. It is on His errand we go; to carry a message of hope to one about to perish.”

“The Lord bless you for a darlint,” cried the old woman, devoutly kissing the velvet cheek of the little fellow sleeping upon her lap. “May your own purty child never know the want and sorrow that is around her.”

Emilia and I talked over the Dummer scheme until we fell asleep. Many were the plans we proposed for the immediate relief of the unfortunate family. Early the next morning, my brother-in-law, Mr. T——, called upon my friend. The subject next to our heart was immediately introduced, and he was called into the general council. His feelings, like our own, were deeply interested; and he proposed that we should each provide something from our own small stores to satisfy the pressing wants of the distressed family; while he promised to bring his cutter the next morning, and take us through the beaver-meadow, and to the edge of the great swamp, which would shorten four miles, at least, of our long and hazardous journey.

We joyfully acceded to his proposal, and set cheerfully to work to provide for the morrow. Jenny baked a batch of her very best bread, and boiled a large piece of beef; and Mr. T—— brought with him, the next day, a fine cooked ham, in a sack, into the bottom of which he stowed the beef and loaves, besides some sugar and tea, which his own kind wife, the author of “the Backwoods of Canada,” had sent. I had some misgivings as to the manner in which these good things could be introduced to the poor lady, who, I had heard, was reserved and proud.

“Oh, Jenny,” I said, “how shall I be able to ask her to accept provisions from strangers? I am afraid of wounding her feelings.”

“Oh, darlint, never fear that! She is proud, I know; but ’tis not a stiff pride, but jist enough to consale her disthress from her ignorant English neighbours, who think so manely of poor folk like her who were once rich. She will be very thankful to you for

your kindness, for she has not experienced much of it from the Dummer people in her throuble, though she may have no words to tell you so. Say that old Jenny sent the bread to dear wee Ellie, 'cause she knew she would like a loaf of Jenny's bakin'."

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“But the meat.”

“Och, the mate, is it? May be, you’ll think of some excuse for the mate when you get there.”

“I hope so; but I’m a sad coward with strangers, and I have lived so long out of the world that I am at a great loss what to do. I will try and put a good face on the matter. Your name, Jenny, will be no small help to me.”

All was now ready. Kissing our little bairns, who crowded around us with eager and inquiring looks, and charging Jenny for the hundredth time to take especial care of them during our absence, we mounted the cutter, and set off, under the care and protection of Mr. T——, who determined to accompany us on the journey.

It was a black, cold day; no sun visible in the grey, dark sky; a keen wind, and hard frost. We crouched close to each other.

“Good heavens, how cold it is!” whispered Emilia. “What a day for such a journey!”

She had scarcely ceased speaking, when the cutter went upon a stump which lay concealed under the drifted snow; and we, together with the ruins of our conveyance, were scattered around.

“A bad beginning,” said my brother-in-law, with a rueful aspect, as he surveyed the wreck of the cutter from which we had promised ourselves so much benefit. “There is no help for it but to return home.”

“Oh, no,” said Mrs. S——; “bad beginnings make good endings, you know. Let us go on; it will be far better walking than riding such a dreadful day. My feet are half-frozen already with sitting still.”

“But, my dear madam,” expostulated Mr. T——, “consider the distance, the road, the dark, dull day, and our imperfect knowledge of the path. I will get the cutter mended to-morrow; and the day after we may be able to proceed.”

“Delays are dangerous,” said the pertinacious Emilia, who, woman-like, was determined to have her own way. “Now, or never. While we wait for the broken cutter, the broken-hearted Mrs. N—— may starve. We can stop at Colonel C——’s and warm ourselves, and you can leave the cutter at his house until our return.”

“It was upon your account that I proposed the delay,” said the good Mr. T——, taking the sack, which was no inconsiderable weight, upon his shoulder, and driving his horse before him into neighbour W——’s stable. “Where you go, I am ready to follow.”

When we arrived, Colonel C—–’s family were at breakfast, of which they made us partake; and after vainly endeavouring to dissuade us from what appeared to them our Quixotic expedition, Mrs. C—– added a dozen fine white fish to the contents of the sack, and sent her youngest son to help Mr. T—– along with his burthen, and to bear us company on our desolate road.

Leaving the colonel’s hospitable house on our left, we again plunged into the woods, and after a few minutes’ brisk walking, found ourselves upon the brow of a steep bank that overlooked the beaver-meadow, containing within its area several hundred acres.

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There is no scenery in the bush that presents such a novel appearance as those meadows, or openings, surrounded as they invariably are, by dark, intricate forests; their high, rugged banks covered with the light, airy tamarack and silver birch. In summer they look like a lake of soft, rich verdure, hidden in the bosom of the barren and howling waste. Lakes they certainly have been, from which the waters have receded, “ages, ages long ago”; and still the whole length of these curious level valleys is traversed by a stream, of no inconsiderable dimensions.

The waters of the narrow, rapid creek, which flowed through the meadow we were about to cross, were of sparkling brightness, and icy cold. The frost-king had no power to check their swift, dancing movements, or stop their perpetual song. On they leaped, sparkling and flashing beneath their ice-crowned banks, rejoicing as they revelled on in their lonely course. In the prime of the year, this is a wild and lovely spot, the grass is of the richest green, and the flowers of the most gorgeous dyes. The gayest butterflies float above them upon painted wings; and the whip-poor-will pours forth from the neighbouring woods, at close of dewy eve, his strange but sadly plaintive cry. Winter was now upon the earth, and the once green meadow looked like a small forest lake covered with snow.

The first step we made into it plunged us up to the knees in the snow, which was drifted to a great height in the open space. Mr. T—— and our young friend C—— walked on ahead of us, in order to break a track through the untrodden snow. We soon reached the cold creek; but here a new difficulty presented itself. It was too wide to jump across, and we could see no other way of passing to the other side.

“There must be some sort of a bridge here about,” said young C——, “or how can the people from Dummer pass constantly during the winter to and fro. I will go along the bank, and halloo to you if I find one.”

In a few minutes he gave the desired signal, and on reaching the spot, we found a round, slippery log flung across the stream by way of bridge. With some trouble, and after various slips, we got safely on the other side. To wet our feet would have been to ensure their being frozen; and as it was, we were not without serious apprehension on that score. After crossing the bleak, snowy plain, we scrambled over another brook, and entered the great swamp, which occupied two miles of our dreary road.

It would be vain to attempt giving any description of this tangled maze of closely-interwoven cedars, fallen trees, and loose-scattered masses of rock. It seemed the fitting abode of wolves and bears, and every other unclean beast. The fire had run through it during the summer, making the confusion doubly confused. Now we stooped, half-doubled, to crawl under fallen branches that hung over our path, then again we had to clamber over prostrate trees of great

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bulk, descending from which we plumped down into holes in the snow, sinking mid-leg into the rotten trunk of some treacherous, decayed pine-tree. Before we were half through the great swamp, we began to think ourselves sad fools, and to wish that we were safe again by our own firesides. But, then, a great object was in view,—the relief of a distressed fellow-creature, and like the “full of hope, misnamed forlorn,” we determined to overcome every difficulty, and toil on.

It took us an hour at least to clear the great swamp, from which we emerged into a fine wood, composed chiefly of maple-trees. The sun had, during our immersion in the dark shades of the swamp, burst through his leaden shroud, and cast a cheery gleam along the rugged boles of the lofty trees. The squirrel and chipmunk occasionally bounded across our path; the dazzling snow which covered it reflected the branches above us in an endless variety of dancing shadows. Our spirits rose in proportion. Young C—— burst out singing, and Emilia and I laughed and chatted as we bounded along our narrow road. On, on for hours, the same interminable forest stretched away to the right and left, before and behind us.

“It is past twelve,” said my brother T—— thoughtfully; “if we do not soon come to a clearing, we may chance to spend the night in the forest.”

“Oh, I am dying with hunger,” cried Emilia. “Do C——, give us one or two of the cakes your mother put into the bag for us to eat upon the road.”

The ginger-cakes were instantly produced. But where were the teeth to be found that could masticate them? The cakes were frozen as hard as stones; this was a great disappointment to us tired and hungry wights; but it only produced a hearty laugh. Over the logs we went again; for it was a perpetual stepping up and down, crossing the fallen trees that obstructed our path. At last we came to a spot where two distinct blazed roads diverged.

“What are we to do now?” said Mr. T——.

We stopped, and a general consultation was held, and without one dissenting voice we took the branch to the right, which, after pursuing for about half a mile, led us to a log hut of the rudest description.

“Is this the road to Dummer?” we asked a man, who was chopping wood outside the fence.

“I guess you are in Dummer,” was the answer.

My heart leaped for joy, for I was dreadfully fatigued.

“Does this road lead through the English Line?”

“That’s another thing,” returned the woodman. “No, you turned off from the right path when you came up here.” We all looked very blank at each other. “You will have to go back, and keep the other road, and that will lead you straight to the English Line.”

“How many miles is it to Mrs. N——’s?”

“Some four, or thereabouts,” was the cheering rejoinder. “’Tis one of the last clearings on the line. If you are going back to Douro to-night, you must look sharp.”

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Sadly and dejectedly we retraced our steps. There are few trifling failures more bitter in our journey through life than that of a tired traveller mistaking his road. What effect must that tremendous failure produce upon the human mind, when at the end of life's unretraceable journey, the traveller finds that he has fallen upon the wrong track through every stage, and instead of arriving at a land of blissful promise, sinks for ever into the gulf of despair!

The distance we had trodden in the wrong path, while led on by hope and anticipation, now seemed to double in length, as with painful steps we toiled on to reach the right road. This object once attained, soon led us to the dwellings of men.

Neat, comfortable log houses, surrounded by well-fenced patches of clearing, arose on either side of the forest road; dogs flew out and barked at us, and children ran shouting indoors to tell their respective owners that strangers were passing their gates; a most unusual circumstance, I should think, in that location.

A servant who had hired two years with my brother-in-law, we knew must live somewhere in this neighbourhood, at whose fireside we hoped not only to rest and warm ourselves, but to obtain something to eat. On going up to one of the cabins to inquire for Hannah J——, we fortunately happened to light upon the very person we sought. With many exclamations of surprise, she ushered us into her neat and comfortable log dwelling.

A blazing fire, composed of two huge logs, was roaring up the wide chimney, and the savoury smell that issued from a large pot of pea-soup was very agreeable to our cold and hungry stomachs. But, alas, the refreshment went no further! Hannah most politely begged us to take seats by the fire, and warm and rest ourselves; she even knelt down and assisted in rubbing our half-frozen hands; but she never once made mention of the hot soup, or of the tea, which was drawing in a tin teapot upon the hearth-stone, or of a glass of whiskey, which would have been thankfully accepted by our male pilgrims.

Hannah was not an Irishwoman, no, nor a Scotch lassie, or her very first request would have been for us to take "a pickle of soup," or "a sup of thae warm broths." The soup was no doubt cooking for Hannah's husband and two neighbours, who were chopping for him in the bush; and whose want of punctuality she feelingly lamented.

As we left her cottage, and jogged on, Emilia whispered, laughing, "I hope you are satisfied with your good dinner? Was not the pea-soup excellent?—and that cup of nice hot tea!—I never relished anything more in my life. I think we should never pass that house without giving Hannah a call, and testifying our gratitude for her good cheer."

Many times did we stop to inquire the way to Mrs. N——'s, before we ascended the steep, bleak hill upon which her house stood. At the door, Mr. T—— deposited the sack of provisions, and he and young C—— went across the road to the house of an English

settler (who, fortunately for them, proved more hospitable than Hannah J——), to wait until our errand was executed.

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The house before which Emilia and I were standing had once been a tolerably comfortable log dwelling. It was larger than such buildings generally are, and was surrounded by dilapidated barns and stables, which were not cheered by a solitary head of cattle. A black pine-forest stretched away to the north of the house, and terminated in a dismal, tangled cedar-swamp, the entrance to the house not having been constructed to face the road.

The spirit that had borne me up during the journey died within me. I was fearful that my visit would be deemed an impertinent intrusion. I knew not in what manner to introduce myself, and my embarrassment had been greatly increased by Mrs. S—— declaring that I must break the ice, for she had not courage to go in. I remonstrated, but she was firm. To hold any longer parley was impossible. We were standing on the top of a bleak hill, with the thermometer many degrees below zero, and exposed to the fiercest biting of the bitter, cutting blast. With a heavy sigh, I knocked slowly but decidedly at the crazy door. I saw the curly head of a boy glance for a moment against the broken window. There was a stir within, but no one answered our summons. Emilia was rubbing her hands together, and beating a rapid tattoo with her feet upon the hard and glittering snow, to keep them from freezing.

Again I appealed to the inhospitable door, with a vehemence which seemed to say, “We are freezing, good people; in mercy let us in!”

Again there was a stir, and a whispered sound of voices, as if in consultation, from within; and after waiting a few minutes longer—which, cold as we were, seemed an age—the door was cautiously opened by a handsome, dark-eyed lad of twelve years of age, who was evidently the owner of the curly head that had been sent to reconnoitre us through the window. Carefully closing the door after him, he stepped out upon the snow, and asked us coldly but respectfully what we wanted. I told him that we were two ladies, who had walked all the way from Douro to see his mamma, and that we wished very much to speak to her. The lad answered us, with the ease and courtesy of a gentleman, that he did not know whether his mamma could be seen by strangers, but he would go in and see. So saying he abruptly left us, leaving behind him an ugly skeleton of a dog, who, after expressing his disapprobation at our presence in the most disagreeable and unequivocal manner, pounced like a famished wolf upon the sack of good things which lay at Emilia’s feet; and our united efforts could scarcely keep him off.

“A cold, doubtful reception this!” said my friend, turning her back to the wind, and hiding her face in her muff. “This is worse than Hannah’s liberality, and the long, weary walk.”

I thought so too, and began to apprehend that our walk had been in vain, when the lad again appeared, and said that we might walk in, for his mother was dressed.

Emilia, true to her determination, went no farther than the passage. In vain were all my entreating looks and mute appeals to her benevolence and friendship; I was forced to enter alone the apartment that contained the distressed family.

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I felt that I was treading upon sacred ground, for a pitying angel hovers over the abode of suffering virtue, and hallows all its woes. On a rude bench, before the fire, sat a lady, between thirty and forty years of age, dressed in a thin, coloured muslin gown, the most inappropriate garment for the rigour of the season, but, in all probability, the only decent one that she retained. A subdued melancholy looked forth from her large, dark, pensive eyes. She appeared like one who, having discovered the full extent of her misery, had proudly steeled her heart to bear it. Her countenance was very pleasing, and, in early life (but she was still young), she must have been eminently handsome. Near her, with her head bent down, and shaded by her thin, slender hand, her slight figure scarcely covered by her scanty clothing, sat her eldest daughter, a gentle, sweet-looking girl, who held in her arms a baby brother, whose destitution she endeavoured to conceal. It was a touching sight; that suffering girl, just stepping into womanhood, hiding against her young bosom the nakedness of the little creature she loved. Another fine boy, whose neatly-patched clothes had not one piece of the original stuff apparently left in them, stood behind his mother, with dark, glistening eyes fastened upon me, as if amused, and wondering who I was, and what business I could have there. A pale and attenuated, but very pretty, delicately-featured little girl was seated on a low stool before the fire. This was old Jenny's darling, Ellie, or Eloise. A rude bedstead, of home manufacture, in a corner of the room, covered with a coarse woollen quilt, contained two little boys, who had crept into it to conceal their wants from the eyes of the stranger. On the table lay a dozen peeled potatoes, and a small pot was boiling on the fire, to receive their scanty and only daily meal. There was such an air of patient and enduring suffering to the whole group, that, as I gazed heart-stricken upon it, my fortitude quite gave way, and I burst into tears.

Mrs. N—— first broke the painful silence, and, rather proudly, asked me to whom she had the pleasure of speaking. I made a desperate effort to regain my composure, and told her, but with much embarrassment, my name; adding that I was so well acquainted with her and her children, through Jenny, that I could not consider her as a stranger; that I hoped that, as I was the wife of an officer, and like her, a resident in the bush, and well acquainted with all its trials and privations, she would look upon me as a friend.

She seemed surprised and annoyed, and I found no small difficulty in introducing the object of my visit; but the day was rapidly declining, and I knew that not a moment was to be lost. At first she coldly rejected all offers of service, and said that she was contented, and wanted for nothing.

I appealed to the situation in which I beheld herself and her children, and implored her, for their sakes, not to refuse help from friends who felt for her distress. Her maternal feelings triumphed over her assumed indifference, and when she saw me weeping, for I could no longer restrain my tears, her pride yielded, and for some minutes not a word was spoken. I heard the large tears, as they slowly fell from her daughter's eyes, drop one by one upon her garments.

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At last the poor girl sobbed out, “Dear mamma, why conceal the truth? You know that we are nearly naked, and starving.”

Then came the sad tale of domestic woes:—the absence of the husband and eldest son; the uncertainty as to where they were, or in what engaged; the utter want of means to procure the common necessaries of life; the sale of the only remaining cow that used to provide the children with food. It had been sold for twelve dollars, part to be paid in cash, part in potatoes; the potatoes were nearly exhausted, and they were allowanced to so many a day. But the six dollars she had retained as their last resource. Alas! she had sent the eldest boy the day before to P——, to get a letter out of the post-office, which she hoped contained some tidings of her husband and son. She was all anxiety and expectation, but the child returned late at night without the letter which they had longed for with such feverish impatience. The six dollars upon which they had depended for a supply of food were in notes of the Farmer’s Bank, which at that time would not pass for money, and which the roguish purchaser of the cow had passed off upon this distressed family.

Oh! imagine, ye who revel in riches—who can daily throw away a large sum upon the merest toy—the cruel disappointment, the bitter agony of this poor mother’s heart, when she received this calamitous news, in the midst of her starving children. For the last nine weeks they had lived upon a scanty supply of potatoes; they had not tasted raised bread or animal food for eighteen months.

“Ellie,” said I, anxious to introduce the sack, which had lain like a nightmare upon my mind, “I have something for you; Jenny baked some loaves last night, and sent them to you with her best love.”

The eyes of all the children grew bright. “You will find the sack with the bread in the passage,” said I to one of the boys. He rushed joyfully out, and returned with Mrs. —— and the sack. Her bland and affectionate greeting restored us all to tranquillity.

The delighted boy opened the sack. The first thing he produced was the ham.

“Oh,” said I, “that is a ham that my sister sent to Mrs. N——; ’tis of her own curing, and she thought that it might be acceptable.”

Then came the white fish, nicely packed in a clean cloth. “Mrs. C—— thought fish might be a treat to Mrs. N——, as she lived so far from the great lakes.” Then came Jenny’s bread, which had already been introduced. The beef, and tea, and sugar, fell upon the floor without any comment. The first scruples had been overcome, and the day was ours.

“And now, ladies,” said Mrs. N——, with true hospitality, “since you have brought refreshments with you, permit me to cook something for your dinner.”

The scene I had just witnessed had produced such a choking sensation that all my hunger had vanished. Before we could accept or refuse Mrs. N——'s kind offer, Mr. T —— arrived, to hurry us off.

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It was two o'clock when we descended the hill in front of the house, that led by a side-path round to the road, and commenced our homeward route. I thought the four miles of clearings would never be passed; and the English Line appeared to have no end. At length we entered once more the dark forest.

The setting sun gleamed along the ground; the necessity of exerting our utmost speed, and getting through the great swamp before darkness surrounded us, was apparent to all. The men strode vigorously forward, for they had been refreshed with a substantial dinner of potatoes and pork, washed down with a glass of whiskey, at the cottage in which they had waited for us; but poor Emilia and I, faint, hungry, and foot-sore, it was with the greatest difficulty we could keep up. I thought of Rosalind, as our march up and down the fallen logs recommenced, and often exclaimed with her, "Oh, Jupiter! how weary are my legs!"

Night closed in just as we reached the beaver-meadow. Here our ears were greeted with the sound of well-known voices. James and Henry C—— had brought the ox-sleigh to meet us at the edge of the bush. Never was splendid equipage greeted with such delight. Emilia and I, now fairly exhausted with fatigue, scrambled into it, and lying down on the straw which covered the bottom of the rude vehicle, we drew the buffalo robes over our faces, and actually slept soundly until we reached Colonel C——'s hospitable door.

An excellent supper of hot fish and fried venison was smoking on the table, with other good cheer, to which we did ample justice. I, for one, never was so hungry in my life. We had fasted for twelve hours, and that on an intensely cold day, and had walked during that period upwards of twenty miles. Never, never shall I forget that weary walk to Dummer; but a blessing followed it.

It was midnight when Emilia and I reached my humble home; our good friends the oxen being again put in requisition to carry us there. Emilia went immediately to bed, from which she was unable to rise for several days. In the meanwhile I wrote to Moodie an account of the scene I had witnessed, and he raised a subscription among the officers of the regiment for the poor lady and her children, which amounted to forty dollars. Emilia lost no time in making a full report to her friends at P——; and before a week passed away, Mrs. N—— and her family were removed thither by several benevolent individuals in the place. A neat cottage was hired for her; and, to the honour of Canada be it spoken, all who could afford a donation gave cheerfully. Farmers left at her door, pork, beef, flour, and potatoes; the storekeepers sent groceries and goods to make clothes for the children; the shoemakers contributed boots for the boys; while the ladies did all in their power to assist and comfort the gentle creature thus thrown by Providence upon their bounty.

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While Mrs. N—— remained at P—— she did not want for any comfort. Her children were clothed and her rent paid by her benevolent friends, and her house supplied with food and many comforts from the same source. Respected and beloved by all who knew her, it would have been well had she never left the quiet asylum where for several years she enjoyed tranquillity and a respectable competence from her school; but in an evil hour she followed her worthless husband to the Southern States, and again suffered all the woes which drunkenness inflicts upon the wives and children of its degraded victims.

THE CONVICT'S WIFE

Pale matron! I see thee in agony steep
The pillow on which thy young innocents sleep;
Their slumbers are tranquil, unbroken their rest,
They know not the grief that convulses thy breast;
They mark not the glance of that red, swollen eye,
That must weep till the fountain of sorrow is dry;
They guess not thy thoughts in this moment of dread,
Thou desolate widow, but not of the dead!

Ah, what are thy feelings, whilst gazing on those,
Who unconsciously smile in their balmy repose,—
The pangs which thy grief-stricken bosom must prove
Whilst gazing through tears on those pledges of love,
Who murmur in slumber the dear, cherish'd name
Of that sire who has cover'd his offspring with shame,—
Of that husband whom justice has wrench'd from thy side
Of the wretch, who the laws of his country defied?

Poor, heart-broken mourner! thy tears faster flow,
Time can bring no oblivion to banish thy woe;
The sorrows of others are soften'd by years.
Ah, what now remains for thy portion but tears?
Anxieties ceaseless, renew'd day by day,
While thy heart yearns for one who is ever away.
No hope speeds thy thoughts as they traverse the wave
To the far-distant land of the exile and slave.

And those children, whose birth with such rapture was hail'd,
When the holiest feelings of nature prevail'd,
And the bright drops that moisten'd the father's glad cheek
Could alone the deep transport of happiness speak;
When he turn'd from his first-born with glances of pride,

In grateful devotion to gaze on his bride,
The loved and the loving, who, silent with joy,
Alternately gazed from the sire to his boy.

Ah! what could induce the young husband to fling
Love's garland away in life's beautiful spring,
To scatter the roses Hope wreath'd for her brow
In the dust, and abandon his partner to woe?
The wine-cup can answer. The Bacchanal's bowl
Corrupted life's chalice, and poison'd his soul.
It chill'd the warm heart, added fire to the brain,
Gave to pleasure and passion unbridled the rein;
Till the gentle endearments of children and wife
Only roused the fell demon to anger and strife.

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By conscience deserted, by law unrestrain'd,
A felon, convicted, unblushing, and chain'd;
Too late from the dark dream of ruin he woke
To remember the wife whose fond heart he had broke;
The children abandon'd to sorrow and shame,
Their deepest misfortune the brand of his name.
Oh, dire was the curse he invoked on his soul,
Then gave his last mite for a draught of the bowl!

CHAPTER XXVI

A CHANGE IN OUR PROSPECTS

The future flower lies folded in the bud,—
Its beauty, colour, fragrance, graceful form,
Carefully shrouded in that tiny cell;
Till time and circumstance, and sun and shower,
Expand the embryo blossom—and it bursts
Its narrow cerements, lifts its blushing head,
Rejoicing in the light and dew of heaven.
But if the canker-worm lies coil'd around
The heart o' the bud, the summer sun and dew
Visit in vain the sear'd and blighted flower.

During my illness, a kind neighbour, who had not only frequently come to see me, but had brought me many nourishing things, made by her own fair hands, took a great fancy to my second daughter, who, lively and volatile, could not be induced to remain quiet in the sick chamber. The noise she made greatly retarded my recovery, and Mrs. H—— took her home with her, as the only means of obtaining for me necessary rest. During that winter and through the ensuing summer, I only received occasional visits from my little girl, who, fairly established with her new friends, looked upon their house as her home.

This separation, which was felt as a great benefit at the time, greatly estranged the affections of the child from her own people. She saw us so seldom that she almost regarded us, when she did meet, as strangers; and I often deeply lamented the hour when I had unwittingly suffered the threefold cord of domestic love to be unravelled by absence, and the flattering attentions which fed the vanity of a beautiful child, without strengthening her moral character. Mrs. H——, whose husband was wealthy, was a generous, warm-hearted girl of eighteen. Lovely in person, and fascinating in manners, and still too young to have any idea of forming the character of a child, she dressed the little creature expensively; and, by constantly praising her personal appearance, gave her an idea of her own importance which it took many years to eradicate.

It is a great error to suffer a child, who has been trained in the hard school of poverty and self-denial, to be transplanted suddenly into the hot-bed of wealth and luxury. The idea of the child being so much happier and better off blinds her fond parents to the dangers of her new situation, where she is sure to contract a dislike to all useful occupation, and to look upon scanty means and plain clothing as a disgrace. If the re-action is bad for a grown-up person, it is almost destructive to a child who is incapable of moral reflection. Whenever I saw little Addie, and remarked the growing coldness of her manner towards us, my heart reproached me for having exposed her to temptation.

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Still, in the eye of the world, she was much better situated than she could possibly be with us. The heart of the parent could alone understand the change.

So sensible was her father of this alteration, that the first time he paid us a visit he went and brought home his child.

“If she remain so long away from us, at her tender years,” he said, “she will cease to love us. All the wealth in the world would not compensate me for the love of my child.”

The removal of my sister rendered my separation from my husband doubly lonely and irksome. Sometimes the desire to see and converse with him would press so painfully on my heart that I would get up in the night, strike a light, and sit down and write him a long letter, and tell him all that was in my mind; and when I had thus unburdened my spirit, the letter was committed to the flames, and after fervently commending him to the care of the Great Father of mankind, I would lay down my throbbing head on my pillow beside our first-born son, and sleep tranquilly.

It is a strange fact that many of my husband’s letters to me were written at the very time when I felt those irresistible impulses to hold communion with him. Why should we be ashamed to admit openly our belief in this mysterious intercourse between the spirits of those who are bound to each other by the tender ties of friendship and affection, when the experience of every day proves its truth? Proverbs, which are the wisdom of ages collected into a few brief words, tell us in one pithy sentence that “if we talk of the devil he is sure to appear.” While the name of a long-absent friend is in our mouth, the next moment brings him into our presence. How can this be, if mind did not meet mind, and the spirit had not a prophetic consciousness of the vicinity of another spirit, kindred with its own? This is an occurrence so common that I never met with any person to whom it had not happened; few will admit it to be a spiritual agency, but in no other way can they satisfactorily explain its cause. If it were a mere coincidence, or combination of ordinary circumstances, it would not happen so often, and people would not be led to speak of the long-absent always at the moment when they are just about to present themselves before them. My husband was no believer in what he termed my fanciful, speculative theories; yet at the time when his youngest boy and myself lay dangerously ill, and hardly expected to live, I received from him a letter, written in great haste, which commenced with this sentence: “Do write to me, dear S——, when you receive this. I have felt very uneasy about you for some days past, and am afraid that all is not right at home.”

Whence came this sudden fear? Why at that particular time did his thoughts turn so despondingly towards those so dear to him? Why did the dark cloud in his mind hang so heavily above his home? The burden of my weary and distressed spirit had reached him; and without knowing of our sufferings and danger, his own responded to the call.

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The holy and mysterious nature of man is yet hidden from himself; he is still a stranger to the movements of that inner life, and knows little of its capabilities and powers. A purer religion, a higher standard of moral and intellectual training may in time reveal all this. Man still remains a half-reclaimed savage; the leaven of Christianity is surely working its way, but it has not yet changed the whole lump, or transformed the deformed into the beauteous child of God. Oh, for that glorious day! It is coming. The dark clouds of humanity are already tinged with the golden radiance of the dawn, but the sun of righteousness has not yet arisen upon the world with healing on his wings; the light of truth still struggles in the womb of darkness, and man stumbles on to the fulfilment of his sublime and mysterious destiny.

This spring I was not a little puzzled how to get in the crops. I still continued so weak that I was quite unable to assist in the field, and my good old Jenny was sorely troubled with inflamed feet, which required constant care. At this juncture, a neighbouring settler, who had recently come among us, offered to put in my small crop of peas, potatoes, and oats, in all not comprising more than eight acres, if I would lend him my oxen to log-up a large fallow of ten acres, and put in his own crops. Trusting to his fair dealing, I consented to this arrangement; but he took advantage of my isolated position, and not only logged-up his fallow, but put in all his spring crops before he sowed an acre of mine. The oxen were worked down so low that they were almost unfit for use, and my crops were put in so late, and with such little care, that they all proved a failure. I should have felt this loss more severely had it happened in any previous year; but I had ceased to feel that deep interest in the affairs of the farm, from a sort of conviction in my own mind that it would not long remain my home.

Jenny and I did our best in the way of hoeing and weeding; but no industry on our part could repair the injury done to the seed by being sown out of season.

We therefore confined our attention to the garden, which, as usual, was very productive, and with milk, fresh butter, and eggs, supplied the simple wants of our family. Emilia enlivened our solitude by her company, for several weeks during the summer, and we had many pleasant excursions on the water together.

My knowledge of the use of the paddle, however, was not entirely without its danger.

One very windy Sunday afternoon, a servant-girl, who lived with my friend Mrs. C——, came crying to the house, and implored the use of my canoe and paddles, to cross the lake to see her dying father. The request was instantly granted; but there was no man upon the place to ferry her across, and she could not manage the boat herself—in short, had never been in a canoe in her life.

The girl was deeply distressed. She said that she had got word that her father could scarcely live till she could reach Smith-town; that if she went round by the bridge, she must walk five miles, while if she crossed the lake she could be home in half an hour.

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I did not much like the angry swell upon the water, but the poor creature was in such grief that I told her, if she was not afraid of venturing with me, I would try and put her over.

She expressed her thanks in the warmest terms, accompanied by a shower of blessings; and I took the paddles and went down to the landing. Jenny was very averse to my “tempting Providence,” as she termed it, and wished that I might get back as safe as I went. However, the old woman launched the canoe for me, pushed us from the shore, and away we went. The wind was in my favour, and I found so little trouble in getting across that I began to laugh at my own timidity. I put the girl on shore, and endeavoured to shape my passage home. But this I found was no easy task. The water was rough, and the wind high, and the strong current, which runs through that part of the lake to the Smith rapids, was dead against me. In vain I laboured to cross this current; it resisted all my efforts, and at each repulse I was carried farther down towards the rapids, which were full of sunken rocks, and hard for the strong arm of a man to stem—to the weak hand of a woman their safe passage was impossible. I began to feel rather uneasy at the awkward situation in which I found myself placed, and for some time I made desperate efforts to extricate myself, by paddling with all my might. I soon gave this up, and contented myself by steering the canoe in the path that it thought fit to pursue. After drifting down with the current for some little space, until I came opposite a small island, I put out all my strength to gain the land. In this I fortunately succeeded, and getting on shore, I contrived to drag the canoe so far round the headland that I got her out of the current. All now was smooth sailing, and I joyfully answered old Jenny’s yells from the landing, that I was safe, and would join her in a few minutes.

This fortunate manoeuvre stood me in good stead upon another occasion, when crossing the lake, some weeks after this, in company with a young female friend, during a sudden storm.

Two Indian women, heavily laden with their packs of dried venison, called at the house to borrow the canoe, to join their encampment upon the other side. It so happened that I wanted to send to the mill that afternoon, and the boat could not be returned in time without I went over with the Indian women and brought it back. My young friend was delighted at the idea of the frolic, and as she could both steer and paddle, and the day was calm and bright, though excessively warm, we both agreed to accompany the squaws to the other side, and bring back the canoe.

Mrs. Muskrat has fallen in love with a fine fat kitten, whom the children had called “Buttermilk,” and she begged so hard for the little puss, that I presented it to her, rather marvelling how she would contrive to carry it so many miles through the woods, and she loaded with such an enormous pack; when, lo! the squaw took down the bundle, and, in the heart of the piles of dried venison, she deposited the cat in a small basket, giving it a thin slice of the meat to console it for its close confinement. Puss received the donation

with piteous mews; it was evident that mice and freedom were preferred by her to venison and the honour of riding on a squaw’s back.

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The squaws paddled us quickly across, and we laughed and chatted as we bounded over the blue waves, until we were landed in a dark cedar-swamp, in the heart of which we found the Indian encampment.

A large party were lounging around the fire, superintending the drying of a quantity of venison which was suspended on forked sticks. Besides the flesh of the deer, a number of musk-rats were skinned, and extended as if standing bolt upright before the fire, warming their paws. The appearance they cut was most ludicrous. My young friend pointed to the musk-rats, as she sank down, laughing, upon one of the skins.

Old Snow-storm, who was present, imagined that she wanted one of them to eat, and very gravely handed her the unsavoury beast, stick and all.

“Does the old man take me for a cannibal?” she said. “I would as soon eat a child.”

Among the many odd things cooking at that fire there was something that had the appearance of a bull-frog.

“What can that be?” she said, directing my eyes to the strange monster. “Surely they don’t eat bull-frogs!”

This sally was received by a grunt of approbation from Snow-storm; and, though Indians seldom forget their dignity so far as to laugh, he for once laid aside his stoical gravity, and, twirling the thing round with a stick, burst into a hearty peal.

“Muckakee! Indian eat muckakee?—Ha! ha! Indian no eat muckakee! Frenchmans eat his hind legs; they say the speckled beast much good. This no muckakee!—the liver of deer, dried—very nice—Indian eat him.”

“I wish him much joy of the delicate morsel,” said the saucy girl, who was intent upon quizzing and examining everything in the camp.

We had remained the best part of an hour, when Mrs. Muskrat laid hold of my hand, and leading me through the bush to the shore, pointed up significantly to a cloud, as dark as night, that hung loweringly over the bush.

“Thunder in that cloud—get over the lake—quick, quick, before it breaks.” Then motioning for us to jump into the canoe, she threw in the paddles, and pushed us from shore.

We saw the necessity of haste, and both plied the paddle with diligence to gain the opposite bank, or at least the shelter of the island, before the cloud poured down its fury upon us. We were just in the middle of the current when the first peal of thunder broke with startling nearness over our heads. The storm frowned darkly upon the woods; the

rain came down in torrents; and there were we exposed to its utmost fury in the middle of a current too strong for us to stem.

“What shall we do? We shall be drowned!” said my young friend, turning her pale, tearful face towards me.

“Let the canoe float down the current till we get close to the island; then run her into the land. I saved myself once before by this plan.”

We did so, and were safe; but there we had to remain, wet to our skins, until the wind and the rain abated sufficiently for us to manage our little craft. “How do you like being upon the lake in a storm like this?” I whispered to my shivering, dripping companion.

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“Very well in romance, but terribly dull in reality. We cannot, however, call it a dry joke,” continued she, wringing the rain from her dress. “I wish we were suspended over Old Snow-storm’s fire with the bull-frog, for I hate a shower-bath with my clothes on.”

I took warning by this adventure, never to cross the lake again without a stronger arm than mine in the canoe to steer me safely through the current.

I received much kind attention from my new neighbour, the Rev. W. W——, a truly excellent and pious clergyman of the English Church. The good, white-haired old man expressed the kindest sympathy in all my trials, and strengthened me greatly with his benevolent counsels and gentle charity. Mr. W—— was a true follower of Christ. His Christianity was not confined to his own denomination; and every Sabbath his log cottage was filled with attentive auditors, of all persuasions, who met together to listen to the word of life delivered to them by a Christian minister in the wilderness.

He had been a very fine preacher, and though considerably turned of seventy, his voice was still excellent, and his manner solemn and impressive.

His only son, a young man of twenty-eight years of age, had received a serious injury in the brain by falling upon a turf-spade from a loft window when a child, and his intellect had remained stationary from that time. Poor Harry was an innocent child; he loved his parents with the simplicity of a child, and all who spoke kindly to him he regarded as friends. Like most persons of his caste of mind, his predilection for pet animals was a prominent instinct. He was always followed by two dogs, whom he regarded with especial favour. The moment he caught your eye, he looked down admiringly upon his four-footed attendants, patting their sleek necks, and murmuring, “Nice dogs—nice dogs.” Harry had singled out myself and my little ones as great favourites. He would gather flowers for the girls, and catch butterflies for the boys; while to me he always gave the title of “dear aunt.”

It so happened that one fine morning I wanted to walk a couple of miles through the bush, to spend the day with Mrs. C——; but the woods were full of the cattle belonging to the neighbouring settlers, and of these I was terribly afraid. Whilst I was dressing the little girls to accompany me, Harry W—— came in with a message from his mother. “Oh, thought I, here is Harry W——. He will walk with us through the bush, and defend us from the cattle.”

The proposition was made, and Harry was not a little proud of being invited to join our party. We had accomplished half the distance without seeing a single hoof; and I was beginning to congratulate myself upon our unusual luck, when a large red ox, maddened by the stings of the gad-flies, came headlong through the brush, tossing up the withered leaves and dried moss with his horns, and making directly towards us. I screamed to my champion for help; but where was he?—running like a frightened chipmunk along the fallen timber, shouting to my eldest girl, at the top of his voice—

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“Run Katty, run!—The bull, the bull! Run, Katty!—The bull, the bull!”—leaving us poor creatures far behind in the chase.

The bull, who cared not one fig for us, did not even stop to give us a passing stare, and was soon lost among the trees; while our valiant knight never stopped to see what had become of us, but made the best of his way home. So much for taking an innocent for a guard.

The next month most of the militia regiments were disbanded. My husband’s services were no longer required at B——, and he once more returned to help to gather in our scanty harvest. Many of the old debts were paid off by his hard-saved pay; and though all hope of continuing in the militia service was at an end, our condition was so much improved that we looked less to the dark than to the sunny side of the landscape.

The potato crop was gathered in, and I had collected my store of dandelion-roots for our winter supply of coffee, when one day brought a letter to my husband from the Governor’s secretary, offering him the situation of sheriff of the V—— district. Though perfectly unacquainted with the difficulties and responsibilities of such an important office, my husband looked upon it as a gift sent from heaven to remove us from the sorrows and poverty with which we were surrounded in the woods.

Once more he bade us farewell; but it was to go and make ready a home for us, that we should no more be separated from each other.

Heartily did I return thanks to God that night for all his mercies to us; and Sir George Arthur was not forgotten in those prayers.

From B——, my husband wrote to me to make what haste I could in disposing of our crops, household furniture, stock, and farming implements; and to prepare myself and the children to join him on the first fall of snow that would make the roads practicable for sleighing. To facilitate this object, he sent me a box of clothing, to make up for myself and the children.

For seven years I had lived out of the world entirely; my person had been rendered coarse by hard work and exposure to the weather. I looked double the age I really was, and my hair was already thickly sprinkled with grey. I clung to my solitude. I did not like to be dragged from it to mingle in gay scenes, in a busy town, and with gaily-dressed people. I was no longer fit for the world; I had lost all relish for the pursuits and pleasures which are so essential to its votaries; I was contented to live and die in obscurity.

My dear Emilia rejoiced, like a true friend, in my changed prospects, and came up to help me to cut clothes for the children, and to assist me in preparing them for the journey.

I succeeded in selling off our goods and chattels much better than I expected. My old friend, Mr. W——, who was a new comer, became the principal purchaser, and when Christmas arrived I had not one article left upon my hands save the bedding, which it was necessary to take with us.

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THE MAGIC SPELL

The magic spell, the dream is fled,
  The dream of joy sent from above;
The idol of my soul is dead,
  And naught remains but hopeless love.
The song of birds, the scent of flowers,
  The tender light of parting day—
Unheeded now the tardy hours
  Steal sadly, silently away.

But welcome now the solemn night,
  When watchful stars are gleaming high,
For though thy form eludes my sight,
  I know thy gentle spirit's nigh.
O! dear one, now I feel thy power,
  'Tis sweet to rest when toil is o'er,
But sweeter far that blessed hour
  When fond hearts meet to part no more.

J.W.D.M.

CHAPTER XXVII

ADIEU TO THE WOODS

Adieu!—adieu!—when quivering lips refuse
The bitter pangs of parting to declare;
And the full bosom feels that it must lose
Friends who were wont its inmost thoughts to share;
When hands are tightly clasp'd, 'mid struggling sighs
And streaming tears, those whisper'd accents rise,
Leaving to God the objects of our care
In that short, simple, comprehensive prayer—
adieu!

Never did eager British children look for the first violets and primroses of spring with more impatience than my baby boys and girls watched, day after day, for the first snow-flakes that were to form the road to convey them to their absent father.

"Winter never means to come this year. It will never snow again?" exclaimed my eldest boy, turning from the window on Christmas Day, with the most rueful aspect that ever greeted the broad, gay beams of the glorious sun. It was like a spring day. The little

lake in front of the window glittered like a mirror of silver, set in its dark frame of pine woods.

I, too, was wearying for the snow, and was tempted to think that it did not come as early as usual, in order to disappoint us. But I kept this to myself, and comforted the expecting child with the oft-repeated assertion that it would certainly snow upon the morrow.

But the morrow came and passed away, and many other morrows, and the same mild, open weather prevailed. The last night of the old year was ushered in with furious storms of wind and snow; the rafters of our log cabin shook beneath the violence of the gale, which swept up from the lake like a lion roaring for its prey, driving the snow-flakes through every open crevice, of which there were not a few, and powdering the floor until it rivalled in whiteness the ground without.

“Oh, what a dreadful night!” we cried, as we huddled, shivering, around the old broken stove. “A person abroad in the woods to-night would be frozen. Flesh and blood could not long stand this cutting wind.”

“It reminds me of the commencement of a laughable extempore ditty,” said I to my young friend, A. C——, who was staying with me, “composed by my husband, during the first very cold night we spent in Canada”—

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Oh, the cold of Canada nobody knows,
The fire burns our shoes without warming our toes;
Oh, dear, what shall we do?
Our blankets are thin, and our noses are blue—
Our noses are blue, and our blankets are thin,
It's at zero without, and we're freezing within!

(Chorus)—Oh, dear, what shall we do?

"But, joking apart, my dear A——, we ought to be very thankful that we are not travelling this night to B——."

"But to-morrow," said my eldest boy, lifting up his curly head from my lap. "It will be fine to-morrow, and we shall see dear papa again."

In this hope he lay down on his little bed upon the floor, and was soon fast asleep; perhaps dreaming of that eagerly-anticipated journey, and of meeting his beloved father.

Sleep was a stranger to my eyes. The tempest raged so furiously without that I was fearful the roof would be carried off the house, or that the chimney would take fire. The night was far advanced when old Jenny and myself retired to bed.

My boy's words were prophetic; that was the last night I ever spent in the bush—in the dear forest home which I had loved in spite of all the hardships which we had endured since we pitched our tent in the backwoods. It was the birthplace of my three boys, the school of high resolve and energetic action in which we had learned to meet calmly, and successfully to battle with the ills of life. Nor did I leave it without many regretful tears, to mingle once more with a world to whose usages, during my long solitude, I had become almost a stranger, and to whose praise or blame I felt alike indifferent.

When the day dawned, the whole forest scenery lay glittering in a mantle of dazzling white; the sun shone brightly, the heavens were intensely blue, but the cold was so severe that every article of food had to be thawed before we could get our breakfast. The very blankets that covered us during the night were stiff with our frozen breath. "I hope the sleighs won't come to-day," I cried; "we should be frozen on the long journey."

About noon two sleighs turned into our clearing. Old Jenny ran screaming into the room, "The masther has sent for us at last! The sleighs are come! Fine large sleighs, and illigant teams of horses! Och, and its a cowld day for the wee things to lave the bush."

The snow had been a week in advance of us at B——, and my husband had sent up the teams to remove us. The children jumped about, and laughed aloud for joy. Old Jenny

did not know whether to laugh or cry, but she set about helping me to pack up trunks and bedding as fast as our cold hands would permit.

In the midst of the confusion, my brother arrived, like a good genius, to our assistance, declaring his determination to take us down to B—— himself in his large lumber-sleigh. This was indeed joyful news. In less than three hours he despatched the hired sleighs with their loads, and we all stood together in the empty house, striving to warm our hands over the embers of the expiring fire.

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How cold and desolate every object appeared! The small windows, half blocked up with snow, scarcely allowed a glimpse of the declining sun to cheer us with his serene aspect. In spite of the cold, several kind friends had waded through the deep snow to say, “God bless you!—Good-bye;” while a group of silent Indians stood together, gazing upon our proceedings with an earnestness which showed that they were not uninterested in the scene. As we passed out to the sleigh, they pressed forward, and silently held out their hands, while the squaws kissed me and the little ones with tearful eyes. They had been true friends to us in our dire necessity, and I returned their mute farewell from my very heart.

Mr. S—— sprang into the sleigh. One of our party was missing. “Jenny!” shouted my brother, at the top of his voice, “it is too cold to keep your mistress and the little children waiting.”

“Och, shure thin, it is I that am comin’!” returned the old body, as she issued from the house.

Shouts of laughter greeted her appearance. The figure she cut upon that memorable day I shall never forget. My brother dropped the reins upon the horses’ necks, and fairly roared. Jenny was about to commence her journey to the front in three hats. Was it to protect her from the cold? Oh, no; Jenny was not afraid of the cold! She could have eaten her breakfast on the north side of an iceberg, and always dispensed with shoes, during the most severe of our Canadian winters. It was to protect these precious articles from injury.

Our good neighbour, Mrs. W——, had presented her with an old sky-blue drawn-silk bonnet, as a parting benediction. This, by way of distinction, for she never had possessed such an article of luxury as a silk bonnet in her life, Jenny had placed over the coarse calico cap, with its full furbelow of the same yellow, ill-washed, homely material, next to her head; over this, as second in degree, a sun-burnt straw hat, with faded pink ribbons, just showed its broken rim and tawdry trimmings; and, to crown all, and serve as a guard to the rest, a really serviceable grey-beaver bonnet, once mine, towered up as high as the celebrated crown in which brother Peter figures in Swift’s “Tale of a Tub.”

“Mercy, Jenny! Why, old woman, you don’t mean to go with us that figure?”

“Och, my dear heart! I’ve no band-box to kape the cowld from desthroying my illigant bonnets,” returned Jenny, laying her hand upon the side of the sleigh.

“Go back, Jenny; go back,” cried my brother. “For God’s sake take all that tom-foolery from off your head. We shall be the laughing-stock of every village we pass through.”

“Och, shure now, Mr. S——, who’d think of looking at an owld crathur like me! It’s only yersel’ that would notice the like.”

“All the world, everybody would look at you, Jenny. I believe that you put on those hats to draw the attention of all the young fellows that we shall happen to meet on the road. Ha, Jenny!”

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With an air of offended dignity, the old woman returned to the house to re-arrange her toilet, and provide for the safety of her “illigant bonnets,” one of which she suspended to the strings of her cloak, while she carried the third dangling in her hand; and no persuasion of mine would induce her to put them out of sight.

Many painful and conflicting emotions agitated my mind, but found no utterance in words, as we entered the forest path, and I looked my last upon that humble home consecrated by the memory of a thousand sorrows. Every object had become endeared to me during my long exile from civilised life. I loved the lonely lake, with its magnificent belt of dark pines sighing in the breeze; the cedar-swamp, the summer home of my dark Indian friends; my own dear little garden, with its rugged snake-fence which I had helped Jenny to place with my own hands, and which I had assisted the faithful woman in cultivating for the last three years, where I had so often braved the tormenting mosquitoes, black flies, and intense heat, to provide vegetables for the use of the family. Even the cows, that had given a breakfast for the last time to my children, were now regarded with mournful affection. A poor labourer stood in the doorway of the deserted house, holding my noble water-dog, Rover, in a string. The poor fellow gave a joyous bark as my eyes fell upon him.

“James J——, take care of my dog.”

“Never fear, ma’am, he shall bide with me as long as he lives.”

“He and the Indians at least feel grieved for our departure,” I thought. Love is so scarce in this world that we ought to prize it, however lowly the source from whence it flows.

We accomplished only twelve miles of our journey that night. The road lay through the bush, and along the banks of the grand, rushing, foaming Otonabee river, the wildest and most beautiful of forest streams. We slept at the house of kind friends, and early in the morning resumed our long journey, but minus one of our party. Our old favourite cat, Peppermint, had made her escape from the basket in which she had been confined, and had scampered off, to the great grief of the children.

As we passed Mrs. H——’s house, we called for dear Addie. Mr. H—— brought her in his arms to the gate, well wrapped up in a large fur cape and a warm woollen shawl.

“You are robbing me of my dear little girl,” he said. “Mrs. H—— is absent; she told me not to part with her if you should call; but I could not detain her without your consent. Now that you have seen her, allow me to keep her for a few months longer?”

Addie was in the sleigh. I put my arm about her. I felt I had my child again, and I secretly rejoiced in the possession of my own. I sincerely thanked him for his kindness, and Mr. S—— drove on.

At Mr. R——'s, we found a parcel from dear Emilia, containing a plum-cake and other good things for the children. Her kindness never flagged.

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We crossed the bridge over the Otonabee, in the rising town of Peterborough, at eight o'clock in the morning. Winter had now set in fairly. The children were glad to huddle together in the bottom of the sleigh, under the buffalo skins and blankets; all but my eldest boy, who, just turned of five years old, was enchanted with all he heard and saw, and continued to stand up and gaze around him. Born in the forest, which he had never quitted before, the sight of a town was such a novelty that he could find no words wherewith to express his astonishment.

"Are the houses come to see one another?" he asked. "How did they all meet here?"

The question greatly amused his uncle, who took some pains to explain to him the difference between town and country. During the day, we got rid of old Jenny and her bonnets, whom we found a very refractory travelling companion; as wilful, and far more difficult to manage than a young child. Fortunately, we overtook the sleighs with the furniture, and Mr. S—— transferred Jenny to the care of one of the drivers; an arrangement that proved satisfactory to all parties.

We had been most fortunate in obtaining comfortable lodgings for the night. The evening had closed in so intensely cold that although we were only two miles from C ——, Addie was so much affected by it that the child lay sick and pale in my arms, and, when spoken to, seemed scarcely conscious of our presence.

My brother jumped from the front seat, and came round to look at her. "That child is ill with the cold; we must stop somewhere to warm her, or she will hardly hold out till we get to the inn at C——."

We were just entering the little village of A——, in the vicinity of the court-house, and we stopped at a pretty green cottage, and asked permission to warm the children. A stout, middle-aged woman came to the sleigh, and in the kindest manner requested us to alight.

"I think I know that voice," I said. "Surely it cannot be Mrs. S——, who once kept the —— hotel at C——?"

"Mrs. Moodie, you are welcome," said the excellent woman, bestowing upon me a most friendly embrace; "you and your children. I am heartily glad to see you again after so many years. God bless you all!"

Nothing could exceed the kindness and hospitality of this generous woman; she would not hear of our leaving her that night, and, directing my brother to put up his horses in her stable, she made up an excellent fire in a large bedroom, and helped me to undress the little ones who were already asleep, and to warm and feed the rest before we put them to bed.

This meeting gave me real pleasure. In their station of life, I seldom have found a more worthy couple than this American and his wife; and, having witnessed so many of their acts of kindness, both to ourselves and others, I entertained for them a sincere respect and affection, and truly rejoiced that Providence had once more led me to the shelter of their roof.

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Mr. S—— was absent, but I found little Mary—the sweet child who used to listen with such delight to Moodie's flute—grown up into a beautiful girl; and the baby that was, a fine child of eight years old. The next morning was so intensely cold that my brother would not resume the journey until past ten o'clock, and even then it was a hazardous experiment.

We had not proceeded four miles before the horses were covered with icicles. Our hair was frozen as white as old Time's solitary forelock, our eyelids stiff, and every limb aching with cold.

"This will never do," said my brother, turning to me; "the children will freeze. I never felt the cold more severe than this."

"Where can we stop?" said I; "we are miles from C——, and I see no prospect of the weather becoming milder."

"Yes, yes; I know, by the very intensity of the cold, that a change is at hand. We seldom have more than three very severe days running, and this is the third. At all events, it is much warmer at night in this country than during the day; the wind drops, and the frost is more bearable. I know a worthy farmer who lives about a mile ahead; he will give us house-room for a few hours; and we will resume our journey in the evening. The moon is at full; and it will be easier to wrap the children up, and keep them warm when they are asleep. Shall we stop at Old Woodruff's?"

"With all my heart." My teeth were chattering with the cold, and the children were crying over their aching fingers at the bottom of the sleigh.

A few minutes' ride brought us to a large farm-house, surrounded by commodious sheds and barns. A fine orchard opposite, and a yard well-stocked with fat cattle and sheep, sleek geese, and plethoric-looking swine, gave promise of a land of abundance and comfort. My brother ran into the house to see if the owner was at home, and presently returned, accompanied by the staunch Canadian yeoman and his daughter, who gave us a truly hearty welcome, and assisted in removing the children from the sleigh to the cheerful fire, that made all bright and cozy within.

Our host was a shrewd, humorous-looking Yorkshireman. His red, weather-beaten face, and tall, athletic figure, bent as it was with hard labour, gave indications of great personal strength; and a certain knowing twinkle in his small, clear grey eyes, which had been acquired by long dealing with the world, with a quiet, sarcastic smile that lurked round the corners of his large mouth, gave you the idea of a man who could not easily be deceived by his fellows; one who, though no rogue himself, was quick in detecting the roguery of others. His manners were frank and easy, and he was such a hospitable entertainer that you felt at home with him in a minute.

“Well, how are you, Mr. S——?” cried the farmer, shaking my brother heartily by the hand. “Toiling in the bush still, eh?”

“Just in the same place.”

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“And the wife and children?”

“Hearty. Some half-dozen have been added to the flock since you were our way.”

“So much the better—so much the better. The more the merrier, Mr. S——; children are riches in this country.”

“I know not how that may be; I find it hard to clothe and feed mine.”

“Wait till they grow up; they will be brave helps to you then. The price of labour—the price of labour, Mr. S——, is the destruction of the farmer.”

“It does not seem to trouble you much, Woodruff,” said my brother, glancing round the well-furnished apartment.

“My son and S—— do it all,” cried the old man. “Of course the girls help in busy times, and take care of the dairy, and we hire occasionally; but small as the sum is which is expended in wages during seed-time and harvest, I feel it, I can tell you.”

“You are married again, Woodruff?”

“No, sir,” said the farmer, with a peculiar smile; “not yet;” which seemed to imply the probability of such an event. “That tall gal is my eldest daughter; she manages the house, and an excellent housekeeper she is. But I cannot keep her for ever.” With a knowing wink, “Gals will think of getting married, and seldom consult the wishes of their parents upon the subject when once they have taken the notion into their heads. But ’tis natural, Mr. S——, it is natural; we did just the same when we were young.”

My brother looked laughingly towards the fine, handsome young woman, as she placed upon the table hot water, whiskey, and a huge plate of plum-cake, which did not lack a companion, stored with the finest apples which the orchard could produce.

The young girl looked down, and blushed.

“Oh, I see how it is, Woodruff! You will soon lose your daughter. I wonder that you have kept her so long. But who are these young ladies?” he continued, as three girls very demurely entered the room.

“The two youngest are my darters, by my last wife, who, I fear, mean soon to follow the bad example of their sister. The other *lady*,” said the old man, with a reverential air, “is a *particular* friend of my eldest darter’s.”

My brother laughed slily, and the old man’s cheek took a deeper glow as he stooped forward to mix the punch.

“You said that these two young ladies, Woodruff, were by your last wife. Pray how many wives have you had?”

“Only three. It is impossible, they say in my country, to have too much of a good thing.”

“So I suppose you think,” said my brother, glancing first at the old man and then towards Miss Smith. “Three wives! You have been a fortunate man, Woodruff, to survive them all.”

“Ay, have I not, Mr. S——? But to tell you the truth, I have been both lucky and unlucky in the wife way,” and then he told us the history of his several ventures in matrimony, with which I shall not trouble my readers.

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When he had concluded, the weather was somewhat milder, the sleigh was ordered to the door, and we proceeded on our journey, resting for the night at a small village about twenty miles from B——, rejoicing that the long distance which separated us from the husband and father was diminished to a few miles, and that, with the blessing of Providence, we should meet on the morrow.

About noon we reached the distant town, and were met at the inn by him whom one and all so ardently longed to see. He conducted us to a pretty, neat cottage, which he had prepared for our reception, and where we found old Jenny already arrived. With great pride the old woman conducted me over the premises, and showed me the furniture "the masther" had bought; especially recommending to my notice a china tea-service, which she considered the most wonderful acquisition of the whole.

"Och! who would have thought, a year ago, misthress dear, that we should be living in a mansion like this, and ating off raal chaney? It is but yestherday that we were hoeing praties in the field."

"Yes, Jenny, God has been very good to us, and I hope that we shall never learn to regard with indifference the many benefits which we have received at His hands."

Reader! it is not my intention to trouble you with the sequel of our history. I have given you a faithful picture of a life in the backwoods of Canada, and I leave you to draw from it your own conclusions. To the poor, industrious working man it presents many advantages; to the poor gentleman, none! The former works hard, puts up with coarse, scanty fare, and submits, with a good grace, to hardships that would kill a domesticated animal at home. Thus he becomes independent, inasmuch as the land that he has cleared finds him in the common necessaries of life; but it seldom, if ever, in remote situations, accomplishes more than this. The gentleman can neither work so hard, live so coarsely, nor endure so many privations as his poorer but more fortunate neighbour. Unaccustomed to manual labour, his services in the field are not of a nature to secure for him a profitable return. The task is new to him, he knows not how to perform it well; and, conscious of his deficiency, he expends his little means in hiring labour, which his bush-farm can never repay. Difficulties increase, debts grow upon him, he struggles in vain to extricate himself, and finally sees his family sink into hopeless ruin.

If these sketches should prove the means of deterring one family from sinking their property, and shipwrecking all their hopes, by going to reside in the backwoods of Canada, I shall consider myself amply repaid for revealing the secrets of the prison-house, and feel that I have not toiled and suffered in the wilderness in vain.

THE MAPLE-TREE

A CANADIAN SONG

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Hail to the pride of the forest—hail
  To the maple, tall and green;
It yields a treasure which ne’er shall fail
  While leaves on its boughs are seen.
    When the moon shines bright,
    On the wintry night,
And silvers the frozen snow;
    And echo dwells
    On the jingling bells
As the sleighs dart to and fro;
    Then it brightens the mirth
    Of the social hearth
With its red and cheery glow.

Afar, ’mid the bosky forest shades,
  It lifts its tall head on high;
When the crimson-tinted evening fades
  From the glowing saffron sky;
    When the sun’s last beams
    Light up woods and streams,
And brighten the gloom below;
    And the deer springs by
    With his flashing eye,
And the shy, swift-footed doe;
    And the sad winds chide
    In the branches wide,
With a tender plaint of woe.

The Indian leans on its rugged trunk,
  With the bow in his red right-hand,
And mourns that his race, like a stream, has sunk
  From the glorious forest land.
    But, blythe and free,
    The maple-tree
Still tosses to sun and air
    Its thousand arms,
    While in countless swarms
The wild bee revels there;
    But soon not a trace
    Of the red man’s race
Shall be found in the landscape fair.

When the snows of winter are melting fast,
  And the sap begins to rise,

And the biting breath of the frozen blast
  Yields to the spring's soft sighs,
    Then away to the wood,
    For the maple, good,
Shall unlock its honied store;
    And boys and girls,
    With their sunny curls,
Bring their vessels brimming o'er
    With the luscious flood
    Of the brave tree's blood,
Into cauldrons deep to pour.

The blaze from the sugar-bush gleams red;
  Far down in the forest dark,
A ruddy glow on the trees is shed,
  That lights up their rugged bark;
    And with merry shout,
    The busy rout
Watch the sap as it bubbles high;
    And they talk of the cheer
    Of the coming year,
And the jest and the song pass by;
    And brave tales of old
    Round the fire are told,
That kindle youth's beaming eye.

Hurrah! For the sturdy maple-tree!
  Long may its green branch wave;
In native strength sublime and free,
  Meet emblem for the brave.
    May the nation's peace
    With its growth increase,
And its worth be widely spread;
    For it lifts not in vain
    To the sun and rain
Its tall, majestic head.
    May it grace our soil,
    And reward our toil,
Till the nation's heart is dead.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CANADIAN SKETCHES

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The preceding sketches of Canadian life, as the reader may well suppose, are necessarily tinctured with somewhat somber hues, imparted by the difficulties and privations with which, for so many years the writer had to struggle; but we should be sorry should these truthful pictures of scenes and characters, observed fifteen or twenty years ago, have the effect of conveying erroneous impressions of the present state of a country, which is manifestly destined, at no remote period, to be one of the most prosperous in the world. Had we merely desired to please the imagination of our readers, it would have been easy to have painted the country and the people rather as we could have wished them to be, than as they actually were, at the period to which our description refers; and, probably, what is thus lost in truthfulness, it would have gained in popularity with that class of readers who peruse books more for amusement than instruction.

When I say that Canada is destined to be one of the most prosperous countries in the world, let it not be supposed that I am influenced by any unreasonable partiality for the land of my adoption. Canada may not possess mines of gold or silver, but she possesses all those advantages of climate, geological structure, and position, which are essential to greatness and prosperity. Her long and severe winter, so disheartening to her first settlers, lays up, amidst the forests of the West, inexhaustible supplies of fertilising moisture for the summer, while it affords the farmer the very best of natural roads to enable him to carry his wheat and other produce to market. It is a remarkable fact, that hardly a lot of land containing two hundred acres, in British America, can be found without an abundant supply of water at all seasons of the year; and a very small proportion of the land itself is naturally unfit for cultivation. To crown the whole, where can a country be pointed out which possesses such an extent of internal navigation? A chain of river navigation and navigable inland seas, which, with the canals recently constructed, gives to the countries bordering on them all the advantages of an extended sea-coast, with a greatly diminished risk of loss from shipwreck!

Little did the modern discoverers of America dream, when they called this country “Canada,” from the exclamation of one of the exploring party, “Aca nada,”—“there is nothing here,” as the story goes, that Canada would far outstrip those lands of gold and silver, in which their imaginations revelled, in that real wealth of which gold and silver are but the portable representatives. The interminable forests—that most gloomy and forbidding feature in its scenery to the European stranger, should have been regarded as the most certain proof of its fertility.

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The severity of the climate, and the incessant toil of clearing the land to enable the first settlers to procure the mere necessaries of life, have formed in its present inhabitants an indomitable energy of character, which, whatever may be their faults, must be regarded as a distinguishing attribute of the Canadians, in common with our neighbours of the United States. When we consider the progress of the Northern races of mankind, it cannot be denied, that while the struggles of the hardy races of the North with their severe climate, and their forests, have gradually endowed them with an unconquerable energy of character, which has enabled them to become the masters of the world; the inhabitants of more favoured climates, where the earth almost spontaneously yields all the necessaries of life, have remained comparatively feeble and inactive, or have sunk into sloth and luxury. It is unnecessary to quote any other instances in proof of this obvious fact, than the progress of Great Britain and the United States of America, which have conquered as much by their industry as by their swords.

Our neighbours of the United States are in the habit of attributing their wonderful progress in improvements of all kinds to their republican institutions. This is no doubt quite natural in a people who have done so much for themselves in so short a time; but when we consider the subject in all its bearings, it may be more truly asserted that, with any form of government not absolutely despotic, the progress of North America, peopled by a civilised and energetic race, with every motive to industry and enterprise in the nature of the country itself, must necessarily have been rapid. An unbounded extent of fertile soil, with an increasing population, were circumstances which of themselves were sufficient to create a strong desire for the improvement of internal communications; as, without common roads, rail-roads, or canals, the interior of the country would have been unfit to be inhabited by any but absolute barbarians. All the first settlers of America wanted was to be left to themselves.

When we compare the progress of Great Britain with that of North America, the contrast is sufficiently striking to attract our attention. While the progress of the former has been the work of ages, North America has sprung into wealth and power almost within a period which we can remember. But the colonists of North America should recollect, when they indulge in such comparisons, that their British ancestors took many centuries to civilise themselves, before they could send free and intelligent settlers to America. The necessity for improvements in the internal communications is vastly more urgent in a widely extended continent than in an island, no part of which is far removed from the sea-coast; and patriotism, as well as self-interest, would readily suggest such improvements to the minds of a people who inherited the knowledge of their ancestors, and

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were besides stimulated to extraordinary exertions by their recently-acquired independence. As the political existence of the United States commenced at a period when civilisation had made great progress in the mother-country, their subsequent improvement would, for various reasons, be much more rapid than that of the country from which they originally emigrated. To show the influence of external circumstances on the characters of men, let us just suppose two individuals, equal in knowledge and natural capacity, to be placed, the one on an improved farm in England, with the necessary capital and farm-stock, and the other in the wilds of America, with no capital but his labour, and the implements required to clear the land for his future farm. In which of these individuals might we reasonably expect to find the most energy, ingenuity, and general intelligence on subjects connected with their immediate interests? No one who has lived for a few years in the United States or Canada can hesitate for a reply.

The farmer in the more improved country generally follows the beaten track, the example of his ancestors, or the successful one of his more intelligent contemporaries; he is rarely compelled to draw upon his individual mental resources. Not so with the colonist. He treads in tracks but little known; he has to struggle with difficulties on all sides. Nature looks sternly on him, and in order to preserve his own existence, he must conquer Nature, as it were, by his perseverance and ingenuity. Each fresh conquest tends to increase his vigour and intelligence, until he becomes a new man, with faculties of mind which, but for his severe lessons in the school of adversity, might have lain for ever dormant.

While America presents the most forbidden aspect to the new settler, it at the same time offers the richest rewards to stimulate his industry. On the one hand, there is want and misery; on the other, abundance and prosperity. There is no middle course for the settler; he must work or starve. In North America there is another strong incentive to improvement, to be found in the scarcity of labour; and still more, therefore, than in Europe must every mechanical contrivance which supersedes manual labour tend to increase the prosperity of the inhabitants. When these circumstances are duly considered, we need no longer wonder at the rapid improvements in labour-saving machinery, and in the means of internal communication throughout the United States. But for the steam-engine, canals, and railroads, North America would have remained for ages a howling wilderness of endless forests, and instead of the busy hum of men, and the sound of the mill and steam-engine, we should now have heard nothing but

“The melancholy roar of unfrequented floods.”

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The scenes and characters presented to the reader in the preceding pages, belong, in some measure, rather to the past than the present state of Canada. In the last twenty years great changes have taken place, as well in the external appearance of the country, as in the general character of its inhabitants. In many localities where the land was already under the plough, the original occupants of the soil have departed to renew their endless wars with the giants of the forest, in order to procure more land for their increasing families where it could be obtained at a cheaper price. In the back-woods, forests have been felled, the blackened stumps have disappeared, and regular furrows are formed by the ploughman, where formerly he had not time or inclination to whistle at his work. A superior class of farmers has sprung up, whose minds are as much improved by cultivation as their lands, and who are comfortably settled on farms supposed to be exhausted of their fertility by their predecessors. As the breadth of land recovered from the forest is increased, villages, towns, and cities have grown up and increased in population and wealth in proportion to the productiveness of the surrounding country.

In Canada, it is particularly to be noted, that there is hardly any intermediate stage between the rude toil and privation of the back-woods, and the civilisation, comfort, and luxury of the towns and cities, many of which are to outward appearance entirely European, with the encouraging prospect of a continual increase in the value of fixed property. When a colony, capable, from the fertility of the soil and abundance of moisture, of supporting a dense population, has been settled by a civilised race, they are never long in establishing a communication with the sea-coast and with other countries. When such improvements have been effected, the inhabitants may be said at once to take their proper place among civilised nations. The elements of wealth and power are already there, and time and population only are required fully to develope the resources of the country.

Unhappily the natural progress of civilised communities in our colonies is too often obstructed by the ignorance of governments, and unwise or short-sighted legislation; and abundance of selfish men are always to be found in the colonies themselves, who, destitute of patriotism, greedily avail themselves of this ignorance, in order to promote their private interests at the expense of the community. Canada has been greatly retarded in its progress by such causes, and this will in a great measure account for its backwardness when compared with the United States, without attributing the difference to the different forms of government. It was manifestly the intention of the British government, in conferring representative institutions on Canada, that the people should enjoy all the privileges of their fellow-subjects in the mother-country. The more to assimilate our government to that of its great original, the idea was for some time entertained of creating a titled and hereditary aristocracy, but it was soon found that though

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"The King can make a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that,"

it was not in his power to give permanency to an institution which, in its origin, was as independent as royalty itself, arising naturally out of the feudal system: but which was utterly inconsistent with the genius and circumstances of a modern colony. The sovereign might endow the members of such an aristocracy with grants of the lands of the crown to support their dignity, but what benefit could such grants be, even to the recipients, in a country covered with boundless forests and nearly destitute of inhabitants? It is obvious that no tenants could be found to pay rents for such lands, or indeed even to occupy them, while lands could be purchased on easy terms in the United States, or in Canada itself. Had this plan been carried out, Canada would have been a doomed country for centuries.

The strongest incitements to industry are required, those of proprietorship and ultimate independence, to induce settlers to encounter all the privations and toil of a new settlement in such a country. A genuine aristocracy can only exist in a country already peopled, and which has been conquered and divided among the conquerors. In such a state of things, aristocracy, though artificial in its origin, becomes naturalised, if I may use the expression, and even, as in Great Britain, when restrained within proper limits, highly beneficial in advancing civilization. Be it for good or be it for evil, it is worse than useless to disguise the fact that the government of a modern colony, where every conquest is made from the forest by little at a time, must be essentially republican.

Any allusion to political parties is certainly foreign to the object of the preceding sketches; but it is impossible to make the British reader acquainted with the various circumstances which retarded the progress of this fine colony, without explaining how the patronage of the local government came formerly to be so exclusively bestowed on one class of the population,—thus creating a kind of spurious aristocracy which disgusted the colonists, and drove emigration from our shores to those of the United States.

After the American Revolution, considerable numbers of loyalists in the United States voluntarily relinquished their homesteads and property, and came to Canada, which then, even on the shores of Lake Ontario, was a perfect wilderness. Lands were of course granted to them by the government, and very naturally these settlers were peculiarly favoured by the local authorities. These loyalists were generally known by the name of "tories," to distinguish them from the republicans, and forming the great mass of the population. Any one who called himself a reformer was regarded with distrust and suspicion, as a concealed republican or rebel. It must not, however, be supposed that these loyalists were really tories in their political principles. Their notions on such subjects were

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generally crude and undefined, and living in a country where the whole construction of society and habits of feeling were decidedly republican, the term tory, when adopted by them, was certainly a misnomer. However, hated by, and hating as cordially, the republican party in the United States, they by no means unreasonably considered that their losses and their attachment to British institutions, gave them an almost exclusive claim to the favour of the local government in Canada. Thus the name of U.E. (United Empire) Loyalist or Tory came to be considered an indispensable qualification for every office in the colony.

This was all well enough so long as there was no other party in the country. But gradually a number of other American settlers flowed into Canada from the United States, who had no claim to the title of tories or loyalists, but who in their feelings and habits were probably not much more republican than their predecessors. These were of course regarded with peculiar jealousy by the older or loyalist settlers from the same country. It seemed to them as if a swarm of locusts had come to devour their patrimony. This will account for the violence of party feeling which lately prevailed in Canada.

There is nothing like a slight infusion of self-interest to give point and pungency to party feeling. The British immigrants, who afterwards flowed into this colony in greater numbers, of course brought with them their own particular political predilections. They found what was called toryism and high churchism in the ascendant, and self-interest or prejudice induced most of the more early settlers of this description to fall in with the more powerful and favoured party; while influenced by the representations of the old loyalist party they shunned the other American settlers as republicans. In the meantime, however, the descendants of the original loyalists were becoming numerous, while the government became unable to satisfy them all according to their own estimation of their merits; and as high churchism was, unfortunately for the peace of society, associated with toryism, every shade of religious dissent as well as political difference of opinion generally added to the numbers and power of the reform party, which was now beginning to be known in the colony. Strange to say, the great bulk of the present reform party is composed of the descendants of these U.E. Loyalists, while many of our most ultra tories are the descendants of republican settlers from the United States.

As may be supposed, thirty years of increasing emigration from the mother-country has greatly strengthened the reform party, and they now considerably out-number the conservatives. While the mass of the people held tory, or, I should rather call them, *conservative* principles, our government seemed to work as well as any representative government may be supposed to work without the necessary check of a constitutional opposition.

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Favouritism was, of course, the order of the day; and the governor, for the time being, filled up all offices according to his will and pleasure, without many objections being made by the people as to the qualifications of the favourite parties, provided the selections for office were made from the powerful party. Large grants of land were given to favoured individuals in the colony, or to immigrants who came with commendations from the home government. In such a state of matters the people certainly possessed the external form of a free government, but as an opposition party gradually acquired an ascendancy in the lower House of Parliament, they were unable to carry the measures adopted by their majority into operation, in consequence of the systematic opposition of the legislative and executive councils, which were generally formed exclusively from the old conservative party. Whenever the conservatives obtained the majority in the House of Assembly, the reformers, in retaliation, as systematically opposed every measure. Thus a constant bickering was kept up between the parties in Parliament; while the people, amidst these attentions, lost sight of the true interests of the country, and improvements of all kinds came nearly to a stand-still. As matters were then conducted, it would have been much better had the colony been ruled by a governor and council; for, in that case, beneficial measures might have been carried into effect. Such a state of things could not last long; and the discontent of a large portion of the people, terminating, through the indiscretion of an infatuated local government, in actual rebellion, soon produced the remedy. The party generally most powerful in the Legislative Assembly, and the members of which had been so long and so unconstitutionally excluded from holding offices under the government, at once obtained the position which they were entitled, and the people being thus given the power of governing by their majorities in Parliament, improvements of all kinds are steadily advancing up the present moment, and their prosperity and contentment have increased in an equal proportion.

Had the first settlement of Canada been conducted on sound and philosophical principles, much hardship and privation, as well as loss of capital in land speculations, would have been saved to its first settlers, and the country, improved and improving as it now is, would have presented a very different aspect at the present time. With the best intentions, the British government may be justly accused of gross ignorance of the true principles of colonisation, and the local governments are still more open to the accusation of squandering the resources of the colony—its lands—in building up the fortunes of a would-be aristocracy, who being non-resident proprietors of wild lands, necessarily obstructed the progress of improvement, while the people were tantalised with the empty semblance of a free government.

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No sooner did emigrants from Great Britain begin to pour into Upper Canada, so as to afford a prospect of the wild lands becoming saleable, than a system of land speculation was resorted to by many of the old colonists. This land speculation has no doubt enriched many individuals, but more than any other abuse has it retarded the natural progress of the country, and the interests of the many have thus been sacrificed to those of the few. Almost all other speculations may be said, in one shape or another, to do good; but land speculation has been an unmitigated curse to Canada, because it occasions a monopoly of the soil, and prevents it from being cleared and rendered productive, until the speculators can obtain their own price for it.

The lands granted to soldiers and sailors who had served in Canada, and those granted to the U.E. loyalists, were bought up, often at merely nominal prices, from the original grantees and their children, and sold again with an immense profit to new settlers from the old country, or retained for many years in an unproductive state. A portion of the lands granted to the U.E. loyalists was, of course, occupied by the heads of families; but the lands to which their children became entitled, under the same benevolent provision of the government, were generally drawn in remote situations. By far the larger portion of these grants, however, were not located or rendered available by the grantees, but remained in the shape of U.E. rights, which were purchased at very low prices by the speculators. These U.E. rights were bought at the rate of 1s. 3d., 2s. 6d., or 3s. 9d. per acre; and it was by no means uncommon for old soldiers to sell one hundred acres of land for two or three dollars, or even for a bottle of rum, so little value did they set on such grants in the then state of Canada. These grants, though well meant, and with respect to the U.E. Loyalists, perhaps, unavoidable, have been most injurious to the country.

The great error in this matter, and which could have been avoided, was the opening of too great an extent of land *at once* for settlement. A contrary system, steadily pursued, would have produced a concentrated population; and the resources of such a population would have enabled the colonists, by uniting their labour and capital, to make the means of communication, in some degree, keep pace with the settlement of the lands; and Upper Canada would now have been as well provided with canals and railroads as the United States. The same abuses, no doubt, existed formerly to as great an extent in that country, but, being longer settled, it has outgrown the evil. Enough has been said on this subject to show some of the causes which have retarded improvements in Canada.

Another chief cause of the long and helpless torpor in which the country lay, was the absence of municipal governments in the various rural localities. It indeed seems strange, that such a simple matter as providing the means of making roads and bridges by local assessment could not have been conceded to the people, who, if we suppose them to be gifted with common sense, are much more capable of understanding and managing their own parish business, than any government, however well disposed to promote their interests.

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Formerly the government of Upper Canada was deluged with petitions for grants of money from Parliament to be expended in improvements in this or that locality, of the reasonableness of which claims the majority of the legislators were, of course, profoundly ignorant. These money grants became subjects of a species of jobbing, or manoeuvering, among the members of the House of Assembly; and he was considered the best member who could get the most money for his county. Commissioners resident in the particular localities were appointed to superintend these public works; and as these commissioners were generally destitute of practical knowledge, these Parliamentary grants were usually expended without producing equivalent results. Nothing in the abstract is more reasonable than that any number of individuals should be allowed to associate themselves for the purpose of effecting some local improvement, which would be beneficial to others as well as to themselves; but nothing of this could be attempted without an Act of Parliament, which, of course, was attended with expense and delay, if not disappointment. The time and attention of the provincial parliament were thus occupied with a mass of parish business, which could have been much better managed by the people themselves on the spot.

When the union of the two provinces was in contemplation, it became evident that the business of such an extended colony could not be carried on in the United Parliament, were it to be encumbered and distracted with the contending claims of so many localities. This consideration led to the establishment of the District (now County) Municipal Councils. These municipal councils were denounced by the conservative party at the time as a step towards republicanism! Were this true, it would only prove that the government of our republican neighbours is better than our own; for these municipal institutions have been eminently beneficial to Canada. But municipal councils are necessarily no more republican in their nature, than the House of Commons in England. However this may be, the true prosperity of Upper Canada may be mainly attributed to their influence on the minds of the people.

Possessing many of the external forms of a parliament, they are admirable political schools for a free people. The most intelligent men in the different townships are freely elected by the inhabitants, and assemble in the county town to deliberate and make by-laws, to levy taxes, and, in short, to do everything which in their judgment will promote the interest of their constituents. Having previously been solely occupied in agricultural pursuits, it might naturally be expected that their first notions would be somewhat crude, and that they would have many long-cherished prejudices to overcome. Their daily intercourse with the more educated inhabitants of the towns, however, tended to remove these prejudices, while new ideas were continually presented to their minds. The rapidity with which

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this species of practical education is acquired is remarkable, and also, how soon men with such limited opportunities of acquiring knowledge, learn to think and to express their views and opinions in appropriate language. These municipal councillors go home among their constituents, where they have to explain and defend their proceedings; while so engaged, they have occasion to communicate facts and opinions, which are fairly discussed, and thus enlightened views are diffused through the mass of people.

The councillors, at first, were averse to the imposition or increase of taxation, however desirable the object might be; but pride and emulation very soon overcame this natural reluctance; and the example of some neighbouring county, with that natural desire to do good, which, more or less, influences the feelings and conduct of all public men, were not long in producing their beneficial results, even with the risk of offending their constituents. When the County Municipal Councils were first established, the warden or president of the council, and also the treasurer, were appointed by the governor; but both these offices were afterwards made elective, the warden being elected by the council from their own body, and the treasurer being selected by them, without previous election by the people.

Lately, councils have been also established in each township for municipal purposes affecting the interest of the township only, the reeves, or presidents, of which minor councils form the members of the county council. This general system of municipalities, and a late act of the provincial parliament, enabling the inhabitants to form themselves into road companies, have converted the formerly torpid and inactive townships into busy hives of industry and progressive improvement.

Our agricultural societies have also played no mean part in furthering the progress of the colony. In colonies fewer prejudices are entertained on the subject of agricultural matters than on any others, and the people are ever ready to try any experiment which offers any prospect of increased remuneration for labour. Education, of late, has also made rapid advances in this province; and now, the yeomanry of the more improved townships, though they may be inferior to the yeomanry of England in the acquirements derived from common school education, are certainly far superior to them in general intelligence. Their minds are better stocked with ideas, and they are infinitely more progressive. When we consider the relative periods at which the first settlements were formed in the United States and in Upper Canada, and the accumulation of capital in the former, it will not be difficult to show that the progress of Canada has been much more rapid.

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The excavation of the Erie Canal, the parent of all the subsequent improvements of a similar nature in the United States, opened-up for settlement a vast country to the westward, which would otherwise for many years have remained a wilderness, unfit for the habitation of man. The boundless success of this experiment necessarily led to all the other similar undertakings. The superior advantages Canada enjoyed in her river and lake navigation, imperfect as that navigation was, operated in a manner rather to retard than to accelerate improvements of this kind; while the construction of the Erie Canal was a matter of prospective necessity, in order to provide for a rapidly increasing population and immigration. In the same manner, the recent completion of the works on the St. Lawrence, and the enlargement of the Welland Canal, connecting Lakes Erie and Ontario, will just as necessarily be followed by similar results, with the additional advantage of the whole colony being greatly benefitted by the commerce of the United States, in addition to her own.

We have now, thanks to responsible government, municipal councils, and common schools, no longer any reason to consider their institutions better calculated to develope the resources of the colony, than our own. Our interests are almost identical, and with our canals and railroads on both sides mutually beneficial, our former hostility has merged into a friendly rivalry in the march of intellect, and we may now truly say that, without wishing for any change in political institutions, which are most congenial to the feelings of the people where they exist, each country now sincerely rejoices in the prosperity of its neighbour.

Before concluding this chapter, I shall endeavour to give the reader a short description of the county of Hastings, in which I have held the office of sheriff for the last twelve years, and which, I believe, possesses many advantages as a place of settlement, over all the other places I have seen in the Upper Province. I should premise, however, lest my partiality for this part of the colony should be supposed to incline me to overrate its comparative advantages to the settler, that my statements are principally intended to show the progress of Upper Province generally; and that when I claim any superiority for this part of it, I shall give, what I trust the reader will consider, satisfactory reasons for my conclusion.

The settlement of a thickly-wooded country, when it is left to chance, is a most uncertain and capricious matter. The narrow views and interests of a clique in the colony, or even of an influential individual, often direct emigration out of its natural course, involving unnecessary suffering to the settler, a waste or absolute loss of capital, and a retarding of the progress of the country. The circumstances and situation of the United States were less productive of these evils than those of Upper Canada, because settlement went on more uniformly from the seacoast

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towards the interior. The mighty rivers and lakes of Canada, though productive of boundless prosperity, operated in the first period of its settlement, most unfavourably on the growth of the colony, by throwing open for settlement an extensive inland coast, at that time unconnected with the ocean by means of canals. Hence numerous detached, feeble, and unprogressive settlements, came into existence, where the new settlers had to struggle for years with the most disheartening difficulties.

European settlers know but little of the value of situation. In most cases they are only desirous of acquiring a large extent of land at a low price, and thus, unless restrained by the wise regulations of a provident government, they too often ruin themselves, and waste their capital in a wilderness, where it does good to no one. When emigration from the United Kingdom began to set in to Upper Canada, the pernicious speculation in wild lands commenced in earnest. As most of the land speculators possessed shares in the steam-boats on Lake Ontario, the interests of both speculations were combined. It was, of course, the interest of the steam-boat proprietors to direct emigration as far to the westward as possible; and influenced by their interested representations and those of the land speculators settled in Toronto, Cobourg, and Hamilton, the greater portion of the emigrants possessing capital were thrown into these towns, near which they were led to expect desirable locations. In the same manner the agents of the Canada Land Company, who were to be found on every steamer, were actively employed in directing the emigrants to the Huron tract.

By a simple inspection of the map of Upper Canada, it will be seen, that as the Bay of Quinte was out of the general route of the steamers, and too near the lower end of the lake navigation, it did not suit the views of the parties most interested to direct emigration to its shores. Thus the beautiful Bay of Quinte, with the most fertile land on its shores, and scenery which exceeds in variety and picturesque beauty that of any part of Upper Canada, Hamilton and Niagara alone excepted, has been passed by for years for situations much less desirable or attractive to European settlers.

The forbidding aspect of the country near Kingston, which is situated at the entrance of the bay from the St. Lawrence, where the soil has a rocky and barren appearance, has no doubt deterred emigrants from proceeding in this direction.

The shores of the Bay of Quinte were originally occupied principally by U.E. loyalists and retired officers, who had served during the late war with the United States, but the emigration from Europe has chiefly consisted of the poorer class of Irish Catholics, and of Protestants from the North of Ireland, settled in two very thriving townships in the county of Hastings. There is also a sprinkling of Scotch and English in different parts of the county. Comparatively few possessing any considerable amount of capital have found their way here, as the county town, Belleville, is not in the line of the summer travel on the lakes.

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The scenery along the shores of the bay is exceedingly beautiful all the way from Kingston to the head, where a large river, the Trent, discharges itself into it at a thriving village, of about a thousand inhabitants, called Trent Port. A summer ride along the lower portion of this river presents scenery of a bolder and grander character than is often met with in Upper Canada, and it is enlivened by spectacles of immense rafts of timber descending the rapids, and by the merry chorus of the light-hearted lumbermen, as they pursue their toilsome and perilous voyage to Quebec.

Belleville was originally a spot reserved for the Mississagua Indians, and was laid out in 1816 for a village, when there were only two or three white men settled among them as traders in the place. It was only during the last year that the two frame farm-houses, situated about a quarter of a mile apart, were removed to make room for more substantial buildings. Belleville remained nearly stationary for several years, during which a few persons realised handsome fortunes, by means of large profits, not withstanding the limited extent of their business. It at length began to grow in importance as the fine country in its neighbourhood was cleared and rendered productive.

In 1839, when the county of Hastings was set apart from the Midland district, under the name of the District of Victoria, and Belleville became the District town, the population of the county, including Belleville, was about 12,000, and that of Belleville about 1500. In 1850 the population of the county had reached 23,454, of which that of Belleville was 3326. By the census just taken, on a much more correct principle than formerly, the population of Belleville in 1852 appears to be 4554, showing an increase of 1228 in two years. During the same period, from 1850 to 1852, the population of Cobourg on Lake Ontario, which town formerly enjoyed the full benefit of a large emigration, has risen from 3379 to 3867, showing an increase of only 488. The town of Dundas in the same time has increased its population from 2311 in 1850 to 3519 in 1852, showing an increase of 1208. The population of the city of Hamilton in 1850 was 10,312, and now, in 1852, it is said to exceed 13,000. In 1838 the then *town* of Hamilton contained a population of only 3116. When I first visited that place in 1832 it was a dull insignificant village, which might, I suppose, contain a population of 1200 or 1500. I can hardly describe my surprise on revisiting it in 1849, to behold a city grown up suddenly, as if by enchantment, with several handsome churches and public and private buildings of cut stone, brought from the fine freestone quarries in the precipitous mountains or tableland behind the city.

Little need be said of the capital of the province, the city of Toronto, the progress of which has been less remarkable in the same period, for the obvious reason that its merits were sooner appreciated or known by the emigrants from Europe. The population of Toronto, then called Little York, in 1826 was 1677, while that of the now city of Kingston was 2329. In 1838 the population of Toronto was 12,571, and that of Kingston 3877. In 1850 the population of Toronto was 25,166, and that of Kingston 10,097.

BOOKRAGS

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These few facts will enable the reader to form some idea of the comparative progress of different towns in Upper Canada, under circumstances similar in some cases and different in others. When it is considered that all of these last-mentioned towns have for many years reaped the full benefit of the influx of emigration and capital from the mother country, while the shores of the Bay of Quinte were little known or appreciated, it will appear that the progress of Belleville has been at least equal to that of any of them. The prosperity of Belleville may in fact be almost entirely attributed to the gradual development of its own internal resources, the fertility of the lands in its vicinity, and a large exportation, of late years, of lumber of all kinds to the United States.

Having no desire unnecessarily to trouble the reader with dry statistical tables, I shall merely quote the following facts and figures, kindly furnished me by G. Benjamin, Esq., the present warden of the county of Hastings, to whose business talents and public spirit the county is largely indebted for its progress in internal improvement.

The increase of business at the port of Belleville has been most extraordinary. In 1839, the total amount of duties paid at this port amounted to 280l; and in the year (1850) the amount reached 3659l. 12s. 4d. The total arrivals at this port from the United States are as follows:

	No. of Vessels employed	Tons	Hands
British propellers	8	2,400	104
British sailing vessels	81	4,140	375
Foreign do. do.	124	12,643	730
Total	213	19,183	1209

This in addition to our daily steamers.

Our exports to the United States are L52,532 17 5
And British ports below Belleville 153,411 16 6

L205,944 13 11

L	s	d			
Total imports from United States	25,067	2	6		
Total acceptances from United States	17,435	0	0		
Total importations from lower ports, including drafts and other resources	130,294	0	0	172,796	2 6

Showing the balance of trade in favour of this port to be L33,148 11 5

Our exports to the lower ports are made up as follows:

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3,485 barrels of Potash L27,880 0 0
33,198 " Flour 33,198 0 0
357 bushels of Grass seed 133 17 6
1,450 " Barley 181 5 0
4,947 " Peas 594 14 0
4,349 " Rye 434 18 0
37,360 " Wheat 7,472 0 0
198 barrels of Pork 396 0 0
54 " Beef 74 5 0
1,141 Sheep-skins 114 2 0
4,395,590 feet square Timber 74,903 2 6
173 kegs of Butter 540 12 6
Furs 716 0 0
Fatted Cattle 1,840 0 0
High Wines 3,098 0 0
Whiskey 1,830 0 0

L153,411 16 6

Our exports to the United States are made up as follows:

30,686 bushels of Wheat L6,137 4 11
3,514 " Rye 351 8 0
3,728 " Peas 466 0 0
90 " Barley 9 0 0
316 " Grass seed 118 10 0
18,756 barrels of Flour 18,756 0 0
338 " Potash 2,366 0 0
1,000 bushels of Potatoes 62 10 0
92 M. Shingles 23 0 0
117 M. Laths 43 15 0
18,210 lbs. Rags 190 0 0
9,912 lbs. Wool 481 19 6
466 Sheep-skins 57 10 0
61 kegs of Butter 122 0 0
19,648,000 feet sawed Lumber 21,296 0 0
513 Cows 2,052 0 0

L52,532 17 5

The River Moira passing through Belleville, where it discharges itself into the Bay of Quinte, is one principal source of its prosperity. The preceding statement will show the quantity of sawed lumber exported, most of which is furnished by the saw-mills of Belleville, or its immediate vicinity. Besides saw and flour-mills, there are cloth and paper manufactories, a manufactory of edge tools; pail manufactories, where great quantities of these useful articles are made at a low price by machinery; planing machines, several iron foundries breweries, distilleries, &c., in almost all of which establishments steam-engines, or water-power from the river, are used. A remarkable feature in Belleville, in common with other towns in Canada, is the great number of tailoring and shoe-making establishments, when compared with towns of an equal population in Great Britain. This shows, more than anything I am aware of, the general prosperity of the people, who can afford to be large consumers of such articles.

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There is very little difference to be observed in the costliness of the clothing of the different classes of society in Upper Canadian towns and cities, and much less difference in the taste with which these articles are selected, than might be expected. With the exception of the lower class of labourers, all persons are well and suitably clad, and they can afford to be so.

Twelve years ago there were not more than five or six piano-fortes in Belleville. Now there are nearly one hundred of a superior description, costing from 80 to 150 pounds.

Another remarkable circumstance in Upper Canada is the number of lawyers in all the towns. In Belleville there are about a dozen, which seems to be a large number for a town containing only 4554 inhabitants, when in an English town of the same size there is often not more than one. Of course, I do not mention this as any particular advantage, but to show the great difference in the amount of transactions, and of subjects of contention, in an old and a new country. The same may be said of the number of newspapers, as indicative of commercial activity. Two newspapers, representing the two political parties, are well-supported in Belleville, both by their subscribers, and the number of advertisements.

The mouth of the Moira River, which widens out at its junction with the Bay of Quinte, is completely covered with saw-logs and square timber of various kinds during the summer months. This river, at Belleville, is often dammed up by confused piles of timber. No sooner are these removed than its waters are covered over by vast quantities of oak staves, which are floated down separately to be rafted off like the squared lumber for the Quebec market. The greater proportion of the saw-logs are, however, cut up for exportation to the United States by the various saw-mills on the river, or by a large steam saw-mill with twenty or thirty run of saws, erected on a little island in the mouth of the river. Several large schooners are constantly loading with sawed lumber, and there are two or three steamboats always running between Belleville and Kingston, carrying passengers to and fro, and generally heavily laden with goods or produce. The Bay of Quinte offers more than common facilities in the summer months for rapid and safe communication with other places; and, in the winter time, being but slightly affected by the current of the river Trent, it affords excellent sleighing.

Large quantities of wheat and other farm produce are transported over the ice to Belleville from the neighbouring county of Prince Edward, which is an exceedingly prosperous agricultural settlement, yielding wheat of the finest quality, and particularly excellent cheese and butter. The scenery on the shores of Prince Edward is exceedingly picturesque, and there are numerous wharfs at short distances, from whence the farmers roll their barrels of flour and other articles on board the steamers on their way to market. I have seen no scenery in Upper Canada presenting the same variety and beauty as that of the shores of Prince Edward in particular.

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The peninsular situation of this county is its only disadvantage—being out of the line of the land travel and of the telegraphic communication which passes through Belleville. The county of Prince Edward having nearly exhausted its exportation lumber—the people are thus freed from the evils of a trade that is always more or less demoralising in its tendency and can now give their undivided attention to the cultivation of their farms. Certain it is, that more quiet, industrious, and prosperous settlers, are not to be found in the Province.

A few miles below Belleville, on the south side of the bay, is a very remarkable natural curiosity, called “The Stone Mills.” On the summit of a table-land, rising abruptly several hundred feet above the shore of the bay, there is a lake of considerable size and very great depth, and which apparently receives a very inadequate supply from the elevated land on which it is situated. The lake has no natural outlet, and the common opinion is that it is unfathomable, and that it is supplied with water by means of a subterranean communication with Lake Huron, or some other lake at the same level. This is, of course, extremely improbable, but there can be no doubt of its great depth, and that it cannot be supplied from the Bay of Quinte, so far beneath its level. As a small rivulet runs into this lake from the flat ground in its vicinity, and as the soil of this remarkable excavation, however it may have been originally formed, is tenacious, I think we require no such improbable theory to account for its existence. Availing himself of the convenient position of this lake, a farmer in the neighbourhood erected a mill, which gives its name to the lake, on the shore of the Bay of Quinte, and which he supplied with water by making a deep cutting from the lake to the edge of the precipice, from whence it is conveyed in troughs to the mill.

There is a somewhat similar lake in the township of Sidney in the county of Hastings, covering some hundred acres. This lake is also of great depth, though situated on the summit of a range of high hills, from whence it gets the name of the “Oak Hill Pond.”

The Bay of Quinte abounds in excellent fish of various kinds, affording excellent sport to those who are fond of fishing. When the ice breaks up in the spring, immense shoals of pickerel commence running up the Moira river, at Belleville, to spawn in the interior. At that time a number of young men amuse themselves with spearing them, standing on the flat rocks at the end of the bridge which crosses the river They dart their spears into the rushing waters at hap-hazard in the darkness, bringing up a large fish at every second or third stroke. My eldest son, a youth of fifteen, sometimes caught so many fish in this manner in two or three hours, that we had to send a large wheelbarrow to fetch them home. Formerly, before so many mills were erected, the fish swarmed in incredible numbers in all our rivers and lakes.

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In the back-woods there is excellent deer-hunting, and parties are often formed for this purpose by the young men, who bring home whole waggon-loads of venison.

While speaking of Belleville, I may mention, as one of its chief advantages, the long period for which the sleighing continues in this part of the country, when compared with other places on the shore of Lake Ontario. Nearly the whole winter there is excellent sleighing on the Bay of Quinte; and on the land we have weeks of good sleighing for days in most other places. This is owing to the influence of a large sheet of frozen water interposed between us and Lake Ontario, which is never frozen.

The county of Prince Edward is a peninsula connected with the main land by a narrow isthmus of low swampy land about four miles wide. Through this neck of land it has long been in contemplation to cut a canal to enable the lake steam-boats to take Belleville in their route between Kingston and Toronto, thus affording a safe navigation in stormy weather. The effect of such a work on the prosperity of the counties of Hastings and Prince Edward would be very great, as European emigrants would have an opportunity of seeing a country which has hitherto escaped their notice, from the causes already mentioned.

Besides the usual variety of churches, there is a grammar-school, and also four large common schools, which latter are free schools, being supported by assessments on the people of the town.

Every Saturday, which is the great day for business from the country, the streets are crowded with farmers' waggons or sleighs, with their wives and pretty daughters, who come in to make their little purchases of silk gowns and ribbons, and to sell their butter and eggs, which are the peculiar perquisites for the females in this country. The counties of Hastings and Prince Edward are celebrated for female beauty, and nowhere can you see people in the same class more becomingly attired. At the same time there is nothing rustic about them, except genuine good nature and unaffected simplicity of manners. To judge by their light elastic step and rosy smiling countenances, no people on earth seem to enjoy a greater share of health and contentment.

Since the establishment of the county municipal councils, plank and macadamised roads have branched out in all directions from the various central county towns, stretching their ramifications like the veins of the human body, conveying nourishment and prosperity throughout the country, increasing the trade and the travel, connecting man with man and promoting intelligence and civilisation; while the magnetic telegraph, now traversing the whole length of the country, like the nervous system, still further stimulates the inhabitants to increased activity.

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The people of this county have not been behind their neighbours in these improvements. The first plank-road which they constructed was from Belleville to Canniff's Mills, a distance of three miles over a road which at the time was often knee-deep in mud, with a solid foundation of flat limestone rock, which prevented the escape of the water. So infamous was this road, that, on some parts of it, it was a matter of serious doubt whether a boat or waggon would be the better mode of conveyance. Notwithstanding the badness of this road, it was the greatest thoroughfare in the county, as it was the only approach to a number of mills situated on the river, and to Belleville, from the back country. It was, however, with the utmost difficulty that the warden could induce the other members of the county-council to sanction the construction of a plank-road at the expense of the county; so little was then known in Canada of the effects of such works.

The profits yielded by this road are unusually large, amounting, it is said, to seventy or eighty per cent. This extraordinary success encouraged the people to undertake other lines, by means of joint-stock companies formed among the farmers. All these plank-roads are highly remunerative, averaging, it is stated, fourteen per cent. over and above all expenses of repair. More than thirty miles of plank-road is already constructed in the county. In a few years plank or gravel roads will be extended through every part of the country, and they will be most available as feeders to the great line of railway which will very soon be constructed through the entire length of the province, and which has been already commenced at Toronto and Hamilton. A single track plank-road costs from 375 to 425 pounds per mile, according to the value of the land to be purchased, or other local causes. The cost of a gravel road, laid twelve feet wide and nine inches deep, and twenty-two feet from out to out, is from 250 to 325 pounds, and it is much more lasting, and more easily repaired than a plank-road. Macadamised or gravel roads will no doubt entirely supersede the others.

In the present circumstances of the colony, however, plank-roads will be preferred, because they are more quickly constructed, and with less immediate outlay of money in the payment of labourer's wages, as our numerous saw-mills enable the farmers to get their own logs sawed, and they thus pay the greater portion of their instalments on the stock taken in the roads. In fact, by making arrangements with the proprietors of saw-mills they can generally manage to get several months' credit, so that they will receive the first dividends from the road before they will be required to pay any money. The mode of making these roads is exceedingly simple.

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The space required for the road is first levelled, ditched, and drained, and then pieces of scantling, five or six inches square, are laid longitudinally on each side, at the proper distance for a road-way twelve feet wide, and with the ends of each piece sawn off diagonally, so as to rest on the end of the next piece, which is similarly prepared, to prevent the road from settling down unequally. The pieces of scantling thus connected are simply bedded firmly in the ground, which is levelled up to their upper edges. Pine planks, three inches thick, are then laid across with their ends resting on the scantling. The planks are closely wedged together like the flooring of a house, and secured here and there by strong wooden pins, driven into auger-holes bored through the planks into the scantling. The common way is to lay the plank-flooring at right angles with the scantling, but a much better way has been adopted in the county of Hastings. The planks are here laid diagonally, which of course requires that they should be cut several feet longer. This ensures greater durability, as the shoes of the horses cut up the planks much more when the grain of the wood corresponds in direction with their sharp edges. When a double track is required, three longitudinal courses of scantling are used, and the ends of the planks meet on the centre one. Very few, if any, iron nails are generally used.

The great advantage of a plank-road is the large load it enables the horses to draw. Whilst on a common road a farmer can only carry twenty-five bushels of wheat in his waggon, a plank-road will enable him to carry forty or fifty bushels of the same grain with a pair of horses. The principal disadvantage of the plank-roads is, that they are found by experience to be injurious to horses, particularly when they are driven quickly on them. They are best adapted for a large load drawn at a slow pace. I shall not attempt to describe the country in the neighbourhood of Belleville, or the more northern parts of the county. It will suffice to observe, that the country is generally much varied in its surface, and beautiful, and the soil is generally excellent. Within the last ten or twelve years the whole country has been studded with good substantial stone or brick houses, or good white painted frame houses, even for thirty miles back, and the farms are well fenced and cultivated, showing undeniable signs of comfort and independence. Streams and water are abundant, and there are several thriving villages and hamlets scattered through the county,—the village of Canniff's Mills, three miles from Belleville, and soon destined to form a part of it, alone containing a population of about a thousand.

In describing the progress of this county, I may be understood as describing that of most other counties in the Upper Province; the progress of all of them being rapid, though varying according to the advantages of situation or from causes already alluded to.

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From what has been said, the reader will perceive that the present condition of Canada generally is exceedingly prosperous, and when the resources of the country are fully developed by the railroads now in progress of construction, and by the influx of capital and population from Europe, no rational person can doubt that it will ultimately be as prosperous and opulent as any country in the world, ancient or modern.

It may be said, “should we not then be hopeful and contented with our situation and prospects.” And so the people are in the main, and the shrewd capitalists of England think so, or they would not be so ready to invest their money in our public works. But some deduction from this general state of contentment and confidence must be made for those little discontents and grumblings created by the misrepresentations of certain disappointed politicians and ambitious men of all parties, who expect to gain popularity by becoming grievance-mongers. Much has been done, and a great deal still remains to be done in the way of reform, here as elsewhere. But there never was any just cause or motive in that insane cry for “annexation” to the United States, which was raised some years ago, and by the tories, too, of all people in the world! The “annexation” mania can now only be regarded as indicative of the last expiring struggle of a domineering party—it would not be correct to call it a political party—which had so long obstructed the progress of Canada by its selfish and monopolising spirit, when it found that its reign had ceased for ever.

Great sacrifices have been, and will be made, by men of loyalty and principle in support of institutions, which are justly dear to every Briton and to every freeman; but this feeling necessarily has its limits along the mass of mankind; and the loyalty of a people must be supported by reason and justice. They should have good reason to believe that their institutions are more conducive to happiness and prosperity than those of all other countries. Without this conviction, loyalty in a people who have by any means been deprived of the power of correcting the abuses of their government, would be hardly rational. Canadians now have that power to its full extent. Why, then, should we not be loyal to the constitution of our country which has stood the test of ages, purifying itself and developing its native energies as a vigorous constitution outgrows disease in the human frame. The government of Canada is practically more republican than that of the mother country and nearly as republican as that of the United States. Our government is also notoriously much less expensive. Our public officers are also, practically, much more responsible to the people, though indirectly, because they are appointed by a Colonial Ministry who are elected by the people, and whose popularity depends in a great degree on the selections they make and upon their watchfulness over their conduct.

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The government of the United States is not a cheap government, because all officers being elective by the people, the responsibility of the selections to office is divided and weakened. Moreover, the change or prospect of the electors being the elected inclines them to put up with abuses and defalcations which would be considered intolerable under another form of government. The British Government now holds the best security for the continued loyalty of the people of Canada, in their increasing prosperity. To Great Britain they are bound by the strongest ties of duty and interest; and nothing but the basest ingratitude or absolute infatuation can ever tempt them to transfer their allegiance to another country.

I shall conclude this chapter with a few verses written two years ago, and which were suggested by an indignant feeling at the cold manner with which the National Anthem was received by some persons who used to be loud in their professions of loyalty on former public occasions. Happily, this wayward and pettish, I will not call it disloyal spirit, has passed away, and most of the “Annexationists” are now heartily ashamed of their conduct.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

God save the Queen. The time has been
When these charmed words, or said or sung,
Have through the welkin proudly rung;
And, heads uncovered, every tongue
Has echoed back—“God save the Queen!”
God save the Queen!

It was not like the feeble cry
That slaves might raise as tyrants pass’d,
With trembling knees and hearts downcast,
While dungeoned victims breathed their last
In mingled groans of agony!
God save the Queen!

Nor were these shouts without the will,
Which servile crowds oft send on high,
When gold and jewels meet the eye,
When pride looks down on poverty.
And makes the poor man poorer still!
God save the Queen!

No!—it was like the thrilling shout—
The joyous sounds of price and praise
That patriot hearts are wont to raise,

’Mid cannon’s roar and bonfires blaze,
When Britain’s foes are put to rout—
God save the Queen!

For ’mid those sounds, to Britons dear,
No dastard selfish thoughts intrude
To mar a nation’s gratitude:
But one soul moves that multitude—
To sing in accents loud and clear—
God save the Queen!

Such sounds as these in days of yore,
On war-ship’s deck and battle plain,
Have rung o’er heaps of foemen slain—
And with God’s help they’ll ring again,
When warriors’ blood shall flow no more,
God save the Queen!

God save the Queen! let patriots cry;
And palsied be the impious hand
Would guide the pen, or wield the brand,
Against our glorious Fatherland.
Let shouts of freemen rend the sky,
God save the Queen!—and Liberty!

Reader! my task is ended.

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APPENDIX A

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE THIRD EDITION

Published by Richard Bentley in 1854

In justice to Mrs. Moodie, it is right to state that being still resident in the far-west of Canada, she has not been able to superintend this work whilst passing through the press. From this circumstance some verbal mistakes and oversights may have occurred, but the greatest care has been taken to avoid them.

Although well known as an authoress in Canada, and a member of a family which has enriched English literature with works of very high popularity, Mrs. Moodie is chiefly remembered in this country by a volume of Poems published in 1831, under her maden name of Susanna Strickland. During the rebellion in Canada, her loyal lyrics, prompted by strong affection for her native country, were circulated and sung throughout the colony, and produced a great effect in rousing an enthusiastic feeling in favour of law and order. Another of her lyrical compositions, the charming Sleigh Song, printed in the present work [at the end of chapter VII], has been extremely popular in Canada. The warmth of feeling which beams through every line, and the touching truthfulness of its details, won for it a reception there as universal as it was favourable.

The glowing narrative of personal incident and suffering which she gives in the present work, will no doubt attract general attention. It would be difficult to point out delineations of fortitude under privation, more interesting or more pathetic than those contained in her second volume.

London, January 22, 1852

APPENDIX B

CANADA: A CONTRAST

Introductory Chapter to the First Canadian Edition (1871)

In the year 1832 I landed with my husband, J.W. Dunbar Moodie, in Canada. Mr. Moodie was the youngest son of Major Moodie, of Mellsetter, in the Orkney Islands; he was a lieutenant in the 21st Regiment of Fusileers, and had been severely wounded in the night-attack upon Bergen-op-Zoom, in Holland.

Not being overgifted with the good things of this world—the younger sons of old British families seldom are—he had, after mature deliberation, determined to try his fortunes in

Canada, and settle upon the grant of 400 acres of land ceded by the Government to officers upon half-pay.

Emigration, in most cases—and ours was no exception to the general rule—is a matter of necessity, not of choice. It may, indeed, generally be regarded as an act of duty performed at the expense of personal enjoyment, and at the sacrifice of all those local attachments which stamp the scenes in which our childhood grew in imperishable characters upon the heart.

Nor is it, until adversity has pressed hard upon the wounded spirit of the sons and daughters of old, but impoverished, families, that they can subdue their proud and rebellious feelings, and submit to make the trial.

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This was our case, and our motive for emigrating to one of the British colonies can be summed up in a few words.

The emigrant's hope of bettering his condition, and securing a sufficient competence to support his family, to free himself from the slighting remarks too often hurled at the poor gentleman by the practical people of the world, which is always galling to a proud man, but doubly so when he knows that the want of wealth constitues the sole difference between him and the more favoured offspring of the same parent stock.

In 1830 the tide of emigration flowed westward, and Canada became the great landmark for the rich in hope and poor in purse. Public newspapers and private letters teemed with the almost fabulous advantages to be derived from a settlement in this highly favoured region. Men, who had been doubtful of supporting their families in comfort at home, thought that they had only to land in Canada to realize a fortune. The infection became general. Thousands and tens of thousands from the middle ranks of British society, for the space of three or four years, landed upon these shores. A large majority of these emigrants were officers of the army and navy, with their families: a class perfectly unfitted, by their previous habits and standing in society, for contending with the stern realities of emigrant life in the backwoods. A class formed mainly from the younger scions of great families, naturally proud, and not only accustomed to command, but to recieve implicit obedience from the people under them, are not men adapted to the hard toil of the woodman's life. Nor will such persons submit cheerfully to the saucy familiarity of servants, who, republicans at heart, think themselves quite as good as their employers.

Too many of these brave and honest men took up their grants of wild land in remote and unfavourable localities, far from churches, schools, and markets, and fell an easy prey to the land speculators that swarmed in every rising village on the boarders of civilization.

It was to warn such settlers as these last mentioned, not to take up grants and pitch their tents in the wilderness, and by so doing reduce themselves and their families to hopeless poverty, that my work "Roughing it in the Bush" was written.

I gave the experience of the first seven years we passed in the woods, attempting to clear a bush farm, as a warning to others, and the number of persons who have since told me, that my book "told the history" of their own life in the woods, ought to be the best proof to every candid mind that I spoke the truth. It it not by such feeble instruments as the above that Providence works when it seeks to reclaim the waste places of the earth, and make them subservient to the wants and happiness of its creatures. The great Father of the souls and bodies of men knows the arm which wholesome labour from the infancy has made strong, the nerves that have become iron by patient endurance, and He chooses such to send forth into the forest to hew out the rough paths for the advance of civilization.

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These men became wealthy and prosperous, and are the bones and sinews of a great and rising country. Their labour is wealth, not exhaustion; it produces content, not home-sickness and despair.

What the backwoods of Canada are to the industrious and ever-to-be-honoured sons of honest poverty, and what they are to the refined and polished gentleman, these sketches have endeavoured to show.

The poor man is in his native element; the poor gentleman totally unfitted, by his previous habits and education, to be a hewer of the forest and a tiller of the soil. What money he brought out with him is lavishly expended during the first two years in paying for labour to clear and fence lands which, from his ignorance of agricultural pursuits, will never make him the least profitable return and barely find coarse food for his family. Of clothing we say nothing. Bare feet and rags are too common in the bush.

Now, had the same means and the same labour been employed in the cultivation of a leased farm, or one purchased for a few hundred dollars, near a village, how different would have been the results, not only to the settler, but it would have added greatly to the wealth and social improvement of the country.

I am well aware that a great and, I must think, a most unjust prejudice has been felt against my book in Canada because I dared to give my opinion freely on a subject which had engrossed a great deal of my attention; nor do I believe that the account of our failure in the bush ever deterred a single emigrant from coming to the country, as the only circulation it ever had in the colony was chiefly through the volumes that often formed a portion of their baggage. The many who have condemned the work without reading it will be surprised to find that not one word has been said to prejudice intending emigrants from making Canada their home. Unless, indeed, they ascribe the regret expressed at having to leave my native land, so natural in the painful home-sickness which, for several months, preys upon the health and spirits of the dejected exile, to a deep-rooted dislike to the country.

So far from this being the case, my love for the country has steadily increased from year to year, and my attachment to Canada is now so strong that I cannot imagine any inducement, short of absolute necessity, which could induce me to leave the colony where as a wife and mother, some of the happiest years of my life have been spent.

Contrasting the first years of my life in the bush with Canada as she now is, my mind is filled with wonder and gratitude at the rapid strides she has made towards the fulfilment of a great and glorious destiny.

What important events have been brought to pass within the narrow circle of less than forty years! What a difference since *now* and *then*. The country is the same only in name. Its aspect is wholly changed. The rough has become smooth, the crooked has

been made straight, the forests have been converted into fruitful fields, the rude log cabin of the woodsman has been replaced by the handsome, well-appointed homestead, and large populous cities have pushed the small clap-boarded village into the shade.

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The solitary stroke of the axe that once broke the uniform silence of the vast woods is only heard in remote districts, and is superseded by the thundering tread of the iron horse and the ceaseless panting of the steam-engine in our sawmills and factories.

Canada is no longer a child, sleeping in the arms of nature, dependant for her very existence on the fostering care of her illustrious mother. She has outstepped infancy, and is in the full enjoyment of a strong and vigorous youth. What may not we hope for her maturity ere another forty summers have glided down the stream of time! Already she holds in her hand the crown of one of the mightiest empires that the world has seen, or is yet to see.

Look at her vast resources—her fine healthy climate—her fruitful soil—the inexhaustible wealth of her pine forests—the untold treasures hidden in her unexplored mines. What other country possesses such an internal navigation for transporting its products from distant Manitoba to the sea, and from thence to every port in the world!

If an excellent Government, defended by wise laws, a loyal people, and a free Church, can make people happy and proud of their country, surely we have every reason to rejoice in our new Dominion.

When we first came to the country it was a mere struggle for bread to the many, while all the offices of emolument and power were held by a favoured few. The country was rent to pieces by political factions, and a fierce hostility existed between the native born Canadians—the first pioneers of the forest—and the British emigrants, who looked upon each other as mutual enemies, who were seeking to appropriate the larger share of the new country.

Those who had settled down in the woods were happily unconscious that these quarrels threatened to destroy the peace of the colony.

The insurrection of 1837 came upon them like a thunder clap; they could hardly believe such an incredible tale. Intensely loyal, the emigrant officers rose to a man to defend the British flag and chastise the rebels and their rash leader.

In their zeal to uphold British authority, they made no excuse for the wrongs that the dominant party had heaped upon a clever and high-spirited man. To them he was a traitor, and, as such, a public enemy. Yet the blow struck by that injured man, weak as it was, without money, arms, or the necessary munitions of war, and defeated and broken in its first effort, gave freedom to Canada, and laid the foundation of the excellent constitution that we now enjoy. It drew the attention of the Home Government to the many abuses then practised in the colony, and made them aware of its vast importance in a political point of view, and ultimately led to all our great national improvements.

The settlement of the long-vexed clergy reserves question, and the establishment of common schools was a great boon to the colony. The opening up of new townships, the making of roads, the establishments of municipal councils in all the old districts, leaving to the citizens the free choice of their own members in the council for the management of their affairs, followed in rapid succession.

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These changes of course took some years to accomplish, and led to others equally important. The Provincial Exhibitions have done much to improve the agricultural interests, and have led to better and more productive methods of cultivation than were formerly practiced in the Province. The farmer gradually became a wealthy and intelligent landowner, proud of his improved flocks and herds, of his fine horses and handsome homestead. He was able to send his sons to college and his daughters to boarding school, and not uncommonly became an honourable member of the Legislative Council.

While the sons of poor gentlemen have generally lost caste and sunk into useless sots, the children of these honest tillers of the soil have steadily risen to the highest class, and have given to Canada some of her best and wisest legislators.

Men who rest satisfied with the mere accident of birth for their claims to distinction, without energy and industry to maintain their position in society, are sadly at discount in a country which amply rewards the worker, but leaves the indolent loafer to die in indigence and obscurity.

Honest poverty is encouraged, not despised, in Canada. Few of her prosperous men have risen from obscurity to affluence without going through the mill, and therefore have a fellow-feeling for those who are struggling to gain the first rung on the ladder.

Men are allowed in this country a freedom enjoyed by few of the more polished countries in Europe—freedom in religion, politics, and speech; freedom to select their own friends and to visit with whom they please without consulting the Mrs. Grundys of society—and they can lead a more independent social life than in the mother country, because less restricted by the conventional prejudices that govern older communities.

Few people who have lived many years in Canada and return to England to spend the remainder of their days, accomplish the fact. They almost invariably come back, and why? They feel more independent and happier here; they have no idea what a blessed country it is to live in until they go back and realize the want of social freedom. I have heard this from so many educated people, persons of taste and refinement, that I cannot doubt the truth of their statements.

Forty years has accomplished as great a change in the habits and tastes of the Canadian people as it has in the architecture of their fine cities and the appearance of the country. A young Canadian gentleman is as well educated as any of his compeers across the big water, and contrasts very favourably with them. Social and unaffected, he puts on no airs of offensive superiority, but meets a stranger with the courtesy and frankness best calculated to shorten the distance between them and to make his guest feel perfectly at home.

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Few countries possess a more beautiful female population. The women are elegant in their tastes, graceful in their manners, and naturally kind and affectionate in their dispositions. Good housekeepers, sociable neighbours, and lively and active in speech and movement, they are capital companions and make excellent wives and mothers. Of course there must be exceptions to every rule; but cases of divorce, or desertion of their homes, are so rare an occurrence that it speaks volumes for their domestic worth. Numbers of British officers have chosen their wives in Canada, and I never heard that they had cause to repent of their choice. In common with our American neighbours, we find that the worst members of our community are not Canadian born, but importations from other countries.

The Dominion and Local Governments are now doing much to open up the resources of Canada by the Intercolonial and projected Pacific Railways and other Public Works, which, in time, will make a vast tract of land available for cultivation, and furnish homes for multitudes of the starving populations of Europe.

And again, the Government of the flourishing Province of Ontario—of which the Hon. J. Sandfield Macdonald is premier—has done wonders during the last four years by means of its Immigration policy, which has been most successfully carried out by the Hon. John Carling, the Commissioner, and greatly tended to the development of the country. By this policy liberal provision is made for free grants of land to actual settlers, for general education, and for the encouragement of the industrial Arts and Agriculture; by the construction of public roads and the improvement of the internal navigable waters of the province; and by the assistance now given to an economical system of railways connecting these interior waters with the leading railroads and ports on the frontier; and not only are free grants of land given in the districts extending from the eastern to the western extremity of the Province, but one of the best of the new townships has been selected in which the Government is now making roads, and upon each lot is clearing five acres and erecting thereon a small house, which will be granted to heads of families, who, by six annual instalments, will be required to pay back to the Government the cost of these improvements—not exceeding $200, or 40 pounds sterling—when a free patent (or deed) of the land will be given, without any charge whatever, under a protective Homestead Act. This wise and liberal policy would have astonished the Colonial Legislature of 1832, but will, no doubt, speedily give to the Province a noble and progressive back country, and add much to its strength and prosperity.

Our busy factories and foundries—our copper, silver, and plumbago mines—our salt and petroleum—the increasing exports of native produce—speak volumes for the prosperity of the Dominion and for the government of those who are at the head of affairs. It only requires the loyal co-operation of an intelligent and enlightened people to render this beautiful and free country the greatest and the happiest upon the face of the earth.

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When we contrast forest life in Canada forty years ago with the present state of the country, my book will not be without interest and significance. We may truly say, old things have passed away, all things have become new.

What an advance in the arts and sciences and in the literature of the country has been made during the last few years. Canada can boast of many good and even distinguished authors, and the love of books and booklore is daily increasing.

Institues and literary associations for the encouragement of learning are now to be found in all the cities and large towns in the Dominion. We are no longer dependent upon the States for the reproduction of the works of celebrated authors; our own publishers, both in Toronto and Montreal, are furnishing our handsome bookstores with volumes that rival, in cheapness and typographical excellence, the best issues from the large printing establishments in America. We have no lack of native talent or books, or of intelligent readers to appreciate them.

Our print shops are full of the well-educated designs of native artists. And the grand scenery of our lakes and forests, transferred to canvas, adorns the homes of our wealthy citizens.

We must not omit in this slight sketch to refer to the number of fine public buildings which meet us at every turn, most of which have been designed and executed by native architects. Montreal can point to her Victoria Bridge, and challenge the world to produce its equal. This prodigy of mechanical skill should be a sufficient inducement to strangers from other lands to visit our shores, and though designed by the son of the immortal George Stephenson, it was Canadian hands that helped him to execute his great project—to raise that glorious monument to his fame, which we hope, will outlast a thousand years.

Our new Houses of Parliment, our churches, banks, public halls, asylums for the insane, the blind, and the deaf and dumb are buildings which must attract the attention of every intelligent traveller; and when we consider the few brief years that have elapsed since the Upper Province was reclaimed from the wilderness, our progress in mechanical arts, and all the comforts which pertain to modern civilization, is unprecedented in the history of older nations.

If the Canadian people will honestly unite in carrying out measures proposed by the Government for the good of the country, irrespective of self-interest and party prejudices, they must, before the close of the present century, become a great and prosperous nationality. May the blessing of God rest upon Canada and the Canadian people!

Susanna Moodie

Belleville, 1871

APPENDIX C

JEANIE BURNS

[This chapter was originally intended by Mrs. Moodie for inclusion in the first edition of Roughing it in the Bush but was instead published in the periodical Bentley's Miscellany, in August 1852. It was later revised and included in the book Life in the Clearings versus the Bush by the same author.]

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"Ah, human hearts are strangely cast,
  Time softens grief and pain;
Like reeds that shiver in the blast,
  They bend to rise again.

"But she in silence bowed her head,
  To none her sorrow would impart;
Earth's faithful arms enclose the dead,
  And hide for aye her broken heart!"

Our man James came to me to request the loan of one of the horses, to attend a funeral. M—— was absent on business, and the horses and the man's time were both greatly needed to prepare the land for the fall crops. I demurred; James looked anxious and disappointed; and the loan of the horse was at length granted, but not without a strict injunction that he should return to his work the moment the funeral was over. He did not come back until late that evening. I had just finished my tea, and was nursing my wrath at his staying out the whole day, when the door of the room (we had but one, and that was shared in common with the servants) opened, and the delinquent at last appeared. He hung up the new English saddle, and sat down by the blazing hearth without speaking a word.

"What detained you so long, James? You ought to have had half an acre of land, at least, ploughed to-day."

"Verra true, mistress. It was nae fau't o' mine. I had mista'en the hour. The funeral didna' come in afore sun-down, and I cam' awa' directly it was ower."

"Was it any relation of yours?"

"Na, na, jist a freend, an auld acquaintance, but nane o' mine ain kin. I never felt sare sad in a' my life, as I ha' dune this day. I ha' seen the clods piled on mony a heid, and never felt the saut tear in my e'en. But, puir Jeanie! puir lass. It was a sair sight to see them thrown doon upon her."

My curiosity was excited; I pushed the tea-things from me, and told Bell to give James his supper.

"Naething for me the night, Bell—I canna' eat—my thoughts will a' rin on that puir lass. Sae young—sae bonnie, an' a few months ago as blythe as a lark, an' now a clod o' the earth. Hout we maun all dee when our ain time comes; but, somehow, I canna' think that Jeanie ought to ha' gane sae sune."

"Who is Jeanie Burns? Tell me, James, something about her."

In compliance with my request, the man gave me the following story. I wish I could convey it in his own words, but though I can perfectly understand the Scotch dialect when spoken, I could not write it in its charming simplicity: that honest, truthful brevity, which is so characteristic of this noble people. The smooth tones of the blarney may flatter our vanity, and please us for the moment; but who places any confidence in those by whom it is employed. We know that it is only uttered to cajole and decieve, and when the novelty wears off, the repetition awakens indignation and disgust; but who mistrusts the blunt, straightforward speech of the land of Burns—for good or ill, it strikes home to the heart.

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“Jeanie Burns was the daughter of a respectable shoemaker, who gained a comfortable living by his trade in a small town in Ayrshire. Her father, like herself, was an only child, and followed the same vocation, and rought under the same roof that his father had done before him. The elder Burns had met with many reverses, and now helpless and blind, was entirely dependent upon the charity of his son. Honest Jock had not married until late in life, that he might more comfortably provide for the wants of his aged parent. His mother had been dead for some years. She was a meek, pious woman, and Jock quaintly affirmed, ’That it had pleased the Lord to provide a better inheritance for his dear auld mither than his arm could win, proud and happy as he would have been to have supported her when she was no longer able to work for him.’

“Jock’s paternal love was repaid at last; chance threw in his way a cannie young lass, baith guid and bonnie: they were united, and Jeanie was the sole fruit of this marriage. But Jeanie proved a host in herself, and grew up the best natured, the prettiest, and the most industrious lass in the village, and was a general favourite both with young and old. She helped her mother in the house, bound shoes for her father, and attended to all the wants of her dear old grandfather, Saunders Burns; who was so much attached to his little handmaid, that he was never happy when she was absent.

“Happiness is not a flower of long growth in this world; it requires the dew and sunlight of heaven to nourish it, and it soon withers, removed from its native skies. The cholera visited the remote village. It smote the strong man in the pride of his strength, and the matron in the beauty of her prime; while it spared the helpless and the aged, the infant of a few days, and the parent of many years. Both Jeanie’s parents fell victims to the fatal disease, and the old blind Saunders and the young Jeanie were left to fight alone a hard battle with poverty and grief. The truly deserving are never entirely forsaken. God may afflict them with many trials, but he watches over them still, and often provides for their wants in a manner truly miraculous. Sympathizing friends gathered round the orphan girl in her hour of need, and obtained for her sufficient employment to enable her to support her old grandfather and herself, and provide for them the common necessaries of life.

“Jeannie was an excellent sempstress, and what between making waistcoats and trousers for the tailors and binding shoes for the shoemakers, a business that she thoroughly understood, she soon had her little hired room neatly furnished, and her grandfather as clean and spruce as ever. When she led him into the kirk of a Sabbath morning, all the neighbours greeted the dutiful daughter with an approving smile, and the old man looked so serene and happy that Jeanie was fully repaid for her labours of love.

“Her industry and piety often formed the theme of conversation to the young lads of the village. ’What a guid wife Jeanie Burns will mak’,’ cried one. ‘Aye,’ said another, ’he need na complain of ill-fortin, who has the luck to get the like o’ her.’

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"'An' she's sae bonnie,' would Willie Robertson add with a sigh. 'I would na' covet the wealth o' the hale world an she were mine.'

"Willie was a fine active young man, who bore an excellent character, and his comrades thought it very likely that Willie was to be the fortunate man.

"Robertson was the youngest son of a farmer in the neighbourhood. He had no land of his own, and he was one of a very large family. From a boy he had assisted his father in working the farm for their common maintenance; but after he took to looking at Jeanie Burns at kirk, instead of minding his prayers, he began to wish that he had a homestead of his own, which he could ask Jeanie and her grandfather to share. "He made his wishes known to his father. The old man was prudent. A marriage with Jeanie Burns offered no advantages in a pecuniary view. But the girl was a good honest girl, of whom any man might be proud. He had himself married for love, and had enjoyed great comfort in his wife.

"'Willie, my lad,' he said, 'I canna' gi'e ye a share o' the farm. It is ower sma' for the mony mouths it has to feed. I ha'e laid by a little siller for a rainy day, an' this I will gi'e ye to win a farm for yersel' in the woods o' Canada. There is plenty o' room there, an' industry brings its ain reward. If Jeanie Burns lo'es you, as weel as yer dear mither did me, she will be fain to follow you there.'

"Willie grasped his father's hand, for he was too much elated to speak, and he ran away to tell his tale of love to the girl of his heart. Jeanie had long loved Robertson in secret, and they were not long in settling the matter. They forgot in their first moments of joy that old Saunders had to be consulted, for they had determined to take the old man with them. But here an obstacle occurred of which they had not dreamed. Old age is selfish, and Saunders obstinately refused to comply with their wishes. The grave that held the remains of his wife and son was dearer to him than all the comforts promised to him by the impatient lovers in that far foreign land. Jeanie wept—but Saunders, deaf and blind, neither heard nor saw her grief, and, like a dutiful child, she breathed no complaint to him, but promised to remain with him until his head rested upon the same pillow with the dead.

"This was a sore and great trial to Willie Robertson, but he consoled himself for his disappointment with the thought that Saunders could not live long, and that he would go and prepare a place for his Jean, and have everything ready for her reception against the old man died.

"'I was a cousin of Willie's,' continued James, 'by the mither's side, and he persuaded me to accompany him to Canada. We set sail the first day of May, and were here in time to chop a small fallow for a fall crop. Willie Robertson had more of this world's gear than I, for his father had provided him with sufficient funds to purchase a good lot of wild land, which he did in the township of M——, and I was to work with him on

shares. We were one of the first settlers in that place, and we found the work before us rough and hard to our heart's content. But Willie had a strong motive for exertion—and never did man work harder than he did that first year on his bush-farm, for the love of Jeanie Burns.'

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“We built a comfortable log-house, in which we were assisted by the few neighbours we had, who likewise lent a hand in clearing ten acres we had chopped for fall crop.

“All this time Willie kept up a constant correspondence with Jeanie Burns, and he used to talk to me of her coming out, and his future plans, every night when our work was done. If I had not loved and respected the girl mysel’ I should have got unco’ tired o’ the subject.

“We had just put in our first crop of wheat, when a letter came from Jeanie bringing us the news of her grandfather’s death. Weel I ken the word that Willie spak’ to me when he closed that letter. ‘Jamie, the auld man is gane at last—an’, God forgi’e me, I feel too gladsome to greet. Jeanie is willin’ to come whenever I ha’e the means to bring her out, an’, hout man, I’m jist thinkin’ that she winna’ ha’e to wait lang.’

“Good workmen were getting very high wages just then, and Willie left the care of the place to me, and hired for three months with auld Squire Jones. He was an excellent teamster, and could put his hand to any sort of work. When his term of service expired he sent Jeanie forty dollars to pay her passage out, which he hoped she would not delay longer than the spring.

“He got an answer from Jeanie full of love and gratitude, but she thought that her voyage might be delayed until the fall. The good woman, with whom she had lodged since her parent’s died, had just lost her husband, and was in a bad state of health, and she begged Jeanie to stay with her until her daughter could leave her service in Edinburgh and come to take charge of the house. This person had been a kind and steadfast friend to Jeanie in all her troubles, and had helped her nurse the old man in his dying illness. I am sure it was just like Jeanie to act as she did. She had all her life looked more to the comforts of others than to her ain. But Robertson was an angry man when he got that letter, and he said, ‘If that was a’ the lo’e that Jeanie Burns had for him, to prefer an auld woman’s comfort, who was naething to her, to her betrothed husband, she might bide awa’ as lang as she pleased, he would never trouble himsel’ to write to her again.’

“I did na’ think that the man was in earnest, an’ I remonstrated with him on his folly an’ injustice. This ended in a sharp quarrel atween us, and I left him to gang his ain gate, an’ went to live with my uncle, who kept a blacksmith’s forge in the village.

“After a while, we heard that Willie Robertson was married to a Canadian woman—-neither young nor good-looking, and very much his inferior in every way, but she had a good lot of land in the rear of his farm. Of course I thought that it was all broken off with puir Jeanie, and I wondered what she would spier at the marriage.

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“It was early in June, and our Canadian woods were in their first flush o’ green—an’ how green an’ lightsome they be in their spring dress—when Jeanie Burns landed in Canada. She travelled her lane up the country, wondering why Willie was not at Montreal to meet her as he had promised in the last letter he sent her. It was late in the afternoon when the steam-boat brought her to C——, and, without waiting to ask any questions respecting him, she hired a man and cart to take her and her luggage to M ——. The road through the bush was very heavy, and it was night before they reached Robertson’s clearing, and with some difficulty the driver found his way among the logs to the cabin-door.

“Hearing the sound of wheels, the wife, a coarse ill-dressed slattern, came out to see what could bring strangers to such an out-o’-the-way place at that late hour. “Puir Jeanie! I can weel imagine the fluttering o’ her heart when she spier’d of the woman for ane Willie Robertson, and asked if he was at hame?’

“‘Yes,’ answered the wife gruffly. ’But he is not in from the fallow yet—you may see him up yonder tending the blazing logs.’

“While Jeanie was striving to look in the direction which the woman pointed out, and could na’ see through the tears that blinded her e’e, the driver jumped down from the cart, and asked the puir girl where he should leave her trunks, as it was getting late, and he must be off?

“‘You need not bring these big chests in here,’ said Mrs. Robertson, ‘I have no room in my house for strangers and their luggage.’

“‘Your house!’ gasped Jeanie, catching her arm. ‘Did ye na’ tell me that *he* lived here? —and wherever Willie Robertson bides Jeanie Burns sud be a welcome guest. Tell him,’ she continued, trembling all ower, for she told me afterwards that there was something in the woman’s look and tone that made the cold chills run to her heart, ’that an auld friend from Scotland has jist come off a lang wearisome journey to see him.’

“‘You may speak for yourself!’ cried the woman angrily, ’for my husband is now coming down the clearing.’

“The word husband was scarcely out o’ her mouth than puir Jeanie fell as ane dead across the door-step.

“The driver lifted up the unfortunate girl, carried her into the cabin, and placed her in a chair, regardless of the opposition of Mrs. Robertson, whose jealousy was now fairly aroused, and who declared that the bold huzzie should not enter her doors.

“It was a long time before the driver succeeded in bringing Jeanie to herself, and she had only just unclosed her eyes when Willie came in.

“‘Wife,’ he said, ’whose cart is this standing at the door, and what do these people want here?’

“‘You know best,’ cried the angry woman, bursting into tears; ’that creature is no acquaintance of mine, and if she is suffered to remain here, I will leave the house at once.’

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"'Forgi'e me, gude woman, for having unwittingly offended ye,' said Jeanie, rising. 'But, merciful Father! how sud I ken that Willie Robertson, my ain Willie, had a wife? Oh, Willie!' she cried, covering her face in her hands to hide all the agony that was in her heart. 'I ha' come a lang way, an' a weary to see ye, an' ye might ha' spared me the grief—the burning shame o' this. Farewell, Willie Robertson, I will never mair trouble ye nor her wi' my presence, but this cruel deed of yours has broken my heart!'

"She went away weeping, and he had not the courage to detain her, or say one word to comfort her, or account for his strange conduct; yet, if I know him right, that must ha' been the most sorrowfu' moment in his life.

"Jeanie was a distant connexion of my uncle's, and she found us out that night, on her return to the village, and told us all her grief. My aunt, who was a kind good woman, was indignant at the treatment she had recieved; and loved and cherished her as if she had been her own child.

"For two whole weeks she kept her bed, and was so ill that the doctor despaired of her life; and when she did come again among us, the colour had faded from her cheeks, and the light from her sweet blue eyes, and she spoke in a low subdued voice, but she never spoke of *him* as the cause of her grief.

"One day she called me aside and said—

"'Jamie, you know how I lo'ed an' trusted *him,* an' obeyed his ain wishes in comin' out to this strange country to be his wife. But 'tis all over now,' and she pressed her sma' hands tightly over her breast to keep doon the swelling o' her heart. 'Jamie, I know now that it is a' for the best; I lo'ed him too weel—mair than ony creature sud lo'e a perishing thing o' earth. But I thought that he wud be sae glad an' sae proud to see his ain Jeanie sae sune. But, oh!—ah, weel!—I maun na think o' that; what I wud jist say is this,' an' she took a sma' packet fra' her breast, while the tears streamed down her pale cheeks. 'He sent me forty dollars to bring me ower the sea to him—God bless him for that, I ken he worked hard to earn it, for he lo'ed me then—I was na' idle during his absence. I had saved enough to bury my dear auld grandfather, and to pay my ain expenses out, and I thought, like the gude servant in the parable, I wud return Willie his ain with interest; an' I hoped to see him smile at my diligence, an' ca' me his bonnie gude lassie. Jamie, I canna' keep this siller, it lies like a weight o' lead on my heart. Tak' it back to him, an' tell him fra' me, that I forgi'e him a' his cruel deceit, an' pray to God to grant him prosperity, and restore to him that peace o' mind o' which he has robbed me for ever.'

"I did as she bade me. Willie looked stupified when I delivered her message. The only remark he made, when I gave him back the money, was, 'I maun be gratefu', man, that she did na' curse me.' The wife came in, and he hid away the packet and slunk off. The man looked degraded in his own eyes, and so wretched, that I pitied him from my very heart.

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“When I came home, Jeanie met me at my uncle’s gate. ‘Tell me,’ she said in a low anxious voice, ’tell me, cousin Jamie, what passed atween ye. Had he nae word for me?’

“‘Naething, Jeanie, the man is lost to himsel’, to a’ who ance wished him weel. He is not worth a decent body’s thought.’

“She sighed deeply, for I saw that her heart craved after some word fra’ him, but she said nae mair, but pale an’ sorrowfu’, the very ghaist o’ her former sel’, went back into the house.

“From that hour she never breathed his name to ony of us; but we all ken’d that it was her love for him that was preying upon her life. The grief that has nae voice, like the canker-worm, always lies ne’est to the heart. Puir Jeanie! she held out during the simmer, but when the fall came, she just withered awa’ like a flower, nipped by the early frost, and this day we laid her in the earth.

“After the funeral was ower, and the mourners were all gone, I stood beside her grave, thinking ower the days of my boyhood, when she and I were happy weans, an’ used to pu’ the gowans together on the heathery hills o’ dear auld Scotland. An’ I tried in vain to understan’ the mysterious providence o’ God, who had stricken her, who seemed sae gude and pure, an’ spared the like o’ me, who was mair deservin’ o’ his wrath, when I heard a deep groan, an’ I saw Willie Robertson standing near me beside the grave.

“‘Ye may as weel spare your grief noo,’ said I, for I felt hard towards him, ‘an’ rejoice that the weary is at rest.’

“‘It was I murdered her,’ said he, ‘an’ the thought will haunt me to my last day. Did she remember me on her death bed?’

“‘Her thoughts were only ken’d by Him who reads the secrets of a’ hearts, Willie. Her end was peace, an’ her Saviour’s blessed name was the last sound upon her lips. But if ever woman died fra’ a broken heart, there she lies.’

“‘Oh, Jeanie!’ he cried, ’mine ain darling Jeanie! my blessed lammie! I was na’ worthy o’ yer love—my heart, too, is breaking. To bring ye back aince mair, I wad lay me down an’ dee.’

“An’ he flung himsel’ upon the grave and embraced the fresh clods, and greeted like a child.

“When he grew more calm, we had a long conversation about the past, and truly I believe that the man was not in his right senses when he married yon wife; at ony rate, he is not lang for this warld; he has fretted the flesh aff his banes, an’ before many months are ower, his heid will lie as low as puir Jeanie Burns’s.”

While I was pondering this sad story in my mind, Mrs. H—— came in.

“You have heard the news, Mrs. M——?”

I looked inquiringly.

“One of Clark’s little boys that were lost last Wednesday in the woods has been found.”

“This is the first I have heard about it. How were they lost?”

“Oh, ’tis a thing of very common occurrence here. New settlers, who are ignorant of the danger of going astray in the forest, are always having their children lost. This is not the first instance by many that I have known, having myself lived for many years in the bush. I only wonder that it does not more frequently happen.

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“These little fellows are the sons of a poor man who came out this summer, and who has taken up some wild land about a mile back of us, towards the plains. Clark is busy logging up a small fallow for fall wheat, on which his family must depend for bread during the ensuing year; and he is so anxious to get it ready in time, that he will not allow himself an hour at noon to go home to his dinner, which his wife generally sends in a basket to the woods by his eldest daughter.

“Last Wednesday the girl had been sent on an errand by her mother, who thought, in her absence, that she might venture to trust the two boys to take the dinner to their father. The boys were from seven to five years old, and very smart and knowing for their age. They promised to mind all her directions, and went off quite proud of the task, carrying the basket between them.

“How they came to ramble away into the woods, the younger child is too much stupified to tell; and perhaps he is too young to remember. At night the father returned, and scolded the wife for not sending his dinner as usual; but the poor woman (who all day had quieted her fears with the belief that the children had stayed with their father), instead of paying any regard to his angry words, demanded, in a tone of agony, what had become of her children?

“Tired and hungry as Clark was, in a moment he comprehended their danger, and started off in pursuit of the boys. The shrieks of the distracted woman soon called the neighbours together, who instantly joined in the search.

“It was not until this afternoon that any trace could be obtained of the lost children, when Brian, the hunter, found the youngest boy, Johnnie, lying fast asleep upon the trunk of a fallen tree, fifteen miles back in the bush.”

“And the other boy?”

“Will never, I fear, be heard of again,” said she. “They have searched for him in all directions and have not discovered him. The story little Johnnie tells is to this effect. During the first two days of their absence, the food they had brought in the basket for their father’s dinner, sustained life; but to-day it seems that the little Johnnie grew very hungry, and cried continually for bread. William, the elder boy, he says, promised him bread if he would try and walk further; but his feet were bleeding and sore, and he could not stir another step. William told him to sit down upon the log on which he was found, and not stir from the place until he came back, and he would run on until he found a house and brought him something to eat. He then wiped his eyes, and bade him not to be frightened or to cry, and kissed him and went away.

“This is all the little fellow knows about his brother; and it is very probable the generous-hearted boy has been eaten by the wolves. The Indians traced him for more than a mile along the banks of a stream, when they lost his trail altogether. If he had fallen into the

water, they would have discovered his body, but they say that he has been dragged into some hole in the bank among the tangled cedars and devoured.

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“Since I have been in the country,” continued Mrs. H——, “I have known many cases of children, and even of grown persons, being lost in the woods, who were never heard of again. It is a frightful calamity to happen to any one, and mothers cannot be too careful in guarding their children against rambling alone into the bush. Persons, when once they lose sight of the beaten track, get frightened and bewildered and lose all presence of mind; and instead of remaining where they are, which is their only chance of being discovered, they plunge desperately on, running hither and thither, in the hope of getting out, while they only involve themselves more deeply among the mazes of the interminable forest.

“Two winters ago, the daughter of a settler in the remote township of Dummer, where my husband took up his grant of wild land, went with her father to the mill, which was four miles from their log shanty and the road lay entirely through the bush. For a while the girl, who was about twelve years of age, kept up with her father, who walked briskly ahead with his bag of corn on his back, for, as their path lay through a tangled swamp, he was anxious to get home before night. After a time Sarah grew tired, and lagged a long way behind. The man felt not the least apprehensive when he lost sight of her, expecting that she would soon come up with him again. Once or twice he stopped and shouted, and she answered, ’Coming, father;’ and he did not turn to look after her again. He reached the mill—saw the grist ground, resumed his burthen and took the road home, expecting to meet Sarah by the way. He trod the path alone, but still thought that the girl, tired of the long walk, had turned back, and that he should find her safe at home.

“You may imagine, Mrs. M——, his consternation and that of the family, when they found that the girl was lost.

“It was now dark, and all search for her was given up for the night as hopeless. By day-break the next morning, the whole settlement, which was then confined to a few lonely log tenements inhabited by Cornish miners, were roused from their sleep to assist in the search.

“The men turned out with guns and arms, and parties started in different directions. Those who first discovered the girl were to fire their guns, which was to be the signal to guide the rest to the spot. It was not long before they found the object of their search seated under a tree, about half a mile from the path she had lost on the preceding day.

“She had been tempted by the beauty of some wild berries to leave the road, and when once in the bush she grew bewildered and could not find her way back. At first she ran to and fro in an agony of terror at finding herself in the woods all alone, and uttered loud and frantic cries, but her father had by this time reached the mill and was out of hearing.

“With a sagacity beyond her years and not very common to her class, instead of wandering further into the labyrinth which surrounded her, she sat down under a large

tree, covered her face with her apron, said the Lord’s Prayer—the only one she knew—-and hoped that God would send her father back to find her the moment he discovered that she was lost.

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“When night came down upon the dark forest (and oh how dark night is in the woods!), the poor girl said, that she felt horribly afraid of being eaten by the wolves which abound in those dreary swamps. But she did not cry, for fear they should hear her. Simple girl! she did not know that the scent of a wolf is far keener that his ear, but that was her notion, and she lay down close to the ground and never once raised her head, for fear of seeing something dreadful standing beside her, until overcome by terror and fatigue she fell fast asleep, and did not awake until roused by the shrill braying of the horns and the shouts of the party who were seeking her.”

“What a dreadful situation! I am sure that I should not have had the courage of this poor girl, but should have died with fear.”

“We don’t know how much we can bear, Mrs. M——, until we are tried. This girl was more fortunate than a boy of the same age, who was lost in the same township, just as the winter set in. The lad was sent by his father, an English settler, in company with two boys of his own age, to be measured for a pair of shoes. George Desne, who followed the double employment of farmer and shoemaker, lived about three miles from the clearing known by the name of the English line. After the lads left the clearing, their road lay entirely through the bush. But it was a path they had often travelled both alone and with their parents, and they felt no fear.

“There had been a slight fall of snow, just enough to cover the ground, and the day was clear and frosty. The boys in this country always hail with delight the first fall of snow, and they ran races and slid over all the shallow pools until they reached George Desne’s cabin.

“He measured young Brown for a strong pair of winter boots, and the boys went on their homeward way, shouting and laughing in the glee of their hearts.

“About halfway they suddenly missed their companion, and ran back nearly a mile to find him. Not succeeding in this, they thought that he had hidden behind some of the trees, and pretended to be lost, in order to frighten them, and after shouting at the top of their voices, and receiving no answer, they determined to go home without him. They knew that he was well acquainted with the road, and that it was still broad day, and that he could easily find his way home alone. When his father inquired for George, they said that he was coming, and went to their respective homes.

“Night came, and the lad did not return, and his parents began to be alarmed at his absence. Mr. Brown went over to the neighbouring cabins, and made the lads tell him all they knew about his son. They described the place where they first missed him; but they concluded that he had either run home before them, or gone back to spend the night with the young Desnes, who had been very urgent for him to stay. This account pacified the anxious father. Early the next morning he went to Desne’s himself to bring home the boy, but the lad had not been there.

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“His mysterious disappearance gave rise to a thousand strange surmises. The whole settlement turned out in search of the boy. His steps were traced from the road a few yards into the bush, and entirely disappeared at the foot of a large tree. The moss was rubbed from the trunk of the tree, but the tree was lofty, and the branches so far from the ground, that it was almost impossible for any boy, unassisted, to have raised himself to such a height. There was no track of any animal all around in the unbroken snow, no shred of garment or stain of blood,—that boy’s fate will ever remain a great mystery, for he was never found.”

“He must have been carried up that tree by a bear, and dragged down into the hollow trunk,” said I.

“If that had been the case, there would have been the print of the bear’s feet in the snow. It does not, however, follow that the boy is dead, though it is more than probable. I knew of a case where two boys and a girl were sent into the woods by their mother to fetch home the cows. The children were lost; the parents mourned them for dead, for all search for them proved fruitless, and after seven years the eldest son returned. They had been overtaken and carried off by a party of Indians, who belonged to a tribe inhabiting the islands in Lake Huron, several hundred miles away from their forest-home. The girl, as she grew into woman, married one of the tribe; the boys followed the occupation of hunters and fishers, and from their dress and appearance might have passed for the red sons of the forest. The eldest boy, however, never forgot the name of his parent, and the manner in which he had been lost, and took the first opportunity of making his escape, and travelling back to the home of his childhood.

“When he made himself known to his mother, who was a widow, but still resided upon the same spot, he was so dark and Indian-like, that she could not believe that he was her son, until he brought to her mind a little incident, that, forgotten by her, had never left his memory.

“Mother, don’t you remember saying to me on that afternoon, ’Ned, you need not look for the cows in the swamp, they went off towards the big hill.’

“The delighted mother clapsed him in her arms, exclaiming, ’You say truly,—you are indeed my own, my long lost son!’”