

Mitchell was a place of a few half-finished wooden houses, where everything was dear but *oats*; we bought a load as we came back, for a York shilling a bushel. Here we got a new experience in winter travelling. Round the head of Lake Ontario we never had snow deep enough to make right good "pitch-holes" in the road; but all the West was full of them every winter. It only needs the snow to be three feet deep, and the beaten track to be eighteen inches thick, to have the material for any number of pitch-holes. Some slight unevenness of the road induces a sleigh to *dip* a little heavily. The runners gouge out the snow an inch or so, where they strike. The next sleigh does the same at the same place; and soon a regular pit is formed all across the track, four feet over, and a foot deep. These occur about every quarter of a mile. Loads of hay and loads of wood are often wrecked by them. A well-trained western horse, in single harness, will avoid the jerk on the shoulders which these holes will give, by stepping over to the right track, and then back again to the left, when he comes to a pitch-hole, thus bringing the cutter through with a wavy oblique motion, which saves the thumping and jerking, both to man and horse.

We now found the timber very heavy—all hardwood; no cedar, no oak, no pine. Rails all elm and ash, with some basswood. Land flat. A few miles beyond Mitchell we turned off to the south, and worked our way through the new townships, in several different directions, finding the people all wonderfully hospitable and kind. A sudden thaw induced us to stay a few days without taking out the team, as the roads were almost impassable. This we thought was favorable to us, as the snow was not now over a foot deep, and soon became little else than a mass of ice. Oxen couldn't go on the road, and there were scarcely any horses round. The kind-hearted fellow with whom we lodged, wanted badly to take a load of spring wheat to St. Mary's, and Montgomery offered to take it out for him. The offer was gladly accepted, and as they were two days away, I took the chance of following "blazes" here and there on the crust, and visiting a good many new clear-

ings. I was told there was a major, "a real army man," on the next concession, who was interested in everything, and bid fair to be the leading man in the township; and to him I also went. I thought, in the first place, that he must be a curiosity; for a half-pay officer to throw off his coat and lead all his neighbors in "pushing back the forest with their strong arms," was something new in the world. He must be altogether different from the half-pay officers settled on the oak plains about Tipstock! And then I wanted information; and here was an intelligent man to give it.

I found him in a very large log house, consisting of a main building with two or three wings. It gave me the best idea in anything I had seen yet, of what might be made of a log house under the moulding hand of a man of taste. The windows had rustic caps, the verandahs were wide and roomy, a covered way on rustic posts, (without a floor) led along one end of the house to the out-buildings beyond. The roof was steep-pitched, giving fine lofty chambers under it; and the roof of a gabled wing had the Lower Canada touch of flaring out at the eaves, like the pictures we see of Swiss cottages. I was quite taken with the man, as soon as I saw his house. His whole clearing, as far as I could judge, was some four or five years old. All across his front he had run a double fence—the space within being about ten feet clear. In this he had planted nothing, but had just allowed the "second growth" to come up. The second growth, where *everything* has been cut down and burned, is always different from the original timber. Here the timber was heavy elm, maple, beech, basswood, and the like. But the "second growth" was running up (some of it higher than a man's head) poplar, sumach, cherry, birch, and soft maple. It would soon be a belt of beautiful ornamental wood along his front.

Major Thomas was a plain man—plain in the sense that greatness is always plain. He told me that he had had a commission in the line. He had found himself, before long, put more and more on the recruiting service; he supposed it was because they found he had an aptitude for dealing with