

placing much confidence in him. To add to my inquietude, it was stated that, from the direction of the fire, it was tolerably certain the hotel in which I had taken my apartments was the house then burning, and nearly obscured in smoke. Of course there was an immediate end put to whist and mint juleps for the present, and accompanied by the great brewer of the latter,—an excellent fellow who had got me safely out of an affair, in which Thellor had interfered, and proposed to be settled with rifles of a ninety to the pound bullet calibre, only a few days before,—made the best of my way to the ferry, the small steamer of which was just on the point of crossing when we arrived.

There was no question as to the quarter whence the fire proceeded. The smoke came in black and curling volumes from the direction of the hotel, and I suffered an anxiety which may well be supposed in one whose all was, in a great degree, at stake. My only hope was that the boy might have had the good sense to have caused my baggage to be removed the moment the alarm of fire had been given, but even this expectation was a very faint one, for knowing as I did his propensity to play the truant during my absence, I could scarcely "lay the flattering unction to my soul" that he was not absent on the present occasion. As we advanced across the river, a gulf of wind blew in a contrary direction and revealed in flames, not the hotel, although it had been so long enshrouded in smoke, but the barn or stable immediately behind it, in which were my unfortunate ponies. My distress at this was even greater than what I had previously entertained: I had become so attached to my horses that I could not endure even the thought of parting from them, therefore the idea of their perishing in this dreadful manner was not one calculated much to soothe me. As we neared the landing place, one vast sheet of flame burst from the now completely enveloped barn, which, fed by the straw and hay with which it was filled, tossed its large flakes into the air as if in proud rejoicing at the havoc it was creating. Still I saw no vestige of my ponies, no tiger to inform me whether they were saved or destroyed. Some person, however, from the hotel, recognizing me, ran down to the boat as she drew up to the wharf, and called out to me not to be alarmed, as my boy had, in the most courageous manner, saved both ponies and harness, and was then occupied in securing them in another stable. This certainly was a great relief, and I felt a degree of gratitude to the boy, so much the stronger in proportion to the injustice I was sensible I had been guilty of towards him. Hastily stepping on the wharf and following my informant, I went to the stable named by him and was not a little delighted to see the ponies eating their hay as calmly as though nothing had occurred to disturb them. Of course, my tiger was very garrulous, and very proud of his conduct, as he fully merited to me, and gave me an account of what he had done for the rescue.

It appeared that I was not far wrong in assuming him to have been at play with the young idlers of the village, but this circumstance had, in all probability, saved the ponies. They had assembled near the barn, which was far enough from the house not to have drawn early attention to the accident, and my boy chanced to be the first to observe the outburst of the fire. He immediately, with great presence of mind, forced open the door, and while the flames were ascending at a distant part of the barn, ran into the stalls of the ponies, which were rather near the entrance, and untying their halters led them forth without resistance on their part; and having removed and tied them, once more returned and succeeded in saving every portion of the harness, with the exception of one or two unimportant straps, which were soon and easily replaced. My waggon, which lay at some distance in the yard adjoining the barn, then was rapidly consuming, had been removed without difficulty, and had sustained no injury. That evening, on my return to my friends of the 4th, I renewed my rubber and the mint juleps, with a gusto not at all diminished by the fortunate escape of the day.

It was now the close of June, and although the weather was extremely warm, as indeed it ever is in the West about that season of the year, I began to make preparations for my departure. Having, however, no fancy to renew the misery of my "Long Woods" journey, I resolved to change my route altogether, and instead of returning by Lake St. Clair and Chatham, to take the road bordering on Lake Erie; and thus, by performing a sort of circle of about a hundred miles in extent, until arriving at what are called "the five stakes," where the roads again meet on their way downwards, not only to escape the monotony of going over ground already traversed, but of seeing more of the country. My heavy baggage was therefore shipped on board one of Mr. Dougall's vessels, then about to sail for the East, for its ultimate destination, and that which I retained as indispensable to the comforts of a journey which was not intended to be a very hurried one, was so disposed, as well as other conveniences intended for the road, that the mode of arrangement requires, in justice to my inventive genius, a passing notice.

The body of my waggon I have elsewhere stated to have been an oblong square box, about two feet deep; and to the back and front of this I had caused two packing cases, each nine inches in depth, to be fitted, of precisely corresponding size. These, with hinges, and straps that were secured by small iron padlocks, were secured to their several places by means of strong straps, passing through staples screwed on to the body of the waggon. Both—the one containing my wife's apparel, the other my own—rested on ledges that

protruded from the back and front, and fitted, when properly strapped on, so closely to the waggon, like which they were painted, that it was difficult for a stranger to know that they did not absolutely form a part of it. Nothing could be more perfect than this arrangement which, moreover, afforded abundance of room inside the waggon, already sufficiently filled in the following manner.

My past experience having induced in me but little desire to frequent the "houses of accommodation" along the road more than well could be avoided, I had determined, as the season was fine, to enter them only at night, and leave them on the following morning as soon as we had breakfasted. Accordingly, I had another oblong square box divided into compartments, and of sufficient depth to contain a ham, three or four fowls, a tongue and all corresponding et ceteras; and in order to admit the air to this, without at the same time giving ingress to the flies which abounded, I had lined the lid, which was perforated with numerous augur holes, and fastened like the cases with a padlock, with a coarse stiff green gauze, through which the air found easy entrance. This box was made wide enough to fit closely across the bottom of the waggon, where it formed a resting place for the feet. A second small case contained dishes, plates and drinking cups, as well as a pitcher, with which to supply ourselves with water when, dining under the shade of some tall and umbrageous tree. Nor were other comforts forgotten, I had purchased and filled a five gallon cask with excellent cider—a delicious beverage when oppressed by thirst in travelling—and a few bottles of wine and brandy, with a moderate portion of good cigars, and all this, to be renewed as required, composed our travelling stock.

Thus provided, I commenced my journey, and in a manner that "astonished" even "the natives." Without my being made aware of the fact, the mare had been in foal when I purchased her in Montreal, and she had thrown a colt about a month previously. This addition to my family had occasioned me a good deal of annoyance at the time of its occurrence, and believing that it was utterly impossible for a creature of that tender age to perform the journey I meditated—nearly five hundred miles—I had half formed the resolution to destroy it, but the little thing was so full of life and spirit, in short so much resembled her dam, that I had not the heart to give the order for its removal, but finally decided that it should take its chance on the road, particularly as it would have a guard and companion in my faithful and noble Hector, the splendid Newfoundland dog to whom I have already alluded, and with whom it was on the best of terms.

Thus started the caravan—for it could scarcely be called anything else—from Windsor, the whole forming a tableau that had more of the useful than the ornamental about it. The people, as we passed, ran to the doors to admire the ponies, the curs ran after the colt, whom they seemed not much to admire, and Hector ran after, and upset right and left, the curs who had the temerity to insult his little friend and charge. The whole route through the villages and more densely settled parts of the country was marked by much the same confusion, and it was only as we passed through some thick wood, or extensive valley, that our four-footed followers were allowed to proceed in peace.

The journey, along the lake shore especially, was really delightful. Although the heat of the day was great, and the musquitoes as teasing as they were abundant, we had generally the advantage of a gentle breeze from the lake shore, which blew balmy and fresh as the liquid plain over which it rolled. Between two and three o'clock in the day, when its sultriness was at its height and the air partially stilled, my search was directed for some green and shaded spot, where our usual halt was to be made, and when this could be made in the neighbourhood of a farm-house, or near a stream of running water, it was invariably taken possession of, without much regard to the meum or teum right of the property thus invaded. Generally, however, we stopped as near the road side as possible, and on one or two occasions on the border of the lake itself. Some amusing scenes were the result of this gipsy mode of travelling, and among others the following:

One beautiful day, after quitting the Talbot District, and gaining the high road leading through the Township of Mersea, in Essex, we found ourselves about the usual hour between a continuous chain of fences skirting the highway, and offering no other shelter than what was afforded by a few fruit trees overhanging the latter. We chose the neighborhood of an orchard where a number of thickly planted cherry trees, teeming with fruit which was, at that time, in its full perfection of ripeness, promised us the shade we wanted, while from the farm house which adjoined we could obtain the necessary water for our horses. I accordingly drove up to the side of the road, under cover of the cherry trees, and as there was some fresh and inviting grass crowning a small elevation formed by the gradually sloping side of what had once been a ditch, we here alighted, and having, much to the surprise of those whom business or curiosity drew along the road, opened our provision-box and spread out our ham, fowls, &c., we did ample justice to our dinner, while my tiger, who had taken the ponies to some little distance, and under cover of the same shade, gave them their oats, a feed of which was always placed in the waggon on starting in the morning.