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They are certainly one of the drawbacks of colonial life, and do not receive sufficient attention in any pamphlet addressed to 'intending settlers' which I have yet seen. After all our efforts to keep the creatures out, it was certainly mortifying, one evening on going into my room, to find them buzzing about quite cheerily and in large numbers. I at once set to work to kill as many as I could; and after a while, as a matter of interest, thought I would count the number that had penetrated in such a mysterious manner into our stronghold. But after counting two hundred and eleven, and finding apparently as many more buzzing about as when I had begun, I went on killing, regardless of numbers, though I could never discover in what way they came. We converted the bed into a four-poster, and hung it all over with netting, until it resembled nothing so much as a monstrous meat-safe, and by these means only could we get any rest at all.

Our settlement was twenty-five miles from a town, and boasted two stores and a post-office, where the letters were posted and received once a week. Unless, however, one of the settlers killed a sheep or an ox, we had absolutely no fresh meat at all, and even butter and eggs were difficult to obtain. So we were naturally reduced to living on bacon and tinned meats, with whatever our land produced in the way of potatoes and vegetables. A more decided change from the life one lives in England could hardly be imagined, for, naturally, no servants were to be had, as all the families lived on their own ranches, and the girls were needed at home to help either in the house or on the land. So the family wash took the place of tennis, and all other spare time was filled up with blacking stoves, sweeping, dusting, and cooking meals for the boys, all of which duties I could have done more easily if I had but had a little real practical experience of housekeeping before leaving England. Under these circumstances it will be readily imagined that social visits are few and far between, the consequent loneliness proving one of the greatest trials of my ranching experience.

As Alder Grove had no church, a service was held monthly in a large barn-like building called by courtesy the Hall; but whenever it happened to be an 'off-day,' we had to fill up the time to the best of our abilities; and very tedious in consequence were many of the Sundays, when the heat indoors was almost unbearable, and the mosquitoes too fierce to let one think for a minute of sitting down outside.

Our ranch, like all the others in this district, consisted of one hundred and sixty acres of forest-land, with a heavy undergrowth of fir-trees and balsams, which have sprung up since 1835, when a terrific bush-fire spread its ravages far and wide. Thousands of bare and blackened logs lying in all directions bore witness to the fierceness of the flames; while they, together with the numbers which were still standing, added much to the difficulty and labour of clearing this part of the country and rendering it available for farming purposes. After the smaller green timber had been chopped down and burnt—a comparatively easy matter—these great logs or 'stubs' still remained to be disposed of, which was generally done by

sawing them into lengths and piling the fir into great heaps, ready for burning, while the cedar was reserved for fence-rails or any other building purposes. Frequently, during the later summer months, weeks would go by with hardly a glimpse of the sun, the air being filled with smoke from the various ranches, which spread in every direction for many miles.

Although as a rule we were little troubled with seeing wild animals, of which there were many all round us, yet it fell to our lot one night to receive a visit from a skunk. The little creature, not so large as a full-grown rabbit, had discovered a small hole in the side of the kitchen wall, and with its sharp claws had enlarged it sufficiently to make an entrance, after which it set to work to test the quality of our stores. Unfortunately, the kitten imagined she could banish the intruder as she would do a rat, with the painful result that a quantity of the noxious fluid which makes the skunk so disagreeable an animal was squirted over her, and the whole house rendered almost uninhabitable in consequence. But what was to us of far more importance was the fact that the barrel of flour standing in the kitchen was so tainted that we were obliged to throw it away; while the sugar had also suffered, though in a less degree.

LOVE AT THE 'SHIP.'

THERE had been a fog in the early morning, but the sun gathering strength, burst suddenly from behind a black and indigo cloud and streaked the sea with a copperish hue. Then a lamp on the pier flashed like a diamond in a pin, and out popped the tops of the buoys. Far down the beach were two men and a boat. They were stalwart men, and the eldest was busy shaking from the meshes of a draw-net entangled tufts of maroon and brown seaweed. When all the seaweed was shaken out, the net was piled on a barrow and carried to the boat.

'Poor draughts, Shelah,' said the net-shaker, looking philosophically into the basket that held the fish.

'Poor enough, Master Reeks.—Is it home now?'

'Ay, lad, home it is. Get in the boat, Shelah.'

The young man jumped into the boat and took the oars; the other shoved off, and when he was knee-deep in salt water, clambered in after him. The oarsman gave a lusty pull or two, and they were fairly afloat. Reeks lighted his pipe and began meditatively to smoke. The searching brown eyes of his companion were fixed upon the foreshore of Herringbourne. He was watching it over Reeks' shoulder, as it came out bit by bit from the fog. When his gaze altered, it was to look at the sea, where, under the direct rays of the sun, it had become a huge pot of molten silver, overflowing and running towards the shore.

'Shelah,' said Reeks, speaking of a sudden, 'when are you going to marry my Jen?'

There came a little extra colour into Shelah's smooth tanned cheeks, and before he answered he shifted one of the oars from the tholes and wetted the leather. 'I don't know, muster,' he said.