

Fishing being therefore out of the question, we determined to start next morning for the Falls.

How dreadfully still the evening air was—not a sound fell upon the ear; but the monotonous roar of the waters, which only increased the profound silence. The woods seemed sunk in deep slumber; and not a breath of air shook the leaves, or rippled the still water. But what a sad addition to the romantic, was the buzz of the mosquito, and the bite of the sand-fly! All the poetry which a lovely night, a sublime scene, and a delicious stillness can inspire, is *buzzed* out of you by these vulgar realities. We were congratulated upon having arrived at a season when they were rare; but our disfigured and reddened features told that their scarcity was rather fabulous.

Early next morning, we witnessed the departure, for the "shanties," of several large canoes, "laden with provisions for the lumbermen engaged in getting out the timber from the woods. Some of these "shanties" are one hundred miles up the river. Soon after, we obtained the loan of a home-made boat, or canoe—we were afraid of the bark canoes—and with an Indian, or rather half-breed, for a guide, started for the Shawinegan Falls.

I think I never saw water so smooth and glassy, and yet so very black. I suppose it only appears so from the dark nature of the soil over which it passes; but such is the fact. From this circumstance the river is called the "Black River," and in Three Rivers it is chiefly known by that name. We all took our turn at paddling; but finding it a very laborious occupation, I got out of the canoe, and walked along the "Booms." These are square logs, fastened together in a long chain, intended to guide the timber down to the mill. Within these "booms" thousands of sticks of timber were floating down to the hungry saws. They were rather narrow to walk comfortably on, but preferable to paddling. At the end of the booms, however, I had again to take my turn at the paddle.

Our anxiety to get a peep of the Falls was intense; and the further we paddled, there seemed the less chance of our ever reaching them. For about four miles the river is perfectly straight, and the Falls are of course hidden from your view; but a sharp point of land appears before you, and you feel an intense anxiety