

less; a mile or so of such work proved its futility, and we now looked for shelter; but in such a place the next house might be miles away, and we were unable to make yards, not to talk of miles. In this desperate state of affairs a council of war was called, and we had almost decided to start for the bush and seek shelter there, when, owing to a sudden shifting eddy in the storm, a building was discovered close at hand. One was sent to reconnoitre and informed us on his return that the house was deserted; this argued a cold reception and no help, but as the gods help those who help themselves we were not without hope, and set to work to get our horses under shelter. If there had once been a stable it had disappeared, and our two ponies were served with the same accommodation as ourselves, namely, the only room in the house, and that but little protected from the storm, as the window panes were all broken and the shutters in bad repair. Finding no firewood we appropriated some of the ceilings, and soon had a fire going; hay and oats we had in the *berlin* for our horses, and having cooking utensils we shortly improvised a supper by cooking some cariboo. Water had to be procured, and I sallied out in the storm in search of it, and was fortunate in finding a spring near the house. We chopped up the remnants of a shed for spare firewood, brought in our blankets, stowed away the *berlin* on the west side of the house and made ourselves as comfortable as we could for the night. Rolled in our blankets, with our feet to the fire and our pipes lit, we bemoaned our hard luck. We each had our engagements, and I for one had in my desolate imagination the picture of a Christmas tree, to which I was expected to be a considerable contributor; but now the choice gifts would be distributed in my absence. Williams, who lay next me, had an engagement to drive my cousin Emma, as great a flirt as ever graced a garrison town, to the country, and she I knew would make the excuse of his absence a *casus belli* with poor Williams, and a reason for desertion to the enemy. This was a lieutenant in one of Her Majesty's marching regiments, quartered in the city a year or two previously, who had

come out from England to visit the scenes of his former conquests, and perhaps secure one of the few "plums" which some papas in Quebec bequeath to their daughters. I dare say Williams was as well or perhaps better acquainted with Emma's constancy as I, so I did not impart to him my feelings on the subject. My own were bitter enough, for I too had made my own arrangements for Christmas Day, which I was now likely to pass in a barn of a house buried in snow, sleeping with horses, and without any other liquid than water to quench thirst.

At this moment a sound of voices was heard in the storm. Curses, loud and deep, with a strong Milesian accent, grew more perceptible each moment, and at last a succession of blows on the door, accompanied by a repetition of oaths, announced the arrival of visitors. Visitors! no visitor could venture out on such a night; they must be belated travellers like ourselves, and after a few moment's conversation we decided to admit our brethren in distress. They were farmers, belonging to one of the outlying parishes, on their way home from town, after making their Christmas purchases, the greater portion of which must have been drinkables, if we were to judge of the strong smell of whiskey, and the unsteady gait and rambling talk of the wanderers. Being accustomed to similar incidents, they were not so long as we in housing their horse and stowing away their *berlin*, out of which they first abstracted two large demijohns, which they immediately uncorked after closing the door and lighting their pipes. The men had had enough; but if any of my readers has ever attempted to convince an Irishman of such a fact, he can easily imagine the difficulty in the present case. But our visitors were not satisfied in having a taste themselves, but would insist on the *gentlemen* having a drop. I have read a description of the man who swallowed a mouthful of ice cream, and of the concentrated agonies of tooth-ache which each tooth endured. I have also read of the Indian Braves who, at a Commissioners' dinner in Washington, swallowed each a mouthful of mustard and retained their composed demeanor