

## EARLY SCENES IN CANADIAN LIFE.

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(Continued.)

## CHAPTER XVIII.

HUNTING DEER ON THE CRUST—BURLINGTON BAY  
A HIGHWAY—MRS. MORDEN'S ADVENTURE ON  
THE ICE—HER DEATH.

The great depth of snow during the long winters, though subjecting the settlers to many inconveniences, and greatly impeding their movements, where, in their isolated positions, each was obliged to break his own road after every fresh fall, yet when broken, afforded the best facilities for the performance of their indispensable journeys. They also contrived to make the deep snow contribute to their advantage in another way.

When wet or thawing weather, which had somewhat melted the surface of the mass of snow, was succeeded by a hard frost, a heavy crust was thereby formed over the snow, so strong that dogs and men could run upon it without breaking it, while the small hoofs of the deer cut through it at every bound, causing them to sink, and the sharp edges of the broken crust wounding their legs, they were soon disabled, and became an easy prey to their pursuers.

The venison thus obtained furnished a supply of fresh meat—though it may be presumed, none of the fattest—for many a family long confined to salt pork or fish, and in some instances probably altogether destitute of animal food. Deer were abundant, and few, if any, then bestowed a thought upon the impropriety of destroying those valuable and beautiful creatures at that season of the year.

The Bay served as a highway for the dwellers upon its shores, which, to a considerable extent, compensated them for the want of ordinary roads. During the summer they conveyed their grain and other commodities, backward and forward upon its waters, in canoes, or such boats as they could procure; and the strong ice, with which the intense cold of the winter bridged it, gave them a smooth road quite as convenient, though

travelling on it was attended with some peril, in consequence of the numerous air-holes.

In one of these *air-holes*, Mrs. Morden had well nigh lost her life, while crossing the bay on the ice, to visit her old friends, the Lands, who lived on the south side of the bay. Mrs. Morden was seated with a little boy in a small sleigh, which was being pushed over the ice by a young man. When near the middle of the 'Little Lake,' as the bay was then called, he, not having observed where he was going, pushed the sleigh on to the brittle ice surrounding an air-hole. The ice giving way, the whole party were precipitated into the water. Fortunately a portion of the hole was covered with an under layer of ice, upon which the sleigh caught fast. The young man being active, succeeded in getting out almost immediately himself, but all his efforts to aid his companions in misfortune were unavailing. He endeavoured to reach the sleigh from every possible point, but the ice would not bear his weight. After consuming some time in these fruitless attempts, he became convinced that, without other means than he then possessed, it was impossible for him to rescue them from their perilous position. What to do, he for a moment knew not. It seemed inhuman to go away and leave that old lady and little child, probably to perish alone; but in his going for help, lay the only hope of deliverance for them. To stay there would be but to witness the catastrophe, which he was powerless to avert. Realising this he hastened back to the nearest house on the north shore of the bay, to procure assistance.

Meanwhile, the worn and weary daughter of affliction, sat in the sleigh, filled with ice-cold water, the terrified little one—her grandchild, the writer believes—clinging to her in its fright, and piercing her heart with its piteous cries. She knew not how slender might be the support which had thus far sustained them, and kept them so near the surface, and fearing every moment that it