

now the left going tilt over a stump a foot high. Every moment I thought I should be thrown off my insecure perch, and had no time to look at what scenery we might be passing through. At last, going down a steep hill, the horse grew so nervous he crouched like a camel, and the whole 'rig' was straining over until I expected to see the shafts snap. Mrs R— began to cry, 'Oh baby, baby!' passed the child to me, and got out instantly, when I handed it to her; and then, in spite of oft-repeated advice about not jumping out of a carriage in danger, I took a good spring, and alighted safely on the ground with no worse damage than yards of torn drapery at my back.

'Oh, Mrs Long,' said Mrs R— reproachfully, 'you would have been all right if you had stayed.'

Perhaps so; but the prospect of sitting behind a plunging horse with a precipice in front and another on the right-hand side hardly seemed to me a sensible idea.

The remaining three miles and a half I did not enjoy much more, as we were mainly occupied in pulling through the great mud-holes, which are often a foot deep and ten feet long, and are caused by the uprooting of enormous tree stumps and roots when the roads are first constructed. Heartily glad was I when we were safely under the shelter of Mrs R—'s hospitable roof, and could comfort ourselves with the thought that no more driving was necessary.

About nine o'clock the next morning we said 'Good-bye' to our hostess, and then set off across a trail to Will's shanty and real bush-life. The trail was such a novel experience, it deserves description. As the roads are at present in a most unfinished condition and few in number, some other communication is necessary between the various settlers' houses; and for this purpose a trail answers admirably. A narrow pathway is trodden out in as direct a line as possible, and the principal large trees notched with an axe—or 'blazed,' as it is called—so that no confusion may arise later on. Often we found it necessary to walk along the huge fallen fir and cedar trunks which lie stretched on the ground in every direction. They are of enormous size, from two to three hundred feet in length, and proportionately broad. Occasionally, we came to a piece of swampy ground, which was made passable by a 'corduroy' bridge, formed of logs laid side by side on the damp earth, and fastened together by cross-pieces, so that in case of high water the bridge can rise or fall like a raft.

Arrived at Will's shanty, we found a little house built of the native cedar of the country, and inside an awful muddle, and chaos reigning, owing to his absence of a fortnight in New Westminster. He showed me some of his land and improvements, and much I sympathised with the difficulties to be met with in clearing land of this description. At noon I was met with a request to prepare dinner as soon as possible; but what to cook and how to cook it, I had not the least idea.

'Bacon and slap-jacks will do well,' said Will; 'and after dinner, I will set some bread.'

So, on a cooking stove, which was standing exposed to the elements at the back of the house, I made my first essay at bush-cookery; and with some assistance and many suggestions, a fairly respectable meal was produced—slap-jacks

proving to be pancakes of flour, water, and baking powder, fried in hot fat. The bachelors, or boys, as all unmarried ranchers are called, are many of them clever cooks and housekeepers, and often I have been able to get hints from them which have proved decidedly useful.

One night we were honoured by a 'chivaree' in our own home, a most doubtful sort of compliment paid to newly-married people on their wedding night. At about eleven o'clock, a procession of young fellows from the different shanties found their way across the trail—anything but an easy matter in the dim light—and came outside the door, calling out and making a great noise. Jack knew what it was directly; and we hastened to let them in and give them whatever provisions we had cooked, with some hot coffee. And after staying two or three hours without making more than half-a-dozen spasmodic remarks apiece, 'they guessed they'd better be quittin',' and returned to their homes to bed. Another pair were less fortunate than ourselves; for, resenting what they considered the impertinence of the intruders, they kept their door shut until three o'clock, when the besieging party broke in, and seating themselves, there and then started to drink some whisky they had with them. The natural consequence was that they were soon in such an uproarious condition that they refused to eat the buns the poor bride had hurriedly baked, declaring them bullets only fit to throw about, and snited the action to the word.

Our house consisted of three good-sized rooms, each of which opened out of the other, so that we were obliged to use the outer one for a kitchen, the middle for a dining-room, and the remaining one as a bedroom. Like nearly all the other shanties, it was made of undressed native cedar planks, taken from the trees by means of a long 'fro,' and built up by the boys themselves. The walls were of course rough and uneven; but, covered with pictures and bric-à-brac, looked pretty and home-like; though the floor defied all efforts to keep it clean by peeling off into long splinters whenever a brush was passed over it. Scrubbing was absolutely out of the question, owing to the porous nature of the wood, which absorbed the water almost like a sponge.

For a fortnight our time was fully occupied in 'packing' our various possessions across the bush. As the house was more than a mile from a road, it necessitated carrying the contents of twenty-three boxes over the trail, anything but an easy or pleasant task. Fortunately, however, no mishaps occurred, in spite of all the difficulties in the way; and we were able to congratulate ourselves on the safe arrival of china and glass with only the breakage of a single tumbler after a journey of six thousand miles.

Having settled our various Lares and Penates, our next care was to make the house 'mosquito-proof'; and to do this it was necessary to cover every hole, crack, and cranny in wall, floor, or ceiling by pasting them over with paper where possible, and by filling in the larger gaps with wads of rag and paper. This process unfortunately took away much from the picturesque effect of the interior, but was the only alternative to being almost consumed by the horrible little pests, which gave us no peace either night or day.