

IV—THE NEW HOME.

"Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home"

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE.

Six weeks in Wall's Cabin acquainted us, in some measure with the conditions and inconveniences of back-woods life. Folk who complain to-day of hard times know not the meaning of the words. During these weeks the settlers were busy harvesting from daylight till dark. Cutting grain with the old-fashioned sickle and scythe, on ground, stumps dotted thickly, was slow, laborious work. Reaping machines, mowing machines, horse rakes and the splendid array of labor-saving implements now in vogue, to lighten the task, and multiply a hundred fold the efficiency of the husbandman, had not yet been evolved. A cumbersome plough, hard to pull and harder to guide, a V-shaped harrow, alike heavy and unwieldy, a clumsy sled, in keeping with the plough and harrow, home-made rakes, weighty as iron and sure to blister the hands of the users, forked-stick pitch forks, first cousins of the awkward rakes, and gnarled flails, certain to raise bumps on the heads of unskilled threshers, with two or three scythes and sickles, represented the average agricultural equipment. Not a grist-mill, saw-mill, factory, store, shop, post-office, school, horse, chimney, stove nor even a chair could be found in Beckwith. Two arm-chairs, constructed for father and mother by Donald Kennedy a wood-worker, were the first in the township. Split logs furnished the materials for benches, tables, floors and roofs. Sawed boards, shingles and plastered walls were unattainable luxuries. The first year men carried flour and provisions on their backs from Perth and Brockville. Families subsisted for months on very scanty flour. Their homes were shanties, chinked between the logs with wood and mud, often without a window, cold in winter, stifling in summer, uninviting always. A hole