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CHRISTMAS IN THE WOODS.

It is not long since the writer, with three friends, planned and executed a trip to the country. It was in winter, a few days before Christmas, and the point of departure was the ancient city of Quebec. I am not going to give a description of that renowned place, nor even of the expedition, whose object was the pursuit of game. The inhabitants of the former Capital of Canada are, in the winter time, either blessed or cursed with a superabundance of leisure time; in fact, from the close of navigation, about the middle of November, to the middle or end of April, there is little to be done besides killing time, and to that delightful occupation the minds of all are fully devoted, and to it was due the conception of our trip. Our destination was about forty miles north, and having procured a *berlin* (a box, without a cover, on runners), two Canadian ponies tandem, and looked after the commissariat and ammunition, we started, and after a few hours' driving arrived at our destination. We were sufficiently successful to satisfy all, each member of the party having bagged one cariboo, several brace of partridges, trapped about a dozen hares, and caught a large quantity of fine trout, averaging about seven pounds. It was the morning before Christmas when we started homewards—a bright, glorious morning, with a sky such as is seldom seen out of Canada; a clear, frosty day, when the music of our bells could be heard resounding on the distant pine-clad hills. The snow had not yet fallen to any great depth, and the forest road, although narrow, was good; our ponies were fresh and ourselves in joyous spirits, anticipating the happy greetings of the Christmas morning. We expected to reach the city towards evening and congratulated ourselves on not being overloaded with unnecessary provender—in fact in having calculated the quantity so closely that by our arrival in town we should be without edibles or drinkables, excepting the spoil which we had captured. With song and gossip we shortened our journey, and it was only when we arrived within twenty miles of the town that we noticed that “the sky was changed, and such a change!”—snow-clouds came hurrying from the east, the sun was hidden, and a darkness overspread the view. We were still in the bush, and the snow fell in such quantities that the ponies became fatigued, and were at last compelled to walk through the harassing depths of snow. The clearances were reached, but this added to our discomfort, as the immense drifts had completely covered the *blazes* which marked the road, and the fences were of course hidden from view. We, however, trusted to the hardiness of our ponies, and still expected to reach home before night-fall. We were soon undeceived; the poor animals, wading to their bellies in the snow, soon became unable to drag the *berlin* after them, so that to give them every assistance we put on our snow-shoes and trudged through the blinding storm. It was use-