

whirled round and round the head, it gives out a most unearthly sound, of wonderful modulation, according to the skill used, and one that may well frighten any new comer in the woods, especially one who had been well prepared beforehand from some such source as story-telling. Two or three of our men were provided with these machines, and were running hither and thither—of course out of sight—in the storm, whilst the uninitiated rushed after them with all sorts of weapons, urged on by those in advance to come quickly. The roars would be first on one side and then on another, as the wild animals were supposed to be flying before their pursuers—and many were the tumbles and rolls the visitors got in the deep snow, or over stumps and logs, while endeavouring to overtake or avoid the supposed wild beast. At last it was generally the case that some one discovered the trick, and, of course, all returned to the shanty laughing and joking the new-comers on the strange noises to be heard in Canadian back-woods, and holding great investigations over barked shins and broken or bleeding noses.

#### CHOPPING THE LAND.

The winter of 1860-1 was very severe; the snow lay nearly four feet deep on the level, and was solid and hard; and as we were too late in beginning to get underbrushing done, as it ought to have been, before the snow fell, we were compelled to chop away at the trees and leave the underbrushing until the following spring. This, of course, was bad management, but we could not control the elements, and therefore had to do the best we could.

We chopped that winter 120 acres of land, having hired four choppers in addition to our own strength—active, wiry little Frenchmen they were, and beautiful choppers—no better men exist, as adapted for such work, than the Lower Canadian Frenchmen. Always gay and merry, and never discontented, all they want is pork and potatoes, tea and some sweetcake shortened with pork fat (provided they are dressed by a decent cook), and a gay Frenchman will willingly go for nine months or more far into uninhabited wilds, and only look forward to returning amongst his fellow men once a year for about a month. The wonder is how such small men can chop so much, and such large trees; and many times in after years I have noticed such and such trees as having been chopped by Ba'tist or Jean. Those stumps that winter were often left six feet high, so deep was the snow when they were chopped. About this time one of our oxen was missed, and a search was instituted in all directions, but without effect. He was seen only an hour before being missed, and no track could be found where he had left the chopping. We made a circuit round our camp in the deep snow, and thought it certain by that means to find his path of exit, but to no purpose, and after a fruitless search we gave it up,

wondering how it was possible that he could have got away. When the spring opened, and the snow melted, our doubts were ended. Within twenty rods of our shanty the ox had fallen, having caught his hind foot in the fork of a fallen tree, the wood of which was not more than about four inches in diameter. The foot was held fast, and the poor brute was starved and frozen to death almost close to the house. In his struggles for freedom he had chafed all the flesh from the bone.

Spring set in that year very early, and remarkably dry, during the month of May; and about the first of April we turned all hands on to cutting underbrush, wherever it was possible to get at it. The whole chopping was gone over, and all the small stuff chopped, and on the 25th of May, 1860, we set fire to the new fallow.

#### BURNING BRUSH.

On the 25th day of May, the day we had determined to fire the brush, we all prepared touchwood and pine slips, with matches, and every small combustible material we could obtain. The great art is to fire the whole at once, and to select a dry, hot day and "half a gale" of wind. Such a wind and such a day we had, and about 10 o'clock, when the dew was all off—a very important point—and everything hot and dry, we commenced to set fire. We passed at intervals of about fifty feet all down the windward side of the chopping, and built little fires. All were engaged at once, in order to have as tremendous a fire as possible. In about half an hour the flames began to gather strength, and truly it was a grand sight. The wood, leaves, and decayed stumps here and there being all dry, caught like touch-paper, and the wind being very high, in an inconceivably short time the whole fallow was one mass of flames fully fifty feet high, roaring like some furious volcano, and sweeping all before it. We had no neighbours, and we knew the fire would not run in the neighbouring green woods so early in the year, so we allowed the flames to have their own course and full sweep, and by evening the finest and best burn I ever saw was the consequence. All the brush was completely burned, and much of the small timber. Where the windrows of the tops were all thrown together—sometimes two hundred yards long, a solid mass of brushwood—a lane of twelve to twenty feet wide was entirely burnt up, so much so that we could and did drive waggons over and through the new fallow to collect the ashes for potash making.

This burn was of immense value to us. About one-half the timber and all the small stuff was entirely destroyed, burnt, and completely cleared away, leaving only heaps on heaps of ashes. The art of chopping land to advantage consists entirely in arranging your windrows in this manner: You first throw down some great unmanageable tree—probably an elm—and carefully chop down all the branches, causing them to lie as

smoothly as possible, so as to have the brush-heap solid at the bottom. You next throw into and on to this heap all the adjoining timber, at various angles, just as they incline or otherwise towards the pile in question. Practice will enable a good chopper to do this in a wonderful manner, especially when he takes into consideration the direction of the prevailing heavy winds of the district—a very important point. Of course, in this direction the windrow must be made, and a very little inclination of the tree-top will cause the tree to go where it is wanted. If, as sometimes happens, an obstinate tree will persist in going the wrong way, and will fall away from the heap, instead of on it, it is of little consequence, as this will be in the next row, parallel, or thereabout, to the first.

I have seen, on our land, fallows so well chopped, and the trees so adroitly thrown on each other, that you could have—and I have many times—walked for a hundred yards, without stepping off this immense long brush-heap. Some of our men could never attain the art, while others could do pretty much as they chose with the trees. In chopping and clearing land, all you want to lighten your job one half is, in addition to good chopping, a perfectly dry time and a strong wind; and you had better wait a month or two in the spring than attempt to burn until these conditions occur. Then your work for the rest of the job is light in comparison to being without such a burn. If, on the other hand, as it often happens, you try to burn some ill-piled brush-heaps, with trees thrown every way, and the fire just runs through without consuming the brushwood, your labour is trebled at least, for the fire never runs a second time, and it is "pick and pile" brushwood and chips for weeks and months, until you are sick of it.

This happened to us in the next hundred acres we had chopped, and it cost us \$9 an acre to log it, as will be related in its proper place. Of course, we gradually acquired experience, but at first we should have miserably failed but for the counsel and help of a friend of ours who visited our shanty the first winter.

#### CLEARING LAND—GRUBBING THE TREES.

Amongst other trials to clear land to better advantage, that of grubbing the trees once occurred to us as not only practicable, but advisable. We reasoned thus—that the stumps were a greater impediment than the roots—that if the tree could be grubbed out at once, using the tree itself as a lever to tear up any roots that might be difficult to cut off, the land would be more easily worked. We accordingly laid out two acres as a trial piece, carefully keeping an account of the time. We did not find it a successful experiment. The time it required was too great. Five trees could be cut down while one was being grubbed out. Certainly, when finished, the land looked almost