

faithful servant M'Phaul caught a glimpse of its owner who appeared to have been skulking behind a stump, and watching us. It appeared afterwards, when M'Phaul's madness had cooled a little, for I really began to fear he *was* mad, that he recognised him at once as the——something, but what I could not get him to tell me. He would begin his story, whatever it was, about him, but before he got to the end of it, or on some movement of the object of his terror, he would suddenly break off and reiterate those exclamations with which my tale commenced. If I attempted to go on to the house near which we now had stopped, he would place his hand upon the reins and hold me back.

The cottage or rather the hut, for it was nothing better, had neither chimney nor windows. The door, which was a little ajar, was of the rudest construction, being made of slabs of bass-wood roughly hewed, and hung by one hinge, and that only a wither. It was built of round logs which no tool had ever touched, except to *notch* them together, as it is called, at the corners. The logs were of all lengths, and protruded beyond the corners from one to five or six feet. A portion of the wall, if I may so call the side of the hut, had been cut away for a door and another for a window, leaving the remainder much less firm, and it had partially given way and was only kept from falling entirely by a rude prop or two composed of pieces of cordwood. The roof consisted of large rolls of the bark of the black ash, reaching from the ridge to the eaves, fastened down with longitudinal poles tied at each end with leather wood bark, to prevent the wind from carrying it away. An opening was left in the ridge near one of the gables as a substitute for a chimney. The size of the building was about twelve feet by eight and not more than five feet high to the eaves.

An enormous gaunt and wolf-like looking dog showed his grisly muzzle through the partially open door, barking with incessant fury as if enraged because he could not get the door opened wider to get at us. There was a little patch of cleared ground around the hut, comprising indeed the whole of the little knoll of upland in the midst of the swampy jungle of alders and cedars on which it stood.

Although the ground was low and swampy when compared with the lofty mountain-peaks around it; yet was it high above the rest of that lone and sequestered valley of which it formed the head. This was evident on looking to the westward, in which direction the valley continued to wind its tortuous way through the rugged waste of wood covered hills, or bare and bectling rocks, with now and then a lake or waterfall to

diversify the scene. Just below the knoll on which the cottage stood was a deep and darkling precipice, and so near the hut that one could not help but wonder why he built it there; perhaps it was because a little crystal fountain of pure and living water came bubbling up beside it, and wound its devious way through tumbling rocks and tangled roots directly for the dizzy height, and then, as if delighted with the chance of shewing its agility, it leapt from rock to rock, and danced and boiled and murmured at the foot as if unwilling to mix and be confounded with the lake below.

The occupant was evidently a *Squatter*, a term well understood by those who settle in the woods; but to such as are not acquainted with country life, it may require a little explanation.

A Squatter, then, is a person who takes possession of wild land without leave or license, builds a cottage, makes a clearing, and lives and looks upon it as his own. They are generally, if not universally, from the lowest of the low—the scum of the earth—idle vagabonds who never work except when they cannot help it. I had therefore no very favorable opinion of our intended host the moment I saw his rude establishment, if I may so call it, as I knew at once he was a Squatter. This unfavorable idea was rather strengthened than otherwise by the only glimpse I obtained of his features as he looked up towards us while we were endeavouring to get the horse and sleigh turned round in the deep snow. I had heeded to my old and faithful servant's wishes and entreaties, so anxiously manifested and so earnestly expressed.

The lonely occupant of this dreary solitude was a stout and stalwart man, a little above the middle size. His figure I could not distinctly see, but his head and face I had a full view of, except what was hidden of the former by a patched and scanty woollen cap. His features were large and gaunt and angular, and in his eye was a singular combination of deep cunning and stupid stolidity, or what in Scotland is called *duff*, strangely mingled at the same time with fear of the most abject kind, and brutal ferocity. He glared upon us like a tiger attacked in his own lair; I shrank from his glance as if a scorpion had bit me, and became as desirous of getting away from him as my man was.

I must now give the reader some little account of my man M'Phaul, because he has already figured so conspicuously in my story, and will continue so to do.

He was a civilian. I picked him up when I was stationed at —— in Ireland, or rather on the eve of my departure for Halifax, where the 2nd battalion of the —— Regiment to which