

Choice Literature.

SAVED BY A PONY.

Mary Livingston's home was on the bank of the St. John River in the Canadian Province of New Brunswick, in a lonely spot, overlooking a great expanse of sunken meadow, and separated by nearly two miles of alder swamp from the nearest neighbours. The only road to Fredericton, the provincial capital, was that afforded by the river, and a narrow track, little better than a foot-path, along the top of the bank. None of the settlers were at that time what would now be considered well-off, and perhaps Mary's father was just a little poorer than most of them. Not that the family did not have plenty to eat and sufficient clothing; but they were not able to procure any of the very few luxuries which the struggling colonists in better circumstances were able to afford. Yet the Livingston children had one possession which was the pride of their hearts and the envy of the little folks for many miles up and down the river.

It was a pony, a round, plump little fellow, with a flowing mane and tail, and a coat almost as thick as that of a sheep. He had a history of his own.

He was born in Iceland; and on the voyage from that far distant island to Scotland, where he was taken for sale with a number of others, had been shipwrecked upon a rocky shore, and had only saved his life by swimming a long distance through the storm-tossed sea. When he had recovered from the effects of his voyage, and its tragic termination, for hundreds of his companions had been drowned, he was purchased by an army officer who brought him out to New Brunswick as a present for his little son. The lad having died during his father's absence, the officer gave the pony to Captain Livingston, who had been a comrade of his under Wellington in Spain.

Duke was the pony's name, given him in honour of the grand old soldier; and the children used to think that he partook of the qualities of his illustrious namesake. He was true as steel, obedient and brave. They loved him, and there never was a day, except during the year of the "High Freshet," from the ever-to-be-remembered evening when Captain Livingston came riding down the narrow footpath, with a little chestnut beauty trotting behind, to the spring morning years afterward when the children, with wet cheeks, buried him beneath the great elm in the pasture, that some of them did not fondle their pet and receive his rough caresses in return. They taught him many things, his most useful accomplishment, as it proved, being to swim from his island pasture to the shore, whenever he was called.

When Mary was twelve years of age, what was called the "High Freshet" occurred. Much snow had fallen during the winter and heavy rains had set in late in May, followed by very hot sunshine. Some travellers from the upper waters of the river told Captain Livingston that he might expect the highest water known for years. This made him not a little anxious; for he had no boat, except a little tottish canoe, which would scarcely carry two persons with safety. When the freshet began the water rose very rapidly, and was soon deep enough in the door-yard to float the canoe, which he brought up from the river bank and tied under one of the windows. Then the cattle were got up on the scaffold in the barn (for on the lowlands it is the custom to build scaffolds to keep the cattle out of the water), and the pony was placed with them; but by some fortunate oversight he was not tied.

Before dusk the water had risen so that it was in the lower storey of the house and the family were driven to the upper storey. As this had happened several times before they were not much alarmed; but this year the current seemed much stronger than usual.

I shall let Mary tell the rest of the story in her own words.

"When father came back from the barn he set to work at once, with brother Tom's help to build a raft. There were some loose boards in the attic, and with these and some fence poles, which stood against the house in readiness for such an emergency, he made quite a substantial structure, placing the canoe alongside and fastening it, as he thought, securely with a piece of board and some nails. We children wondered what these preparations meant, for as yet the freshet did not seem any more dangerous than others we had passed through; but just as darkness had fully set in, father said to mother that if the water came much higher he was sure the house could not stand it.

"This made us extremely anxious; for we could by measuring down the stairway tell that the water was coming up with unusual rapidity. We could feel the house writhing in the strong current, and several times were upon the point of taking to the raft; but the night was so very dark that father hesitated to give the word. At length we heard a crash, and when father held a candle to the window we saw that a mass of drift stuff had come down upon us. It was now clearly only a question of minutes how soon the house would be carried away, and we scarcely needed father's sharp word of command: 'To the raft!'

"Out of the window we went; mother first, then baby, then little Sue and David, then myself, then Tom, and last of all, father. The raft bore us up pretty well, but to make it a little lighter father put me in the canoe.

"Keep still, Mary," he said, as he kissed me, 'there is no danger. Let us go, Tom.'

"We had brought the lantern with us; but, unfortunately, just as Tom went to untie the rope, by which the raft was made fast to the house, his foot slipped and striking against the lantern knocked it off into the water. Its loss left us in almost utter darkness; but as Tom called out that he was all right, we did not feel like complaining. He was some little time in getting the rope untied, but finally exclaimed: 'There, we're off;' and we could see the house fade away in the darkness.

"Are you all safe?" asked father, cheerily; and we answered that we were. 'Then keep up your courage, and remember that you are a soldier's children,' he said, while mother added in her quiet way, 'And that God will take care of us.'

"We had only been adrift a few moments when I felt the canoe strike something. The jar was quite severe; but it only lasted for an instant, and then all seemed right again. I was looking in the direction of the barn at the time, though I could not see it, wondering what would be the fate of Duke; and when I turned to speak to the others about him, to my

utter astonishment nothing but empty darkness met my vision. I put out my hand to take hold of the raft, but found nothing within reach. I knew then that I had become separated from them.

"Father!" I called, but there was no reply.

"Father!" I cried, still louder; and then a voice that seemed to come from far away answered:—

"Mary."

"Where are you?" I screamed in terror; but although a voice was borne back to me I could not understand the words.

"I cannot tell how frightened I was. I threw myself down in the bottom of the canoe and sobbed bitterly. What had happened I, of course, did not know then. Father afterward told me that the canoe had been detached from the raft by the collision spoken of, and had remained caught upon the projecting object, whatever it was, while the rest of the raft had been swept on. They missed me almost immediately, and their first thought naturally was that I had been drowned; but my cry dispelled that fear. Tom wanted to try and swim to me, but father would not let him; because he could neither make headway against the current nor hope to find the canoe in the darkness. Besides, if by any accident he should happen to reach the canoe he could not get into it without upsetting it. Nothing could be done to help me, so father called to me to sit perfectly still. These were the words I heard but did not catch. All night long, as they were carried swiftly down by the current, mother prayed for me, while the children wept. It was a terrible night for them, far worse than for me; for after the first fright was over I did not feel very badly.

"When I had sobbed myself into comparative calmness, I heard the water ripple along the side of the canoe, and realized that it was stationary. After a time the canoe rocked a little, the ripple ceased, and I knew it was in motion again. The rising water had lifted it clear of whatever had held it; but before I had time to wonder what this change signified, I felt the branch of a tree brush over me. Then the canoe stopped. By this time my presence of mind had come back. This is the way I ought to tell it, I suppose; but it seemed to me then, and it seems so now, though fifty years have passed since that night, as if some one spoke to me and told me to seize a branch above my head and climb up into the tree. It was very dark, and, under the branches of the tree, which was in full leaf, nothing was visible; but I reached up and my hands, coming in contact with a stout limb, I grasped it and, without a moment's hesitation, drew myself up upon it. I was almost as skilful as a boy at climbing, so I felt secure, especially as there was another branch higher up, on which I could sit while resting my feet on the lower one. I suppose that I did not realize my danger, perhaps fear had benumbed my understanding, or the novelty of my situation prevented me from comprehending the risk to which I was exposed. However it may be I sat on the branch as coolly as if I were only hiding from the boys, as I had done many times before. Yet it seemed a very long time before morning came, and though the night was not cold and I did not suffer any real physical discomfort, it was weary waiting for daybreak. At length the first gray light appeared, and I saw that my canoe had drifted down into a long row of willows, which stood a little below the barn. As it grew lighter I was able to distinguish the barn and, after a while, to make out the open window of the loft; but what was best of all, there in the window stood Duke looking wistfully out over the water, that just came up to the sill.

"Duke, Duke!" I cried.

"The little fellow raised his head and pricked up his ears. Scarcely knowing why, and in fact without any thought that he would obey me, I called again:—

"Duke, Duke! come here, old fellow."

"The pony touched the water, first with one foot and then with the other, and then stood irresolute.

"Here, Duke!" I cried again.

"He hesitated no longer, but sprang into the water. Then there came to me the thought that in calling him from the stable I had exposed him to the chance of being drowned, and, as he swam aimlessly about, I hid my eyes so that I might not see him perish. But, recalling the story of his shipwreck, I began to think that if he could breast the rough waves of the Atlantic, he could live long enough in the smooth waters of the St. John to swim to the shore; and a wild sort of idea entered my mind that he could not only save himself, but might in some way save me also. So I began to call him again at the top of my voice.

"Duke, Duke! This way, old fellow!" I kept repeating. He could not see me, for I was hidden by the branches but he followed the sound of my voice, and, aided by the current, soon reached the tree. Very carefully I descended from my perch, got into the canoe, and, as he came alongside, I reached out my hand and patted his nose, that just projected from the water. Then, seeing that he had his halter on with a rope attached, I caught hold of the latter. The little fellow at once began to swim away, and I tried to stop him; but, to my surprise, instead of my being able to hold him, the canoe was drawn clear of the tree, and, for good or ill, I was once more afloat upon the swollen river. The pony could, of course, make no headway against the current, and took his way directly across it. If it had been far to the end of the row of willows, it would have been impossible to have kept the canoe out from under the branches, and it would have inevitably been upset; but, fortunately, my tree of refuge was only a very little way from the end of the row, and I was soon free from that danger.

"At first my spirits grew very high at the thought that I was having such an unexpected ride behind 'His Grace'; but when I saw the fierce strength of the current out in the open river, and the immense quantities of drift stuff that were being carried down, I became frightened. The Duke was struggling manfully to reach the other shore, which was more than a mile distant. I did not think he could do it, and knew that to attempt to do so was perilous; for we were in danger of being struck by one of the hundreds of pieces of drifting wood and trees, which were being borne along by the river. I tried to get him to turn and swim directly down stream; but could do little to guide him, and was afraid to do that little for fear of upsetting the canoe. We were being carried down all the while, notwithstanding his efforts. As we got further from the shore-line the danger increased, yet I feared to let go the rope; for while I held it I did not seem to be utterly helpless. At length a great tree came floating down, the branches of which I could not escape if I did not drop the rope and drift with the current.

"Good-by, Duke," I said, and the tears came into my eyes, for I thought I was bidding him a last farewell. Then I let the rope slip through my fingers; I had not the courage to throw it down. The pony swam on, and the canoe drifted away from him so quickly that I was many yards distant before I could sufficiently control my voice to call to him to follow me. When I did so, calling him every endearing name he was accustomed to hear, he turned toward me, but just at that moment the tree came down between us, hiding me completely from him. Whether he tried to follow, I do not know. When after what seemed a long time the tree floated by, for being much heavier and deeper than the canoe it floated more rapidly, no sign of the pony could be seen.

"Then for the first time I looked back to where our house had stood. It was some distance away, but I could make out the poplars that used to stand before the door. They were in their old place; but of the house there was no sign, and I knew it had been swept away. It seems strange to me now that my first thought on realizing that our house was gone was that the doll I had got at Christmas, and which mother said was the last one I must expect, for I was in my teens now, was lost beyond hope of recovery. Then I began to think of father and mother, and though I never for a moment believed that father could not take care of them, I cried very bitterly. I was well enough practised in canoeing to know that I was in no immediate danger, and, growing used to my situation, gained confidence, and even managed to possess myself of a stick, which drifted near, and with this I hoped to be able to steer to the shore, if ever the canoe took me near enough to a favourable spot. In the meantime I sat as low as possible to prevent my being upset, and watched sharply along the shores for signs of the others.

"I had drifted for seven or eight miles when I heard a shout from behind me, and, turning carefully, saw a canoe coming toward me as fast as two men could paddle it. It seemed almost to fly over the water, and was beside me almost before I had time to think who the men could be. When they came alongside, dropping their bark canoe by mine with wonderful skill, I saw that they were Indians. I did not know their names, but I had seen them often at our place. They knew me at once, and one of them said:—

"What Captin's pappose do in canoe?"

"After I had answered in as few words as possible, they talked together for a few moments in their own language, and then the one who had already spoken said to me:—

"Um guess um know where findum Captin."

"Then his comrade gently lifted me into their canoe, and, after tying mine astern, resumed their paddling. The sense of safety was so great, the confidence which the stalwart men inspired was so much of a relief that I began to weep again, but this time for joy. The Indians, thinking that perhaps I feared harm at their hands, tried to re-assure me.

"Pappose all right. Big John no hurtum pappose," said one; and the other rejoined:—

"Soon findum Captin. Pretty soon water not run so fast, then Captin stopum raft."

"I told them that I was not afraid, but am sure that they did not believe me; for they kept up their protestations of goodwill until I grew calm again.

"After an hour of sharp paddling, Big John pointed ahead with his paddle, and said:—

"There Captin."

"I looked. There, sure enough were some people on the bank; and in a few minutes we were near enough for me to recognize father, whose tall, erect form could be distinguished anywhere.

"Mother! mother!" I called, or rather shrieked.

"They heard me, and rushed close to the water as the Indians steered to the shore, Tom wading out, so as to be the first to greet me. He lifted me from the canoe as soon as it was near enough, for he was a strong fellow, though only sixteen, and, carrying me to the bank, gave me into mother's arms. How they all laughed and cried over me! To the Indians the performance was inexplicable—for tears under any circumstances, especially on an occasion of joy, were to them unaccountable; but they showed the sort of men they were when father offered to pay them for saving me, for they refused any reward except a fig of tobacco.

"We were, of course, much troubled as to the probable fate of Duke; for he was a greater hero in our eyes now than ever, although we did not fully appreciate how much I owed to him. The worst that any of us supposed likely to have happened, after we had talked a little while and I had explained how I had spent the night, was that I would have had to remain in the tree until father and Tom could have reached me, which would have been some time during the day; for they had already borrowed a canoe from a settler and were about starting in search of me when they saw the Indians coming. We did not know then how narrow my escape from death had been; but when, after a few days, the water went down and we returned to what had been our home, we saw that a great mass of drift stuff had been carried down right across our farm, had overturned the barn, and piled up against the row of willows, breaking them down so that I could not distinguish which of them had afforded me a refuge. The people who lived above us, and were much less exposed to danger, told us that the "jam" had passed down shortly after sunrise, so that if the Duke had not come to my aid, I would have inevitably been crushed to death or been drowned.

"As for Duke, he proved able to take care of himself, and some weeks later we got him home safe and sound."

EUROPEANS IN JAPAN.

Japan is not free from the difficulties which beset some of the Western nations in the imitation of whose methods she is proving so apt a scholar. Advice from Yokohama convey the intelligence that native feeling is running very high on the subject of the relations between the law of foreign residents. Hitherto a European living in Japan, if called to account for his actions, has had the privilege of being tried by consular court, native magistrates and judges having no jurisdiction in the matter. The people of Japan, who have during the present generation experienced a renaissance to which perhaps no parallel could be found, are beginning to feel more strongly the indignity to their institutions, which from some points of view may appear to be offered by this system. There are, of course,