

sandy highway, and the farmer was reluctantly compelled to borrow a rail from the nearest fence, and place it so as to support the axle; he then put the denuded wheel and its tire on the wagon, and drove slowly to the nearest blacksmith's shop, his vehicle "trailing like a wounded duck," the rail leaving a snake's track behind it on the dusty road.

The blacksmith had previously cut and welded the tire, reducing its circumference, and when it was hot enough, he and Sandy, each with a pair of tongs, lifted it from the red-hot circle of fire. It was pressed and hammered down on the blazing rim of the wheel, and instantly Sandy and Macdonald, with two pails of water that stood handy, poured the cold liquid around the red-hot zone, enveloping themselves in clouds of steam, the quick contraction clamping the iron on the wood until the joints cracked together. There could be no loitering; quick work was necessary, or a spoiled wheel was the result. Macdonald, alternately spluttering through fire and steam, was in his element. Even Sandy had to be on the keen jump, without a moment to call his plug of tobacco his own. Macdonald fussed and fussed, but got through an immense amount of work in an incredibly short space of time, cursing Sandy pretty much all the while; yet that useful man never replied in kind, contenting himself with a wink at the crowd when he got the chance, and saying under his breath:

"The old man's in great fettle to-day."

Thus everybody enjoyed himself: Macdonald, because he was the center figure in a saturnalia of work; Sandy, because no matter how hard a man has to work he can chew tobacco all the time; the crowd, because the spectacle of fire, water, and steam was fine, and they didn't have to do anything but sit