

CHAPTER III

THE PIONEER PREACHER

THE young officer approached the rude building and stood for a moment in the open doorway, gazing with some interest on its equally rude interior. Two small windows, in opposite walls, one unglazed, and one covered with a bit of coarse, thin, white cloth, which kept out the inclement weather at the chill seasons of the year, gave a dim light to an apartment which would surprise the Canadian of to-day, but which was only too common in those early pioneer years of the infant colony.

A square place in the center of the house, under the opening in the roof which served as a chimney, was set apart to contain the fire, which was built on a sort of hearth. Here an iron pot was simmering over the embers above which it was suspended; and a woman now and again stirred its contents with a wooden ladle or spoon, when she was not engaged in placing a rude meal on a table under the open window. The floor of the apartment, which comprised the whole building, was made of rough logs hewn flat on their upper surface. The walls were of logs, plastered with clay and moss, and there was no furniture save of the simplest and rudest. A few stools made of blocks of wood, about the fire or at the table, served for seats. Several children, half-naked, played on the floor with a dog,