

CHAPTER I

CHRISTMAS EVE IN A LUMBER CAMP

IT was due to a mysterious dispensation of Providence, and a good deal to Leslie Graeme, that I found myself in the heart of the Selkirks for my Christmas Eve as the year 1882 was dying. It had been my plan to spend my Christmas far away in Toronto, with such Bohemian and boon companions as could be found in that cosmopolitan and kindly city. But Leslie Graeme changed all that, for, discovering me in the village of Black Rock, with my traps all packed, waiting for the stage to start for the Landing, thirty miles away, he bore down upon me with resistless force, and I found myself recovering from my surprise only after we had gone in his lumber sleigh some six miles on our way to his camp up in the mountains. I was surprised and much delighted, though I would