

"Ach, man, whisht is no sort of a game at all," replied Tim, quite unabashed. "Do ye play forty-fives? Sure I'll tache ye forty-fives, and me wife 'll come and play wid us."

But the prospect of a game at forty-fives in the back-woods with Tim and Esmeraldy was too much for me, so I told him I was off to bed, and to bed I went.

Next morning I was up early and had a look round. A large snow-covered lake lay at the foot of Cassidy's house, and beyond the lake the round-topped hills, covered with spruce and brushwood, stretched far away into the distance: a wild place truly and well-fitted by nature for a haunt of the wily cariboo. So I got hold of Tim and asked him what he proposed to do.

"Is it going after the cariboo ye'd be to-day, now?" he asked, "sure ye'd better take a rest after your drive yesterday, and it's a divil of a country over there, I can tell you." Then Esmeraldy came forward and held forth at length on the danger of the woods. "*Beaucoup de misère dans les bois*," said she, "*beaucoup de misère, la misère en masse, Monsieur*." "At any rate," I said to Tim, "you had better get a couple of men and take out the tent and things, and fix up a camp in some good place."

"And what for will ye be putting up a camp at all at all?" said Tim; "there's hapes and hapes of cariboo just across the lake there; ye can go across and shoot your cariboo and git back here at night quite aisy, and it's good travellin' all the way."

As Tim had said about two seconds previously that it was "the divil's own country," I was a good deal puzzled; but, as I found out afterwards, Tim very rarely made two