

rashly. When I got back to the clearing I was grimy with smoke and almost suffocated. Little Mary, who had no idea of the danger we were in, had suffered from the smoke also, but I had saved her from its worst effects by wrapping my coat round her head.

When I got back to our little clearing I saw that it would not be safe to remain there many minutes longer; indeed, the fire had already reached the woods on its margin, and I observed with dismay that the trees between us and the Miramichi river were on fire. Yet our little river, now lined with burning forests, was the only avenue of escape for us. We must pass through that fiery portal or perish where we stood.

I rushed into the house, took four of the heaviest quilts from the beds, seized a large loaf of bread and a piece of meat that was on the table, and picking up Mary, made a rush for the river. The horse, as if from an instinct of danger, followed us, and the cattle came running down after us and bellowed with fright. Our case seemed quite desperate; we had only a little skiff, and the double chance of being upset in the rapids, or roasting to death by fire. There, too, was the horse; what was to be done with that mute pleader who looked at me for help?

These thoughts passed through my mind in an instant, but they did not delay my efforts. I wrapped Mary up in the largest of the quilts and laid her on her face in the front of the skiff, enjoining her as she valued her life, to remain still where I placed her. Then taking the horse by the bridle I got into the skiff and pushed into the stream, which was about three hundred feet wide and quite deep. At this moment the whole sky seemed on fire and the roar of the burning forest was like the sound of continual