

LOST IN THE WOODS.

The following was written some years ago, on the occasion of Moses Richardson and his wife getting lost in the woods; Draper township was then but thinly settled, and the sensation it created in the settlement was intense; I happened to be one of the party who went in search of the missing ones. Persons unacquainted with the bush should be careful not to penetrate far into it, unless provided with a compass. "What means this blowing of horns, firing of arms, and the oft-repeated 'Hoop, whoo' that greets the ear and arrests the attention of every settler?" "A man and his wife are lost in the woods" is the prompt and excited reply. How sad is every countenance, how agitated every breast, how anxious every neighbour! The unhappy pair had gone in search of their cattle, mistaken their way, and got lost in the dense forest; with wild desperation they are forcing their way through the thicket of the swamp, or ascending the rugged mountain's brow, or climbing over logs vainly in search of the home they left; but, alas, they are totally bewildered and every step they take leads them farther from "The dearest spot on earth," "Home, sweet home." The neighbors now begin to collect from all points of the compass; they form themselves into companies, and decide what the signal shall be in case the unhappy wanderers are found. Animated by a noble philanthropy they start, cheered by the happy thought of saving the lost; for hours they pursue their difficult task; crossing deep gullies, ascending almost perpendicular heights, then going down steep precipices, they onward go; the sun begins to sink in the western sky, the shades of evening fall upon them, the dark curtains of night at length are thrown around them; to proceed farther would be folly; in the dark they might pass the objects of their search; an eminence is sought and a fire is kindled, in order to attract the notice of the lost ones; the searchers gather around it; a little bread and pork, with some "bright water" from the brook that flows at the mountain's base, form their evening meal; no levity characterizes their conduct; there is but one expression visible on each countenance, and that is sadness; hemlock brush is cut and spread that the weary searchers may rest themselves thereon; sleep is out of the question; their trouble is too deep for them to enjoy "Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep." The solemn words, "Let us pray," for the first time are repeated in this dense forest; and, on the still