

standing, had more quickness and intelligence—an extremely lively eye—much sensitiveness of the whip, which she never required to stimulate her exertions, and could not endure to be passed on the road. Owing to her great impatience, she was always in advance of the horse, whose absence of ambition, induced by his comparative sluggishness of character—a fault common to horses as well to men—she used invariably to rebuke by a spiteful bite at the head, which he, seemingly conscious of his offence and the punishment that was to follow, used most amusingly to dodge, or turn aside, the moment he observed the ears of the mare wickedly thrown back in earnest of meditated mischief. The ponies had never been together until they came into my possession, but their friendship became in the end so great, that they could not endure even five minutes' separation, and if one happened to be in the stable and the other out of it, there was no end to their neighing and whinnying until they were again united. They were very great pets, fed from the hand, and although they had never been regularly led to the baptismal font, answered freely to the name of "Pony." If at the close of a hard day's travelling, I but uttered the word "Ponies," either in an encouraging or a reproachful tone, their spirits were sure to be aroused, even if their speed was not, from exhaustion, materially increased.

Such was the "turn out" which was paraded before Rasco's Hotel about six o'clock in a certain morning towards the close of February, 1840. Everything was comfortably "stowed away," and my tiger—a little fellow whose size was in strict keeping with that of the ponies—sat with his chin buried in the collar of his great-coat, and his hands thrust into its pockets, apparently as though he never intended to alter his position, until he should at least have attained the end of the day's journey. But if this was his impression, he counted, as will be seen presently, without his host. I took the reins from the ostler, jumped in, tucked the buffalo robe closely round me, and slightly cracking the whip, away went the ponies on the Lachine Road, the route to Upper Canada. I had unfortunately, yet unavoidably, protracted my departure so long that it was now nearly the close of the sleighing season, and not much snow remained even in the Lower Province. There had been a thaw the preceding day, and some rain had fallen, which, freezing during the night, had rendered the roads extremely hard, rough, and (contradictory though it may seem) slippery. Many parts of the road were as smooth as a mirror, thus not only causing one's seat in the vehicle to be exceedingly disagreeable, but allowing the sleigh to sway to and fro in a manner that threatened an upset, notwithstanding our heavy "ballast" of baggage. As we approached Lachine, I observed that the surface of a long and rather steep hill over which the road passes, and which it was impossible to avoid, was like polished glass. I did not much admire the appearance of this, especially as my ponies, who had been harnessed in a slovenly manner, seemed to be rather loose in their traces. However, trusting more to good luck than to any careful supervision of my own, I resolved to try the descent, seeking such inequalities as the sides of the road might present. But no sooner had the horses turned the brow of the hill, when finding the sleigh pressing upon their heels, for they were without breechings, they started off at their utmost speed, dashing down the slope as though it had been the Montagnes Russes in Paris, and naturally inspiring me with some dread lest we should meet and come in fearful collision with an ascending sleigh. Fortunately the road was clear, and, as I seldom lose my presence of mind on these occasions, I continued to pull steadily at the reins in a manner to enable me to guide the horses in their present course. At length, we reached the bottom of the hill, and the pressure upon the horses was consequently lessened, but they had become too much excited to abate their furious speed, and I was compelled to rein them with all the strength I possessed. This threw them eventually on their haunches, and as the sleigh had not yet wholly lost its forward impetus, but still kept touching their heels, they commenced kicking most furiously, dashing in the strong front of the sleigh, and leaving the prints of their shoes on a small packing case which was closely wedged in front. In order to avoid having the vehicle dashed to pieces, I again gave them the rein, and they had just started forward again when the sleigh came against something—I could not learn what—which upset it in a twinkling, and sent me bounding some half-a-dozen yards over my servant's head, upon the hard and ice-covered road.

I felt myself to be a good deal bruised, yet rose as fast as the weight of two or three overcoats would permit, to see what had become of the sleigh, which I fully expected, now that the horses had no one to guide them, to find dashed to pieces. Much to my surprise, I beheld the latter, still harnessed to the overturned vehicle, within twenty yards of the spot, and quietly approaching a shed adjoining the cottage opposite to which the accident had occurred, and to which they had evidently been invited by the tempting appearance of some hay which lay within. My next care was to see how my tiger had fared. He did not complain much at the time, nor had I the slightest idea that he had sustained any other injury than severe fright, and yet (as will appear later) an arm was dislocated. As for the sleigh, it was still on its side emptied of half its contents, which were strewn about on the road, and in no condition to rise without assistance. This was soon afforded to it by the man who inhabited the cottage, and the

baggage having once more been collected and replaced, I had leisure to think of own injury.

I entered the cottage, at the door of which was standing the wife of the habitant, who had been a spectator of the upset, and requested her to assist me in removing my coats, with a view to the examination of the arm on which I had fallen, and which from an old wound, was rendered particularly susceptible of pain; but such was the agony I endured in the attempt, that I resolved, if the coat must come off, to defer their removal until I should have reached the house of an apology for a married man, who was named to me as being the only one in the village of Lachine, and to whom I felt it would be necessary for me to apply for the means of relief. The place was about half a mile distant, and the habitant having driven my sleigh thither, the eradite culler of simples stripped my arm of innumerable, and rather tightly fitting coverings, the united thickness of which had, in all probability, prevented more serious injury—applied some warm aromatic decoction to the injured part, and strictly enjoined that the arm should be supported in a sling.

This was, it must be confessed, an excellent beginning to my journey of six hundred miles, and it now became a matter for serious consideration, whether I should proceed in my present disabled state, or return to Montreal for the purpose of procuring proper surgical assistance. I did not much fancy the idea of returning; firstly, because of a certain apprehension of ridicule; and secondly, because I foresaw that if I did not avail myself of what little snow remained, I should not accomplish my journey on runners as I meditated. My mind was therefore soon made up on the subject, and I started from Lachine with a determination, *coute qu'il coute*, to reach the Coteau du Lac (nearly forty miles from Lachine) that night. I had only one hand (the right) with which I could exercise any guidance or control over the horses, who never, during that day, lost sight of the excitement of the morning, and yet with this I hazarded the journey. My tiger had never had a rein in his hand, and even could he have driven, his feebleness—for he was a mere boy—would have rendered it impossible to place any trust in him.

The winter route from Montreal to Western Canada is from Point Claire, about fifteen miles above the city, and across an arm of the St. Lawrence to another island, called *l'Isle Perrot*, after traversing which the Ottawa is gained, a few miles beyond its junction with the St. Lawrence. The route is somewhat circuitous, but as the ice is there generally firm, a few miles of extra road becomes a matter of secondary consideration. At Point Claire I first quitted what might be called the land, for the frozen surface of the river, and as there was a gentle declivity on approaching this, I made up my mind for another run-away. The ponies had made up their minds also, it appeared, for, as I expected, they set off once more at a pace which compelled me to use my teeth as well as my hand for more than half a mile, before I could succeed in stopping them. I had taken the precaution to tie a knot in the reins, and this afforded me a capital purchase, without which, indeed, I never could have checked them. About mid-day I left the ice for the *Isle Perrot*, and the country over which the track lay was so uneven and cut up by cahots,* that I despaired of getting across it without accident. Nor was I wrong. I had reached nearly the middle of the island, and was in the heart of a dense wood, far removed from any human habitation, when a sudden jerk of the ponies, who were pulling to disengage the heavily-laden sleigh from between two deep and short cahots, broke the off whipple-tree, and left me in the most hopeless condition. I had neither axe nor knife, nor, had I even possessed these, could I, with a single hand, have made any efficient use of either. What was now to be done, I could not advance until I obtained a new whipple-tree, and night might, for all I knew to the contrary, overtake me in this position, without food or shelter for either "man or beast." These, however, were but fleeting anticipations, for scarcely had I formed them when I observed at some distance, and moving through the wood, a man who, from his costume, I knew to be a French Canadian. I called lustily out to him, and, when he drew near, promised him a dollar if he would contrive to mend my whipple-tree in such manner that I could proceed on my journey. He assented, and went to work with an axe which he carried on his shoulder, with such good purpose that, in a very short time, with the assistance of a rope from one of the packages, a new whipple-tree was produced much stronger than its fellow. Acquiring caution and foresight from experience, I now asked the man if there was any sudden descent from the island upon the ice of the Ottawa. He said there was a slight one, but that if I would give him something in addition, he would relinquish the work on which he was employed (wood-cutting) and accompany me until I got upon the ice. This proposal I gladly embraced, and we proceeded onward. Before coming to the spot designated by him, my new friend had an opportunity of witnessing the run-away propensities of the ponies, whom, by the by, he admired very much,—as much I believe because they were, like himself, French Canadian, as from any other reason. We had cleared the wood, and reached the high road which runs near the edge of the Ottawa, when a deep

* Abrupt undulations of snow, resembling the waves of a short sea, and one of the greatest nuisances in Lower Canadian travelling.