

LOST IN THE WOODS :

A STORY OF THE CANADIAN LUMBER FOREST.

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IT was the last of Indian summer, and Sunday night, in a little lumber shanty, on the bank of "Myers's Creek," as it was known to the shanty-men, who would hardly recognise that unpretending stream by its more pretentious name, "River Moira," which appears on the map of Canada, designated by a narrow and very crooked black line commencing near the valley of the Upper Ottawa, and ending at the Town of Belleville, on the beautiful Bay of Quinté.

In the morning the sun had shone out brightly through the thin purple haze that hovered over hill and valley, painting an edge of rainbow hues along the outline of the far off granite hills that reared their rugged forms against the eastern sky, and lending a gleam of purple and gold to the wavelets that fluttered out from the current into the quiet little bay just in front of our shanty.

But this was the last smile that flitted across the hectic face of the dying summer, for before noon a thunder-storm suddenly burst upon us; and this, in turn, degenerated into a cold drenching rain as the afternoon wore on. Glad enough we were to have even the leaky roof of the old shanty over our heads that night, as we spread our blankets on the floor around the caboose or fire-place in the centre, and prepared to spend the evening in genuine shanty style.

To one unaccustomed to it, roughing it in the lumber woods has its drawbacks, but, at the same time, it is not without its good points. True, a diet of bread, pork, beans, and "black strap" is not just the thing for one accustomed to fare sumptuously every day; yet I have never known any man to spend a week in a well-kept lumber shanty without getting up a magnificent appetite. And then there is something in the careless *abandon*, the entire absence of anything like constraint or conventionality, that affords a delightful change after one has been

enduring the restraints of what, for want of a better name, may be termed civilized life.

Picture our little group lounging on the shanty floor, stretched on our blankets in just such attitudes as pleased our fancies, around a great, roaring, crackling fire, that sent its broad, ruddy sheets of flame half-way to the smoke-browned rafters, and shot its whirling sparks out into the great cold pall of damp and darkness that enwrapped the outer world. Close beside us we could hear the steady measured clamping of the horses as they took their supper of ground oats in the stable which adjoined the shanty, and outside we could hear the storm roaring and whistling among the giant pines, that thrashed each other with their long, bare arms just above our heads.

We were only commencing the season, having just returned from the "tail of the drive," which had been all summer in reaching Belleville. Our gang was nearly the same that had begun the season in that shanty for two or three years successively. There was the same cook, the same "boss," and the same time-keeper; while there had been but few changes among the teamsters and axe-men. We had lost two men on the drive of the preceding spring, the poor fellows having been carried over High Falls while breaking a jam of logs; and, owing to his eccentricities, another of our number had been left in a remarkably substantial stone building in Belleville when we returned up the river. I believe the difficulty arose out of a misunderstanding as to the ownership of a pair of buckskin gloves that had been hanging at the door of a hat store. Those two Lower Canadian Frenchmen playing "old sledge" in the corner have taken the place of the men who were drowned; and the St. Regis Indian sleeping on the bags of grain yonder has taken the place of the young man we left in Belle-