

fourth time. This was the occasion of a charivari, a custom dating from the French occupation of Canada, and still kept up there. Mrs. Moodie has an amusingly naïf chapter on this subject, concerning which she has collected some curious anecdotes. It is hardly necessary to explain that a mismatch—of a young and an old person—is the usual pretext for a charivari.

“The idle young fellows of the neighbourhood disguise themselves, blackening their faces, putting their clothes on hind part before, and wearing horrible masks, with grotesque caps on their heads, adorned with cocks’ feathers, and bells. They then form in a regular body, and proceed to the bridegroom’s house, to the sound of tin kettles, horns, drums, &c. Thus equipped, they surround the house, just at the hour when the happy couple are supposed to be about to retire to rest, beating upon the door with clubs and staves, and demanding of the bridegroom admittance to drink the bride’s health, or in lieu thereof, a certain sum of money to treat the band at the nearest tavern.”

Mrs. Moodie expresses all a woman’s indignation at what she styles “a lawless infringement upon the natural rights of man.” The charivari is usually bought off—she mentions an instance when thirty pounds were disbursed by an antiquated swain who had wedded a handsome widow—but sometimes the victim resists, and the consequences are serious. Shortly before old Satan’s bridal, a tragical affair had taken place at one of these saturnalia.

“The bridegroom was a man in middle life, a desperately resolute and passionate man, and he swore that if such riff-raff dared to interfere with him, he would shoot at them with as little compunction as if they were so many crows. His threats only increased the mischievous determination of the mob to torment him; and when he refused to admit their deputation, or even to give them a portion of the wedding cheer, they determined to frighten him into compliance by firing several guns, loaded with peas, at his door. Their salute was returned from the chamber-window, by the discharge of a double-barrelled gun, loaded with buck-shot. The crowd gave back with a tremendous yell. Their leader was shot through the heart, and two of the foremost in the scuffle dangerously wounded. They vowed they would set fire to the

house, but the bridegroom boldly stepped to the window and told them to try it; and before they could light a torch he would fire among them again, for his gun was reloaded, and he would discharge it at them as long as one of them dared to remain on his premises. They cleared off.”

In point of amusement there is little difference between the first and the second volumes of Mrs. Moodie’s book—which, however, is not intended merely to amuse, but also as “a work of practical experience,” written for the benefit of, and conveying useful hints to, persons contemplating emigration to Canada. The first volume is the gayest of the two; there is a vein of great humour in Mrs. Moodie’s descriptions and sketches of her neighbours, and of her wild Irish servant, John Monaghan, who gave Uncle Joe an awful thrashing for purloining the captain’s hay; and of Mrs. D., the Yankee lady, who considered her English neighbours shocking proud because they did not eat with their “helps,” but was of opinion that all negroes were children of the devil, for that “God never condescended to make a nigger.” But it is in the second volume that the interest is strongest, and at times becomes intense. Disgusted with their neighbours, Captain and Mrs. Moodie left their farm at C—, and removed to the township of Douro, forty miles off, in the backwoods, where they had friends and relatives settled, and where the society—consisting chiefly of English, Irish, and Scotch gentlemen, recently come from Europe, and many of them half-pay officers—was more congenial to their tastes and habits. Unfortunately, about this time Captain Moodie sold his commission, in consequence of an intimation in the newspapers that half-pay officers must either do so or join a regiment. This was not enforced in the case of officers settled in the colonies, and the captain greatly repented his haste; the more so, as he was induced to invest the proceeds of his sale in shares in a steamboat on Lake Ontario. Q—, the land-jobber, appears to have led him into this investment. He received no interest on his shares, and when, some years afterwards, the boat was