

For the Land We Live In.

Reminiscence.

A little more than sixty years ago, when the population of that portion of the Township of Hatley in the vicinity of Massawippi Lake, were few and far between, and the primeval forests covered nearly all the land for miles around, and when there were no roads other than those for winter use by sleds, and for predestrians in summer, one whom we will call Langton, had purchased land on the westerly side of that lake, and had commenced improvements thereon. In that he was usually occupied from Monday morning until Saturday night of each week, and on Saturday evening, it was his custom to return along the unfrequented track to his father's house.

Bears, wolves and other wild and ferocious animals were then often met with, and it required considerable strength of nerve and courage to travel alone, and unarmed through the woods in the evening at that time, and both the eye and the ear were constantly kept upon the alert upon such occasions to prevent a surprise by some nightly prowler of the forest.

Langton had made several journeys from his woodland clearing, in the evening, to his father's house, a distance of five miles, without experiencing any encounter with wild beasts, and his sense of danger grew less with each repeated journey, until every object along the trail became familiar to his gaze.

But upon one Saturday evening on his return home, and when approaching a rising ground, he discovered an object on the side of a large dead tree which stood close to the path, and about twenty-five feet from the ground, plainly defined in its main features, with its head pointing downward, its long tail and body being close to and parallel with the trunk of the tree, and its motion, which seemed to be undulating, indicated a preparation for a spring. On his approach opposite the tree, Langton stood at a distance of some five rods from the tree and watched the animal with trepidation as it was clearly outlined against the sky, and deliberated as to what he should do. To turn from the track and try to pass it by going through the bush, would be difficult, and perhaps as dangerous, as it would be to try and pass it on the run on the path, at any event he had got too far away from his camp and too near his father's comfortable house, to think of turning back. He therefore concluded to provide himself with a club which he readily found, and opening his large pocket knife, to run the gauntlet, which he did at a good "two-forty" speed, and halted not until the space of a quarter of a mile had intervened between him and the tree upon which the beastly thing had placed itself. He reached home just as the family were preparing to retire for the night, and his relation of his narrow escape caused a general thankfulness for his preservation from a fearful encounter with and probable death by a wild beast, and it was late at night e'er the family retired from the wide brick fire-place with its genial glow, and after the subject above related was discussed and enlarged upon, to their beds for the nights repose, having first determined to seek out, and if possible capture the animal whatever it was, on the following morning.

The following bright, October morning found the entire family early astir, and after a hasty prepared breakfast had been hastily partaken of, Langton and his father, started out for the scene of the escape of the previous evening.

The leaves of the forest had put on their autumnal decorations, of the varied tints and colors which is characteristic of our latitude at that season of the year. The air was crisp and invigorating, and the two hunters, one of whom was armed with a fowling piece heavily loaded with a ball and buck-shot and the other with an axe, considered themselves equal to any emergency. There was no snow upon the ground to aid them in tracking the animal in case it should have left the tree, as they reasonably expected it had.

done in the meantime, yet, as it was evidently a tree climbing one they hoped to find it in the near vicinity, and to bring it to the ground by a charge from the gun and then dispatch it with the axe.

With these intentions and preliminaries discussed on the way, they at length arrived within sight of the dead birch tree before mentioned, with its bare limbs and shaggy trunk, but the animal was not there, but upon a near approach and closer examination they discovered a loosened piece of bark about five feet long, hanging to its trunk some twenty-five feet from the ground, one edge of the bark hung as if by a hinge to the tree, while the loosened edge had swung outward from it, and when outlined against the sky, gave the exact appearance before described, and which caused the fright of Langton and the subsequent family discussion, and the morning hunting expedition. With a feeling of shame for being fooled by the apparition, the brave hunters hastened home before any one in the neighborhood was moving, and it was not until after the lapse of many years that the story became known to the writer of this brief sketch.

E. H. L.

We clip the following from the March number of the *Vade Mecum*, published at Salina, Kansas:—*The Land We Live In*, published at Sherbrooke, P. Q., is one of our most valued exchanges. After the annexation of Canada, it will be one of the best monthly publications in the United States."

That's rather hard on us Bro. Oakley, but perhaps you mean well. But it's too bad to check our youthful ambition with that last paragraph.

At a recent meeting convened at Waterville, for the purpose of denouncing the Jesuits' Estate bill, some of the Assembly wanted to know what kind of fish Jesuits were. "Sharks!" replied the chairman. "Oh!" said Jonathan, "That's why they are so scaly!"

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