

horse, bear, and venison roasted, and sent forth a savoury odour as well as a pleasant hissing noise. The inhabitants of the block-house were self-taught brewers, and the result of their recent labours now stood displayed in a row of goodly casks of beer—the only beverage with which the dwellers in these far-off regions were wont to regale themselves.

The whole scene, as the cooks moved actively about upon the lawn, and children romped round the fires, and settlers came flocking through the forests, might have recalled the revelry of merry England in the olden time, though the costumes of the far west were perhaps somewhat different from those of old England.

No one of all the band assembled there on that day of rejoicing required to ask what it was all about. Had any one been in doubt for a moment, a glance at the centre of the crowd assembled round the gate of the western fortress would have quickly enlightened him. For there stood Dick Varley, and his mild-looking mother, and his loving dog Crusoe. There, too, stood Joe Blunt, like a bronzed warrior returned from the fight, turning from one to another as question poured in upon question almost too rapidly to permit of a reply. There, too, stood Henri, making enthusiastic speeches to whoever chose to listen to him—now glaring at the crowd with clenched fists and growling voice, as he told of how Joe and he had been tied hand and foot, and lashed to poles, and buried in leaves, and threatened with a slow death by torture; at other times bursting into a hilarious laugh as he held forth on the predicament of Mahtawa, when that wily chief was treed by Crusoe in the prairie.