

the woods, and one fine, frosty spring day, he and John Monaghan took a rope and the dog to fetch her home. M—— said that they should be back by six o'clock in the evening, and to mind and have something cooked for supper when they returned, as their long walk and the sharp air would give them a great appetite. This was during the time that I was without a female servant, and lived in old Mrs. H——'s shanty.

The day was so bright and clear, and Katie was so full of frolic and play, rolling about the floor or toddling from chair to chair, that the day passed on without my feeling remarkably lonely. At length the evening drew nigh, and I began to expect the return of my beloved, and to think of the supper I was to prepare for his reception. The red heifer came lowing to the door to be milked, but I did not know how to milk in those days, and was terribly afraid of the cattle. Yet as I knew milk must be had for the tea, I ran across to Mrs. Joe, and begged that one of her girls would be so kind as to milk for me. My request was greeted with a rude burst of laughter from the whole set.

"If you can't milk," says Mrs. Joe, "it is high time you should learn. My galls are above being helps."

"I would not ask you but as a favor; I am afraid of cows."

"*Afraid of cows?*" Here followed another horse laugh; and indignant at the refusal of the first request I had ever made, when they had all borrowed so much from me, I shut the door, and returned home.

After many ineffectual attempts I succeeded at last, and bore my half pail of milk in triumph to the house. Yes! I felt prouder of that milk than the best thing I ever wrote, whether in verse or prose; and then it was doubly sweet, when I considered that I had procured it without being under any obligation to my ill-natured neighbors.

I fed little Katie and put her to bed, made the hot cakes for tea, boiled the potatoes, and laid the ham cut in nice slices in the pan, ready to cook the moment I saw the men enter the clearing, and arranged the little room with scrupulous care and neatness. A glorious fire was blazing on the hearth, and everything was ready for their supper, and I began to look out anxiously for their arrival. The night had closed in cold and foggy, and I could no longer distinguish any object a few yards from the door. Bringing in as much wood as I thought would last me for a few hours, I closed the door, and for the first time in my life, found myself in a house entirely alone. Then I began to ask myself a thousand

torturing questions, as to the reason of their unusual absence. "Had they lost their way in the woods? could they have fallen in with wolves?—one of my early bugbears—could any fatal accident have befallen them?" I started up, opened the door, held my breath, and listened. The little brook lifted up its voice, in loud hoarse wailing, or mocked, in its bubbling to the stones, the sound of human voices. As it became later, my fears increased in proportion. I grew too superstitious to keep the door open; and not only closed it, but dragged a heavy box in front of it. Several ill-looking men had asked their way to Toronto during the day; and I felt alarmed lest such rude wayfarers should come to-night, and find me alone and unprotected. Once I thought of running across to Mrs. Joe, and asking her to let one of the girls stay with me till M—— returned; but the way in which I had been repulsed in the evening deterred me. Hour after hour wore away, and the crowing of the cocks proclaimed midnight, and yet they came not. I had burnt out all my wood, and I dared not open the door to fetch in more. The candle was expiring in the socket, and I had not courage to go up into the loft, before it went finally out, to set up another. Cold, heart-weary, and faint, I sat in the middle of the floor, and cried. The furious barking of the dogs at the neighboring farms, and the cackling of the geese on our own place, made me hope they were coming; and then I listened, till the beating of my own heart excluded all other sounds. Oh! that weary brook! how it sobbed and moaned, like a fretful child! What unreal terrors, and fanciful illusions, my too active mind conjured up, while listening to its mysterious tones! Just as the moon rose, the howling of a pack of wolves, from the great swamp in our rear, filled the whole air. Their yells were answered by the barking of all the numerous dogs in the vicinity; and the geese, unwilling to be behind hand in the general confusion, set up the most discordant screams. I had often heard, and even been amused, during the winter, particularly on thaw nights, by the howls of these formidable wild beasts; but I had never before heard them alone, and my fears reached a climax. They were directly on the track that M—— and Monaghan must have taken,—and I now made no doubt that they had been attacked, and killed, on their return, and I wept and cried, until the grey cold dawn looked in upon me through the small dim windows. I have passed many a long, cheerless night; but that was the saddest and longest I ever remember. Just as the day broke, my friends, the wolves, set up a parting benediction, so loud and