

were willing to wait ; there was not a happier youth in the country than I was then.

The Prentiss farm was some ten miles above Newcastle, on a tributary of the Northwest Miramichi. The house, which was of logs, was about one hundred yards from the river, which joined the Miramichi a mile below, passing in that distance over a sharp rapid and running with a very swift current. The clearing was quite narrow and extended along the edge of the small river for some distance. The house was close to the forest and the barn closer still ; the whole extent of the cleared farm did not exceed ten to fifteen acres.

It was autumn ; our little harvest had been safely gathered and the barn was full to overflowing. All the regular farm work was done, and I was engaged in chopping up a huge pile of firewood for the winter. I was very anxious to have this job completed, for I had agreed with my old employer to go to the lumber woods again, and wished to have everything comfortable for the family before I left. I had the prospect before me of a six months' absence from Grace, but after that we would never be separated any more, for in the following autumn she was to become my wife. How little either of us knew what the future had in store for us.

The 7th October came, a day never to be forgotten by the residents of the Miramichi district. For some days the smoke of distant fires had been observed in the woods to the north, but such things were too common to excite notice. That morning was unusually warm for the season and the air heavy and close. Mrs Prentiss thought it a good opportunity to go to a little barren stretch, three miles from the farm, to gather a winter store of cranberries. It was