

TO THE LUMBER REGIONS, II.

(HABERER.)

There was an addition to our party at Rawdon. Mr. Way, the foreman at the shanties, had come that far to meet us and act as guide through the deep woods, where only lumbermen, an occasional hunter, and here and there

passage. Unfortunately, in moving aside, his horse stepped a little too far out and went so deep into the snow that only a shovel or a great deal of "tramping" around him would release the animal. His driver, in his excitement, also made a reckless plunge, and went clear to his waist.

He made no audible remarks, and the manner in which he glared after us as we drove on suggested thoughts too deep for words. Our turn came a little later. But, before alluding to that, reference may properly be made to another incident. We were passing a number of large birch trees, with their beautiful silvery bark curling about them. This bark, as everybody knows, is highly inflammable. Mr. Ross, to give us an exceptionally interesting spectacle, ploughed his way through the snow to the base of one of the birches and fired the bark. The fire spread around the trunk and upward, quickly encircling the whole tree in curling



DRIVING THROUGH THE WOODS

an Indian trapper are to be found. After leaving Rawdon the outlook on every side was infinitely dull and dreary. In the afternoon we dined and rested at the Chertsey Depot, where provisions are stored by the company, and from that time the only sign of life we met with was one man with a heavily laden team. The road was very rough, broken by steep hillocks and deep hollows and with frequent sharp curves. We were knocked about in the liveliest fashion, and our teams, to avoid collisions, were compelled to keep quite a distance apart. Mr. Way led the procession, followed by Mr. McLaurin and myself, while the gallant huntsmen, with "Sago," brought up the rear.

There was an unexpected meeting in the very heart of the woods. A team, with a heavy load of wood, was coming in the opposite direction. The road was only wide enough for one sled, and the snow on either side was four or five feet deep. The driver of the opposing team, a sturdy Irishman, was disposed to hold the fort, but after a parley consented to unload the wood and give us half the

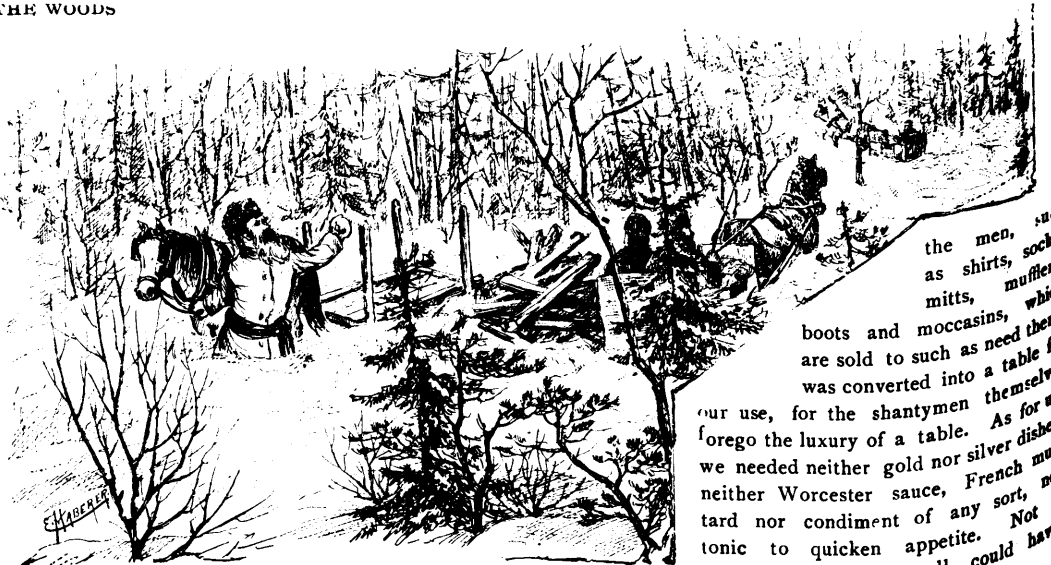
smoke and flame. It was a pretty picture, and one that can only be seen with safety to the woods at this season of the year. At any other time there would be imminent risk of a great forest fire.

One other incident of our journey, already hinted at, is worth relating. We were already in sight of the shanties, and had quickened our pace in anticipation. The sleigh in which Mr. McLaurin and myself were seated was a rather high one and easily upset. Swinging round a curve, one runner caught the root of a tree, and over we went, valises, rugs, Mr. McLaurin and myself, all in one heap, myself at the bottom. Mr. Mc. is not a small man, and the way I sank into the snow with his weight upon me was something not to say funny—so far as I was concerned—though the other fellows seemed to find in it a source of rare enjoyment. Fortunately, Mr. Mc. had a firm grip on the reins, and prevented a runaway. We floundered out of the drift, gathered our traps together in a hurry and righted the sleigh. It was glorious moonlight when we reached the shanties at last, and gave our horses over to the willing hands of the lumbermen. After a drive of more than seventy miles we had reached our destination, a group of low-built but comfortable-looking cabins in the heart of the wilderness, where nearly fifty men, remote from the busy outer world, cheerily pursue their daily toil for months without other companionship than that afforded by the visits of such rare intruders as ourselves.

Moonlight at the shanties! Crisp air and sparkling snow, the latter contrasting with sombre shadows among the evergreens. Snow on the ground, on the trees, on the low-browed cabins—everywhere. And over all and part of all the deep silence of the wilderness. Aloft, the radiant moon, flooding with soft light the strange, wild scene. The contrast between this and the noisy, bustling streets of the city could not but force itself upon us all.

The shanties are located by the shore of Lac Ouareau, a sheet of water sixteen miles long, and at its broadest part five miles wide. It is one of many small lakes in this region. All round about it the land is heavily timbered with spruce, pine and tamarac, the first named largely predominating. From the lake an abundant supply of good water is obtained, and from its depths, too, the men are able to secure at any time a mess of fresh fish to vary their accustomed diet. We were now high up among the Laurentian hills, in the heart of the lumber region, a section visited only by lumbermen or sportsmen in any season of the year.

We were made heartily welcome by the lumbermen and the cook, who is an absolute sovereign in his own domain, ushered us into the shanty where the men live, and took us under his especial care. While we disposed of our wraps and warmed our shins at the great fire in the centre of the shanty he prepared a steaming supper. Boiled beef, pork, potatoes, baked beans, molasses, homemade bread, tea and sugar were placed before us. To a set of hungry men, whose appetites had been sharpened by the bracing winter air, there could be nothing more inviting. Everything was of the best quality, and admirably cooked and served. The company are especially careful in the choice of provisions for their men. In honour of the visitors a table was set. The "van," a high, square box containing the most necessary clothing requisites for



THE IRISHMAN'S MISHAP.

the men, such as shirts, socks, mitts, muffers, boots and moccasins, which are sold to such as need them, was converted into a table for our use, for the shantymen themselves forego the luxury of a table. As for us, we needed neither gold nor silver dishes, neither Worcester sauce, French mustard nor condiment of any sort, nor tonic to quicken appetite. Not a shantyman of them all could have