

forest of ebony trunks growing out of charred earth;—the fire has passed, and Nathan is safe! "Oh! sir," he said, "it was frightful! Think only if a horse had stumbled or fallen! or had the fire caught us farther back!—five minutes more would have done it, sir!" That same fire consumed a space of forest ten miles long, and three broad!

But what was such a fire even, to the memorable one which devastated Miramichi, in New Brunswick, about twenty-five years ago! That terrific conflagration is unparalleled in the history of consumed forests. It broke out on the 7th October, 1825, about sixty miles above the town of Newcastle, at one in the afternoon, and before ~~ten the same night it had~~ reached twenty miles beyond; thus traversing, in nine hours, a distance of eighty miles of forest, with a breath of about twenty-five! Over this great tract of country everything was destroyed; one hundred and sixty persons perished; not a tree was left; the very fish in the streams were scorched and found lying afterwards dead in heaps.

The morning of that dreadful day was calm and sultry; but, in an instant, smoke swept over the town of Newcastle (situated on the river Miramichi), which turned day into night. The darkness was so unexpected—so sudden—so profound—that many cried that the Judgment day had come. But soon the true cause was suspected.—Suspensions were speedily followed by certainty, as the flames were seen bursting through the gloom. Every one made for the river; some got into boats moored near the beach, some on rafts of timber, while others stood in the water. Terrified mothers with their families, decrepit old men and women, and worse than all, the sick and dying, were hurried, in despairing crowds, to the stream, to escape the flames which were already devouring their houses, and making a bonfire of the thriving town. Each succeeding hour added some new horror to the scene. The rarefaction and exhaustion of the air by the intense heat over so great a space, caused, as was supposed, such a rush of cold air from the ocean, that a hurricane rushed in fury along the river, tearing burning trees up by the roots, hurling flaming branches through the air for five or six miles (which set fire to the shipping, and to the woods

on the other side of the broad stream), causing, at the same time, such a rolling sea up the river as threatened to swamp the boats, and sweep the miserable refugees from the rafts! It seems incredible, but we believe there is no doubt as to the fact, that the ashes of the fire fell thick on the streets of Halifax, St. John's Newfoundland, and Quebec; and that some were carried as far as the Bermudas, while the smoke darkened the air hundreds of miles off! That terrible night is fresh in the memory of all who endured its horrors.—One of my informants speaking of it, said, "No language can describe it! I do not think I shall see anything like it again in this world, or until the last day! I was in a druggist's shop, getting medicine for my wife, who was confined to bed with fever. The druggist was pouring a few drops into a phial, when literally, in a twinkling of an eye, it became so dark that he could not see to drop the medicine, and I could not see his face! 'The last day has come!' we both exclaimed. I left the shop to go home; but it was so pitch dark that I could not see the roof, and had to walk in the ditch which bordered it. Guided by the paling, and assisted by a friend, I got my wife and children to the river, and placed them on a raft; and what a scene!—what weeping and crying of those whose relations lived in the settlements farther back, and for whom they knew there was now no escape! But there is no use talking about it. No tongue can find words to picture that night! Fire and smoke, wind and water, all spending their utmost fury; the children crying—the timid screaming—the sick in misery—the brave at their wit's end—and all knowing, too, that we had lost many friends, and all our property. I shudder to think of it!"

That fire has left singular traces of its journey. The road from Newcastle to Bathurst, near the Bay of Chaleur, passes for five or six miles through a district called the Barrens. The scene which meets the eye of the traveller is perhaps unequalled. Far as the eye can reach upon every side, there is nothing but desolation. The forest extends, as it has done for ages, across plains, and vanishes over the undulating hills which bound the distant horizon. But while all the trees, with most of their