

the weight of some dreadful commission they were charged to execute. The river, tortured into violence by the hurricane, foamed with rage, and flung its boiling spray upon the land. The thunder pealed along the vault of heaven; the lightning rent the firmament in pieces. For a moment all was still and a deep and awful silence reigned over everything. All nature appeared to be hushed into dumbness, when suddenly a lengthened and sullen roar came booming through the forest, and driving a thousand massive and devouring flames before it. Then Newcastle and Douglstown and the whole northern side of the river, extending from Bartibog to the Nashwaak, a distance of more than one hundred miles in length, became enveloped in an immense sheet of flame that spread over nearly six thousand square miles.

That the stranger may form a faint idea of the desolation and misery no pen can describe, he must picture to himself a large and rapid river, thickly settled for one hundred miles or more, on both sides of it. He must also fancy four thriving towns, two on each side of this river; and then reflect that these towns and settlements were all composed of wooden houses, stores, stables and barns, that these barns and stables were filled with the crops, and that the arrival of the fall importation had stocked the warehouses and stores with spirits, powder and a variety of combustible articles, as well as with the necessary supplies for the approaching winter. He must then remember that the cultivated, or settled, part of the river is but a long narrow strip, about a quarter of a mile wide, and lying between the river and almost interminable forests that stretch along the very edge of its precincts and all round it. Extending his conception, he will see these forests thickly extending over more than six thousand square miles, and absolutely parched into tinder by the protracted heat of a long summer and by the large fires that had streamed through almost every part of them. Let him then animate the picture by scattering countless tribes of wild animals, hundreds of domestic ones, and even thousands of men through the interior. Having done all this, he will have before him a feeble description of the extent, features and general circumstances of the country, which, on the night I have mentioned, was suddenly buried in fire.

What shall we say of the inconceivably awful and terrific scene that now presented itself? Who shall attempt to describe the condition of a country, tortured and agonized by a hurricane, on every blast of which a messenger of vengeance seemed to ride? Unpardonably vain would that man be, exceedingly high would he stand in his own esteem, who would for a

moment think himself capable of describing the situation of a country, overwhelmed by a conflagration whose every blast resembled the emissions of hell, and whose every billow appeared to sustain a demon.

What eye can follow the impetuous course of a raging and consuming fire, sweeping over forests, towns, villages, and hamlets, rooting up trees, ploughing the earth and destroying everything?

What shall we say of the tremendous howling of the storm, dashing broken and burning trees, scorching sand, and flaming houses through the air? What of the boiling surges of the river and its tributaries, flinging their maddened foam all around them, and smashing everything that came within their fury? What of the indescribable confusion on board of one hundred and fifty large vessels imminently exposed to danger, many of them frequently on fire, some burning and others burned?

It is painful to dwell on the agonized feelings and indescribable terrors of the wretched and miserable inhabitants. But painful, however, as such a task would be, to overcome the aversion is not half so difficult as to acquire the competency. Even now the shrieks, screams and cries of a wretched and beggared people, involved in ruin, desolation and despair, ring their mournful cadences upon the ear. Oh, God! merciful and just, how shuddering were the frantic cries, the wild expressions of horror and the despairing groans of hundreds upon hundreds of poor houseless creatures, flying from their smoking habitations, they knew not whither, and mingling the thrilling echoes of their anguish with the yells, roarings and howlings of wild beasts and domestic animals perishing by fire and suffocation!

Who can gauge the misery, or estimate the agony of poor industrious people suddenly stript of their all, and exposed, almost without a hope, to the dreadful alternative of being either consumed by fire or famished by hunger? What tongue can express the intensity of anguish, what mind can contemplate the poignancy of that sorrow, which must have wrung the bursting hearts of men and women, running half naked, and in wild disorder, deploing their loss, and anticipating their end? Of children looking for their parents, parents looking for their children, and mothers encumbered with their infants, urging their way through the lakes of fire and volumes of smoke?

The more I endeavour to contemplate this awful dispensation, the more convinced am I of my inadequacy to do so. When I strive to raise my mind to a full consideration of it, its overwhelming magnitude crushes the attempt. Every step I make to approach it, the farther am I flung from it; and the more intensely I strain my aching eyes to observe it, the