"ROUGHING IT IN THE BUSH"

or FOREST LIFE IN CANADA

BY MRS. SUSANNA MOODIE

"Nay, God forbid!" said I. "I hope this Mr. ——, with the unpronounceable name, will disgust them with his eloquence; for E—— writes me word, in his droll way, that he is a coarse, vulgar fellow, and lacks the dignity of a bear. Oh! I am certain they will return quite sickened with the Canadian project." Thus I laid the flattering unction to my soul, little dreaming that I and mine should share in the strange adventures of this oddest of odd creatures.

It might be made a subject of curious inquiry, to those who delight in human absurdities, if ever there were a character drawn in works of fiction so extravagantly ridiculous as some which daily experience presents to our view. We have encountered people in the broad thoroughfares of life more eccentric than ever we read of in books; people who, if all their foolish sayings and doings were duly recorded, would vie with the drollest creations of Hood or George Colman, and put to shame the flights of Baron Munchausen. Not that Tom Wilson was a romancer; oh no! He was the very prose of prose, a man in a mist, who seemed afraid of moving about for fear of knocking his head against a tree, and finding a halter suspended to its branches—a man as helpless and indolent as a baby.

Mr. Thomas, or Tom Wilson, as he was familiarly called by all his friends and acquaintances, was the son of a gentleman who once possessed a large landed property in the neighborhood; but an extravagant and profligate expenditure of the income which he derived from a fine estate which had descended from father to son through many generations had greatly reduced the circumstances of the elder Wilson. Still, his family held a certain rank and standing in their native county, of which his evil courses, bad as they were, could not wholly deprive them. The young people—and a very large family they made of sons and daughters, twelve in number—were objects of interest and commiseration to all who knew them, while the worthless father was justly held in contempt. Our hero was the youngest of his six sons; and from his childhood he was famous for his nothing-to-doishness. He was too indolent to engage heart and soul in the manly sports of his comrades; and he never thought it neccessary to commence learning his lessons until the school had been in an hour. As he grew up to man's estate, he might be seen dawdling about in a black frock-coat, jean trousers, and white kid gloves, making lazy bows to the pretty girls of his acquaintance; or dressed in a green shooting-jacket, with a gun across his shoulder, saunterung down the wooded lanes, with a brown spaniel dodging at his heels, and looking as sleepy and indolent as his master.

The slowness of all Tom's movements was strangely contrasted with his slight, elegant, and symmetrical figure; that looked as if it only awaited the will of the owner to be the most active piece of human machinery that ever responded to the impulses of youth and health. But then, his face! What pensil could faithfully delineate features at once so comical and lugubrious—features that one moment expressed the most solemn seriousness, and the next the most grotesque and absurd abandonment to mirth? In him, all extremes appeared to meet; the man was a contradiction to himself. Tom was a person of few words, and so intensely lazy that it required a strong effort of will ti enable him to answer the questions of inquiring friends; and when at length aroused to exercise his colloquial powers, he performed the task in so original a manner that it never failed to upset the gravity of the interrogator. When he raised his large, prominent, lead-en-colored eyes from the ground, and looked the inquirer steadily in the face, the effect was irresistible; the laugh would come—do your best to resist it.

Poor Tom took this mistimed merriment in very good part, generally answering with a ghastly controtion which he meant for a smile, or, if he did trouble himself to find words, with, "Well, that's funny! What makes you laugh? At me, I suppose? I don't wonder at it; I often laugh at myself."

Tom would have been a treasure to an undertaker. He would have been celebrated as a mute; he looked as if he had been born in a shroud, and rocked in a coffin. The gravity with which he could answer a ridiculous or impertinent question completely disarmed and turned the shafts of malice back upon his opponent. If Tom was himself an object of ridicule to many, he had a way of ridiculing others that bade defiance to all competition. He could quiz with a smile, and put down insolence with an incredulous stare. A grave wink from those dreamy eyes would destroy the veracity of a travelled dandy for ever.

Tom was not without use in his day and generation; queer and awkward as he was, he was the soul of truth and honor. You might suspect his sanity—a matter always doubtful—mut his honesty of heart and purpose, never.

When you met Tom in the streets, he was dressed with such neatness and care (to be sure it took him half the day to make his toilet), that it led many persons to imagine that this very ugly young man considered himself an Adonis; and I must confess that I rather inclined to this opinion. He always paced the public streets with a slow, deliberate tread, and with his eyes fixed intently on the ground—like a man who had lost his ideas, and was diligently employed in searching for them. I chanced to meet him one day in this dreamy mood.

"How do you do, Mr. Wilson?" He stared at me for several minutes, as if doubtful of my presence or identity.

"What was that you said?"

I repeated the question; and he answered, with one of his incredulous smiles—

"Was it to me you spoke? Oh, I am quite well, or I should not be walking here. By the way, did you see my dog?"

"How should I know your dog?"

"They say he resembles me. He's a queer dog, too; but I never could find out the likeness. Good night!"

This was at noonday; but Tom had a habit of taking light for darkness, and darkness for light, in all he did or said. He must have had different eyes and ears, and a different way of seeing, hearing and comprehending, than is possesses by the generality of his species; and to such a length did he carry this abstraction of soul and sense that he would often leave you abruptly in the middle of a sentence; and if you chanced to meet him some weeks after, he would resume the conversation with the very word at which he had cut short the thread of your discourse.

A lady once told him in jest that her youngest brother, a lad of twelve years old, had called his donkey Braham, in honor of the great singer of that name. Tom made no answer, but started abruptly away. Three months after, she happened to encounter him on the same spot, when he accosted her, without any previous salutation—

"You were telling me about a donkey, Miss ——, a donkey of your brother's—Braham, I think you called him—yes, Braham; a strange name for an ass! I wonder what the great Mr. Braham would say to that. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Your memory must be excellent, Mr. Wilson, to enable you to remember such a trifling circumstance all this time."

"Trifling, do you call it? Why, I have thought of nothing else ever since."

From traits such as these my readers will be tempted to imagine him brother to the animal who had dwelt so long in his thoughts; but there were times when he surmounted this strange absence of mind, and could talk and act as sensibly as other folks.

On the death of his father, he emigrated to New South Wales, where he contrived to doze away seven years of valueless existence, suffering his convict servants to rob him of everything, and finally to burn his dwelling. He returned to his native village, dressed as an Italian mendicant, with a monkey perched upon his shoulder, and playing airs of his own composition upon a hurdy-gurdy. In this disguise he sought the dwelling of an old bachelor uncle, and solicited his charity. But who that had ever seen our friend Tom could ever forget him? Nature had no counterpart of one who in mind and form was alike original. The good-natured old soldier, at a glance, discovered his hopeful nephew, received him into his house with kindness, and had afforded him an asylum ever since.

One little anecdote of him at this period will illustrate the quiet love of mischief with which he was imbued. Travelling from W——" to London in the stage-coach (railways were not invented in those days), he entered into conversation with an intelligent farmer who sat next him; New South Wales, and his residence in that colony, forming the leading topic. A Dissenting minister who happened to be his vis-a-vis, and who had annoyed him by making several impertinent remarks, suddenly asked him, with a sneer, how many years he had been there.

"Seven," returned Tom, in a solemn tone, without deigning a glance at his companion.

"I thought so," responded the other, thrusting his hands into his breeches pockets. "And pray, sir, what were you sent there for?"

"Stealing pigs," returned the incorrigible Tom, with the gravity of a judge. The words were scarcely pronounced when the questioner called to the coachman to stop, preferring a ride outside in the rain to a seat within with a thief. Tom greatly enjoyed the hoax, which he used to tell with the merriest of all grave faces.

Besides being a devoted admirer of the fair sex, and always imagining himself in love with some unattainable beauty, he had a passionate craze for music, and played upon the violin and flute with consiferable taste and execution. The sound of a favorite melody operated upon the breathing automaton like magic, his frozen faculties experienced a sudden thaw, and the stream of life leaped and gambolled for a while with uncontrollable vivacity. He laughed, danced, sang, and made love in a breath, committed a thousand mad vagaries to make you acquainted with his existence.

My husband had a remarkably sweet-toned flute, and this flute Tom regarded with a species of idolatry.

"I break the Tenth Commandment, Moodie, whenever I hear you play upon that flute. Take care of your black wife (a name he had bestowed upon the coveted treasure) or I shall certainly run off with her."

"I am half afraid of you, Tom. I am sure if I were to die, and leave you my black wife as a legacy, you would be too much overjoyed to lament my death."

Such was the strange, helpless, whimsical being who contemplated an emigration to Canada. How he succeeded in the speculation the sequel will show.

It was late in the evening before my husband and his friend Tom Wilson returned from Y——. I had provided a hot supper and a cup of coffee after their long walk, and they did ample justice to my care.

Tom was in unusually high spirits, and appeared wholly bent upon his Canadian expedition.

"Mr. C—— must have been very eloquent, Mr. Wilson," said I, "to engage your attention for so many hours."

"Perhaps he was," returned Tom, after a pause of some minutes, during which time he seemed to be groping for words in the salt-cellar, having deliberately turned out its contents upon the table-cloth. "We were hungry after our long walk, and he gave us an excellent dinner."

"But that had nothing to do with the substance of his lecture."

"It was the substance, after all," said Moodie, laughing; "and his audience seemed to think so, by the attention they paid to it during the discussion. But come, Wilson, give my wife some account of the intellectual part of the entertainment."

"What! I—I—I—I give an account of the lecture? Why, my dear fellow, I never listened to one word of it!"

"I thought you went to Y—— on purpose to obtain information on the subject of emigration to Canada?"

"Well, and so I did; but when the fellow pulled out his pamphlet, and said that it contained the substance of his lecture and would only cost a shilling, I thought that it was better to secure the substance than endeavor to catch the shadow—so I bought the book, and spared myself the pain of listening to the oratory of the writer. Mrs. Moodie! he had a shocking delivery; a drawling, vulgar voice; and he spoke with such a nasal twang that I could not bear to look at him or listen to him. He made such grammatical blunders that my sides ached with laughing at him. Oh, I wish you could have seen the wretch! But here is the document, written in the same style in which it was spoken. Read it; you have a rich treat in store."

I took the pamphlet, not a little amused at his description of Mr. C——, for whom I felt an uncharitable dislike.

"And how did you contrive to entertain yourself, Mr. Wilson, during his long address?"

"By thinking how many fools were collected together, to listen to one greater than the rest. By the way, Moodie, did you notice Parmer Flitch?"

"No; where did he sit?"

"At the foot of the table. You must have seen him; he was too big to be overlooked. What a delightful squint he had! What a ridiculous likeness there was between him and the roast pig he was carving! I was wondering all dinner-time how that man contrived to cut up that pig; for one eye was fixed upon the ceiling, and the other leering very affectionately at me. It was very droll, was it not?"

"And what do you intend doing with yourself when you arrive in Canada?" said I.

"Find out some hollow tree, and live like Bruin in the winter by sucking my paws. In the summer there will be plenty of mast and acorns to satisfy the wants of an abstemious fellow."

"But, joking apart, my dear fellow," said my husband, anxious to induce him to abandon a scheme so hopeless, "do you think that you are at all qualified for a life of toil and hardship?"

"Are you?" returned Tom, raising his large, bushy, black eyebrows to the top of his forehead, and fixing his leaden eyes steadfastly upon his interrogator, with an air of such absurd gravity that we burst into a hearty laugh.

"Now what do you laugh for? I am sure I asked you a very serious question."

"But your method of putting it is so unusual that you must excuse us for laughing."

"I don't want you to weep," said Tom; "but as to our qualifications, Moodie, I think them pretty equal. I know you think otherwise, but I will explain. Let me see; what was I going to say?—ah, I have it! You go with the intention of clearing land, and working for yourself, and doing a great deal. I have tried that before in New South Wales, and I know that it won't answer. Gentlemen can't work like laborers, and if they could they won't—it is not in them, and that you will find out. You expect, by going to Canada, to make your fortune, or at least to secure a comfortable independence. I anticipate no such results; yet I mean to go, partly out of a whim, partly to satisfy my curiosity whether it is a better country than New South Wales; and lastly, in the hope of bettering my condition in a small way, which at present is so bad that it can scarcely be worse. I mean to purchase a farm with the three hundred pounds I received last week from the sale of my father's property; and if the Canadian soil yields only half what Mr. C—— says it does, I need not starve. But the refined habits in which you have been brought up, and your unfortunate literary propensities—(I say unfortunate, because you will seldom meet people in a colony who can or will sympathize with you in these pursuits)—they will make you an object of mistrust and envy to those who cannot appreciate them, and will be a source of constant mortification and disappointment to yourself. Thank God! I have no literary propensities; but, in spite of the latter advantage, in all probability I shall make no exertion at all; so that your energy, damped by disgust and disappointment, and my laziness will end in the same thing, and we shall both return like bad pennies to our native shores. But, as I have neither wife nor child to involve in my failure, I think, without much self-flattery, that my prospects are better than yours."

This was the longest speech I ever heard Tom utter; and, evidently astonished at himself, he sprang up abruptly from the table, overset a cup of coffee into my lap, and, wishing us good day (it was eleven o'clock at night), he ran out of the house.

There was more truth in Tom's words that at that moment we were willing to allow; for youth and hope were on our side in those days, and we were most ready to believe the suggestions of the latter.

My husband finally determined to emigrate to Canada, and in the hurry and bustle of a sudden preparation to depart, Tom and his affairs for a while were forgotten.

How dark and heavily did that frightful anticipation weigh upon my heart! As the time for our departure drew near, the thought of leaving my friends and native land became so intensely painful that it haunted me even in sleep. I seldom awoke without finding my pillow wet with tears. The glory of May was upon the earth—of an English May. The woods were bursting into leaf, the meadows and hedgerows were flushed with flowers, and every grove and copsewood echoed to the warblings of birds and the humming of bees. To leave England at all was dreadful—to leave her at such a season was doubly so. I went to take a last look at the old Hall, the beloved home of my childhood and youth; to wander once more beneath the shades of its venerable oaks—to rest once more upon the velvet sward that carpeted their roots. It was while reposing beneath those noble trees that I had first indulged in those delicious dreams which are a foretaste of the enjoyments of the spirit-land. In them the soul breathes forth its aspirations in a language unknown to common minds; and, that language is poetry. Here annually, from year to year, I had renewed my friendship with the first primroses and violets, and listened with the untiring ear of love to the spring roundelay of the blackbird, whistled from among his bower of May blossoms. Here I had discoursed sweet words to the tinkling brook, and learned from the melody of waters the music of natural sounds. In these beloved solitudes all the holy emotions which stir the human heart in its depths had been freely poured forth, and found a response in the harmonious voice of Nature, bearing aloft the chloral song of earth to the throne of the Creator.

How hard it was to tear myself from scenes endeared to me by the most beautiful and sorrowful recollections, let those who have loved and suffered as I did say. However the world has frowned upon me, Nature, arrayed in her green loveliness, had ever smiled upon me like an indulgent mother, holding out her loving arms to enfold to her bosom her erring but devoted child.

Dear, dear England! Why was I forced by a stern necessity to leave you? What heinous crime had I committed that I, who adored you, should be torn from your sacred bosom, to pine out my joyless existence in a foreign clime? Oh that I might be permitted to return and die upon your wave-encircled shores, and rest my weary head and heart beneath your daisy-covered sod at last! Ah, these are vain outbursts of feeling—melancholy relapses of the spring home-sickness! Canada! thou art a noble, free, and rising country—the great fostering mother of the orphans of civilization. The offspring of Britain, thou must be great and I will and do love thee, land of my adoption, and of my children's birth; and oh—dearer still to a mother's heart—land of their graves!

* * * *

Whilst talking over our coming separation with my sister C——, we observed Tom Wilson walking slowly up the path that led to the house. He was dressed in a new shooting-jacket, with his gun lying carelessly across his shoulder, and an ugly pointer dog following at a little distance.

"Well, Mrs. Moodie, I am off," said Tom, shaking hands with my sister instead of me. "I suppose I shall see Moodie in London. What do you think of my dog?" patting him affectionately.

"I think him an ugly beast," said C——. "Do you mean to take him with you?"

"An ugly beast—Duchess a beast? Why, she is a perfect beauty!—Beauty and the beast! Ha, ha, ha! I gave two guineas for her last night." (I thought of the old adage) "Mrs. Moodie, your sister is no judge of a dog."

"Very likely," returned C——, laughing. "And you go to town tonight, Mr. Wilson? I thought as you came up to the house that you were equipped for shooting."

"To be sure; there is capital shooting in Canada."

"So I have heard—plenty of bears and wolves. I suppose you take out your dog and gun in anticipation?"

"True," said Tom.

"But you surely are not going to take that dog with you?"

"Indeed I am. She is a most valuable brute. The very best venture I could take. My brother Charles has engaged our passage in the same vessel."

"It would be a pity to part you," said I. "May you prove as lucky a pair as Whittington and his cat."

"Whittington! Whittington!" said Tom, staring at my sister and beginning to dream, which he invariably did in the company of women. "Who was the gentleman?"

"A very old friend of mine, one whom I have known since I was a very little girl," said my sister; "but I have not time to tell you more about him now. If you go to St. Paul's Churchyard, and inquire for Sir Richard Whittington and his cat, you will get his history for a mere trifle."

"Do not mind her, Mr. Wilson; she is quizzing you," quoth I. "I wish you a safe voyage across the Atlantic; I wish I could add a happy meeting with your friends. But where shall we find friends in a strange land?"

"All in good time," said Tom. "I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you in the backwoods of Canada before three months are over. What adventures we shall have to tell one another! It will be capital. Good-bye."

* * * *

"Tom has sailed," said Captain Charles Wilson, stepping into my little parlour a few days after his eccentric brother's last visit. "I saw him and Duchess safe on board. Odd as he is, I parted with him with a full heart; I felt as if we never should meet again. Poor Tom! he is the only brother left me now that I can love. Robert and I never agreed very well, and there is little chance of our meeting in this world. He is married, and settled down for life in New South Wales; and the rest—John, Richard, George—are all gone—all!"

"Was Tom in good spirits when you parted?"

"Yes. He is a perfect contradiction. He always laughs and cries in the wrong place. 'Charles,' he said, with a loud laugh, 'tell the girls to get some new music against I return; and, hark ye! if I never come back, I leave them my Kangaroo Waltz as a legacy!'"

"What a strange creature!"

"Strange, indeed; you don't know half his oddities. He has very little money to take out with him, but he actually paid for two berts in the ship, that he might not chance to have a person who snored sleep near him. Thirty pounds thrown away upon the mere chance of a snoring companion! 'Besides, Charles,' quoth he, 'I cannot endure to share my little cabin with others; they will use my towels, and combs, and brushes, like that confounded rascal who slept in the same berth with me coming from New South Wales, who had the impudence to clean his teeth with my tooth-brush. Here I shall be all alone, happy and comfortable as a prince, and Duchess shall sleep in the after-berth, and be my queen.' And so we parted," continued Captain Charles. "May God take care of him, for he never could take care of himself."

"That puts me in mind of the reason he gave for not going with us. He was afraid that my baby would keep him awake of a night. He hates children, and says that he never will marry on that account."

* * * *

We left the British shores on the 1st of July, and cast anchor, as I have already shown, under the Castle of St. Louis, at Quebec, on the 2nd of September 1832. Tom Wilson sailed the 1st of May, and had a speedy passage, and was, as we heard from his friends, comfortably settled in the bush, had bought a farm, and meant to commence operations in the fall. All this was good news, and as he was settled near my brother's location, we congratulated ourselves that our eccentric friend had found a home in the wilderness at last, and that we should soon see him again.

On the 9th of September, the steam-boat William IV. landed us at the then small but rising town of ——, on Lake Ontario. The night was dark and rainy; the boat was crowded with emigrants; and when we arrived at the inn, we learnt that there was no room for us—not a bed to be had; nor was it likely, owing to the number of strangers that had arrived for several weeks, that we could obtain one by searching farther. Moodie requested the use of a sofa for me during the night; but even that produced a demur from the landlord. Whilst I awaited the result in a passage crowded with strange faces, a pair of eyes glanced upon me through the throng. Was it possible?—could it be Tom Wilson? Did any other human being possess such eyes, or use them in such an eccentric manner? In another second he had pushed his way to my side, whispering in my ear, "We met, 'twas in a crowd."

"Tom Wilson, is that you?"

"Do you doubt it? I flatter myself that there is no likeness of such a handsome fellow to be found in the world. It is I, I swear!—although very little of me is left to swear by. The best part of me I have left to fatten the mosquitoes and black flies in that infernal bush. But where is Moodie?"

"There he is—trying to induce Mr. S——, for love or money, to let me have a bed for the night."

"You shall have mine," said Tom. "I can sleep upon the floor of the parlour in a blanket, Indian fashion. It's a bargain—I'll go and settle it with the Yankee directly; he's the best fellow in the world! In the meanwhile here is a little parlour, which is a jointstock affair between some of us young hopefuls for the time being. Step in here, and I will go for Moodie. I long to tell him what I think of this confounded country. But you will find it out all in good time," and, rubbing his hands together with a most lively and mischievous expression, he shouldered his way through trunks and boxes and anxious faces, to communicate to my husband the arrangement he had so kindly made for us.

"Accept this gentleman's offer, sir, till to-morrow," said Mr. S——; "I can then make more comfortable arrangements for your family. But we are crowded—crowded to excess. My wife and daughters are obliged to sleep in a little chamber over the stable, to give our guests more room. Hard that, I guess, for decent people to locate over the horses."

These matters settled, Moodie returned with Tom Wilson to the little parlour, in which I had already made myself at home.

"Well, now, is it not funny that I should be the first to welcome you to Canada?" said Tom.

"But what are you doing here, my dear fellow?"

"Shaking every day with ague. But I could laugh in spite of my teeth to hear them make such a confounded rattling; you would think they were all quarrelling which should first get out of my mouth. This shaking mania forms one of the chief attractions of this new country."

"I, fear," said I, remarking how thin and pale he had become, "that this climate cannot agree with you."

"Nor I with the climate. Well, we shall soon be quits, for, to let you into a secret, I am now on my way to England."

"Impossible!"

"It is true."

"And the farm—what have you done with it?"

"Sold it."

"And your outfit?"

"Sold that too."

"To whom?"

"To one who will take better care of both than I did. Ah! such a country!—such people!—such rogues! It beats Australia hollow; you know your customers there—but here you have to find them out. Such a take in!—God forgive them! I never could take care of money; and, one way or the other, they have cheated me out of all mine. I have scarcely enough left to pay my passage home. But, to provide against the worst, I have bought a young bear, a splendid fellow, to make my peace with my uncle. You must see him; he is close by in the stable."

"Tomorrow we will pay a visit to Bruin; but tonight do tell us something about yourself, and your residence in the bush."

"You will know enough about the Bush by-and-by. I am a bad historian," he continued, stretching out his legs, and yawning horribly, "a worse biographer. I never can find words to relate facts. But I will try what I can do. Mind, don't laugh at my blunders."

We promised to be serious—no easy matter while looking at and listening to Tom Wilson; and he gave us, at detached intervals, the following account of himself:—

"My troubles began at sea. We had a fair voyage, and all that; but my poor dog, my beautiful Duchess!—that beauty in the beast—died. I wanted to read the funeral service over her, but the captain interfered—the brute!—and threatened to throw me into the sea along with the dead bitch, as the unmannerly ruffian persisted in calling my canine friend. I never spoke to him again during the rest of the voyage. Nothing happened worth relating until I got to this place, where I chanced to meet a friend who knew your brother, and I went up with him to the woods. Most of the wise men of Gotham we met on the road were bound to the woods; so I felt happy that I was, at least, in a fashion. Mr.——was very kind, and spoke in raptures of the woods, which formed the theme of conversation during our journey—their beauty, their vastness, the comfort and independence enjoyed by those who had settled in them; and he so inspired me with the subject that I did nothing all day but sing as we rode along—

'A life in the woods for me;'

until we came to the woods and then I soon learned to sing that same, as the Irishman says, on the other side of my mouth."

Here succeeded a long pause, during which friend Tom seemed mightily tickled with his reminiscences, for he leaned back in his chair, and, from time to time, gave way to loud hollow bursts of laughter.

"Tom, Tom! are you going mad?" said my husband, shaking him.

"I never was sane that I Know of," remarked he. "You know that it runs in the family. But do let me have my laugh out. The woods! Ha! ha! When I used to be roaming through those woods, shooting,—though not a thing could I ever find to shoot, for birds and beasts are not such fools as our English emigrants—and I chanced to think of you coming to spend the rest of your lives in the woods—I used to stop, and hold my sides, and laugh until the woods rang again. It was the only consolation I had."

"Good heavens!" said I, "let us never go to the woods."

"You will repent if you do," continued Tom. "But let me proceed on my journey. My bones were well-nigh dislocated before we got to D——. The roads for the last twelve miles were nothing but a succession of mud-holes, covered with the most ingenious invention ever thought of for racking the limbs, called corduroy bridges; not breeches, mind you,—for I thought, whilst jolting up and down over them, that I should arrive at my destination minus that indispensable covering. It was night when we got to Mr.—'s place. I was tired and hungry, my face disfigured and blistered by the unremitting attentions of the black flies that rose in swarms from the river. I thought to get a private room to wash and dress in, but there is no such thing as privacy in this country. In the bush, all things are in common; you cannot even get a bed without having to share it with a companion. A bed on the floor in a public sleeping-room! Think of that; a public sleeping-room!—men, women, and children, only divided by a paltry curtain. Oh, ye gods! think of the snoring, squalling, grumbling, puffing; think of the kicking, elbowing, and crowding; the suffocating heat, the mosquitoes, with their infernal buzzing—and you will form some idea of the misery I endured the first night of my arrival in the bush.

"But these are not half the evils with which you have to contend. You are pestered with nocturnal visitants far more disagreeable than even the mosquitoes, and must put up with annoyances more disgusting than the crowded close room. And then, to appease the cravings of hunger, fat pork is served to you three times a day. No wonder that the Jews eschewed the vile animal; they were people of taste. Pork, morning, noon, and night, swimming in its own grease! The bishop who complained of partridges every day should have been condemned to three months' feeding upon pork in the bush; and he would have become an anchorite, to escape the horrid sight of swin's flesh forever spread before him. No wonder I am thin; I have been starved—starved upon fritters and pork, and that disgusting specimen of unleavened bread, yclept cakes in the pan.

"I had such a horror of the pork diet, that whenever I saw the dinner in progress I fled to the canoe, in the hope of drowning upon the waters all reminiscences of the hateful banquet; but even here the very fowls of the air and the reptiles of the deep lifted up their voices, and shouted, 'Pork, pork, pork!'"

M——remonstrated with his friend for deserting the country for such minor evils as these, which, after all, he said, could easily be borne

"Easily borne!" exclaimed the indignant Wilson. "Go and try them; and then tell me that. I did try to bear them with a good grace, but it would not do. I offended everybody with my grumbling. I was constantly reminded by the ladies of the house that gentlemen should not come to this country without they were able to put up with a little inconvenience; that I should make as good a settler as a butterfly in a bee hive; that it was impossible to be nice about food and dress in the bush; that people must learn to eat what they could get, and be content to be shabby and dirty, like their neighbors in the bush,—until that horrid word bush became synonymous with all that was hateful and revolting in my mind.

"It was impossible to keep anything to myself The children pulled my books to pieces to look at the pictures; and an impudent, bare-legged Irish servant girl took my towels to wipe the dishes with, and my clothes-brush to black the shoes—an operation which she performed with a mixture of soot and grease. I thought I should be better off in a place of my own, so I bought a wild farm that was recommended to me, and paid for it double what it was worth. When I came to examine my estate. I found there was no house upon it, and I should have to wait until the fall to get one put up, and a few acres cleared for cultivation. I was glad to return to my old quarters.

"Finding nothing to shoot in the woods, I determined to amuse myself with fishing; but Mr.——could not always lend his canoe, and there was no other to be had. To pass away the time, I set about making one. I bought an ave, and went to the forest to select a tree. About a mile from the lake, I found the largest pine I ever saw. I did not much like to try my maiden hand upon it, for it was the first and the last tree I ever cut down. But to it I went; and I blessed God that it reached the ground without killing me in its way thither. When I was about it, I thought I miyht as well make the canoe big enough; but the bulk of the tree deceived me in the length of my vessel, and I forgot to measure the one that belonged to Mr.——. It took me six weeks hollowing it out, and when it was finished, it was as long as a sloop-of-war, and too unweildy for all the oxen in the township to draw it to the water. After all my labor, my combats with those wood-demons the black-flies, sand-flies and mosquitoes, my boat remains a useless monument of my industry. And worse than this, the fatigue I had endured, while working at it late and early, brought on the ague; which so disgusted me with the country that I sold my farm and all my traps for an old song; purchased Bruin to bear me company on my voyage home; and the moment I am able to get rid of this tormenting fever, I am off."

Argument and remonstrance were alike in vain, he could not be dissuaded from his purpose. Tom was as obstinate as his bear.

The next morning he conducted us to the stable to see Bruin. The young denizen of the forest was tied to the manger, quietly masticating a cob of Indian corn, which he held in his paw, and looked half human as he sat upon his haunches, regarding us with a solemn, melancholy air. There was an extraordinary likeness, quite ludicrous, between Tom and the bear. We said nothing, but exchanged glances. Tom read our thoughts.

"Yes," said he, "there is a strong resemblance; I saw it when I bought him. Perhaps we are brothers;" and taking in his hand the chain that held the bear, he bestowed upon him sundry fraternal caresses, which the ungrateful Bruin returned with low and savage growls.

"He can't flatter. He's all truth and sincerity. A child of nature, and worthy to be my friend; the only Canadian I ever mean to acknowledge as such."

About an hour after this, poor Tom was shaking with ague, which in a few days reduced him so low that I began to think he never would see his native shores again. He bore the affliction very philosophically, and all his well days he spent with us.

One day my husband was absent, having accompanied Mr. S.——to inspect a farm, which he afterwards purchased, and I had to get through the long day in the best manner I could. The local papers were soon exhausted. At that period, they possessed little or no interest for me. I was astonished and disgusted at the abusive manner in which they were written, the freedom of the press being enjoyed to an extent in this province unknown in more civilized communities.

(To be continued.)

A New York court ordered a man to pay his wife $40 a week alimony. He objected, saying he already had to pay his first wife $200 a month and cannot afford more.