

On Lake Deschenes.

THE woods of March in a stiff gale shiver,—
My main-mast bends, and the lee shrouds slacken,
The stays are taut, and the lithe boom quivers,
And a squall-cloud lowering, the long waves blacken.

I stand at the helm and with eager eyes
To sea and to sky and to shore I gaze,
For my charge is great and I dread surprise,
And hoarse is the order "*Full for stays!*"

The ship bends lower before the breeze,
As her broadside fair to the blast she lays,
And she swiftly springs to the rising seas,
And heads for the heart of the surging ways.

And the light on Aylmer Head draws near,
As, trumpet-winged, a heartening shout
Through the gathering din in the air I hear,
With the welcome call of "*Ready! About!*"

No time to spare! it is touch and go,
When over the gale rings the yell, "*Hard down!*"
And my weight on the stubborn tiller I throw,—
My grip shoots white through my fingers brown.

High o'er the bow flies the ghostly spray,
As we meet the shock of the plunging sea;
And my shoulder stiff to the rudder I lay,
And guide my charger hard a-lee!

With the swerving leap of a startled steed
The ship flies fast in the eye of the wind,
Soon the shoals of Stony Point recede,
And the headland's fangs we leave behind.