

CHAPTER XIV.

A WINTER AT YORK.

Castle Frank, although in an unfinished state, was habitable in 1794, for early in the year the Governor and his family resided there. In the spring, however, Mrs. Simcoe returned to Niagara, where life at Navy Hall was more enjoyable and varied than at York.

York, Mon., Jan. 6th, 1794—The skin of a cross fox, marked yellow, black and white, with a dark cross on the back, was brought here and sold for four dollars; sometimes they are sold for two dollars.

I sketched a likeness of the "Great Sall," who came here to-day. The Indians call the stars we name *Ursa Major*, a marten (sable) with a broken tail. I received from Detroit a stone carved by an Indian into a head, and when it is known that they have no tools but the commonest kind of small knife, it is surprising to see it is so well done.

I sketched a Caughnawaga Indian to-day whose figure was quite antique. He was from the settlement of that tribe on the south side of the St. Lawrence, opposite Lachine. I have often observed (but never had more reason to do so than to-day) that when the Indians speak, their air and action is more like that of Roman or Greek orators than of modern nations. They have a great deal of impressive action, and look like the figures painted by the Old Masters.

Thur. 14th—There is a great deal of snow on the River Don, which is so well frozen that we walked some miles upon it to-day, but in returning I found it so cold near the lake that I was benumbed and almost despaired of ever reaching my own house, and when I came near the hill was frightfully slippery. Near the river we saw the track of wolves, and the head and hoofs of a deer. The workmen, who reside in a small hut near the place, heard the wolves during the night, and in the morning saw the remains of the deer. The Indians do not kill wolves; they seldom take trouble that does not answer to them, and the wolves are not good to eat and their skins are of little value.

Sat. Jan. 18th—The Queen's (Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Consort of George III.,) birthday. The weather is so mild that we breakfasted with the window open. An experiment was made of firing pebbles from cannon. A salute of 21 guns and a dance in the evening in honour of the day. The ladies much dressed.

Sunday 19th—The weather so pleasant that we rode to the bottom of the bay, crossed the Don, which is frozen, and rode on the peninsula; returned across the marsh, which is covered with ice, and went as far as the settlements, which are near seven miles from the camp. There appeared some comfortable log houses, inhabited by Germans and some by Pennsylvanians. Some of the creeks were not frozen enough to bear the Governor's horse, but mine passed very well. He excels in getting over difficult places and in leaping over logs, which I like very much.



QUEEN CHARLOTTE.