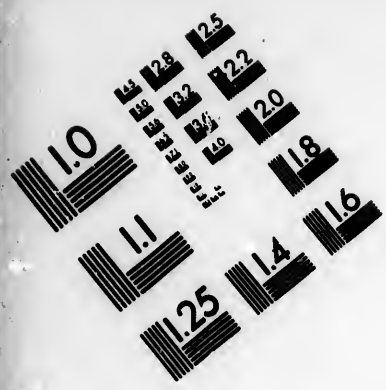

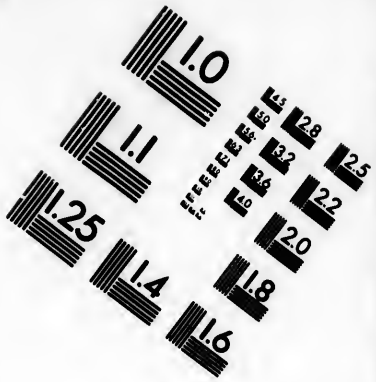

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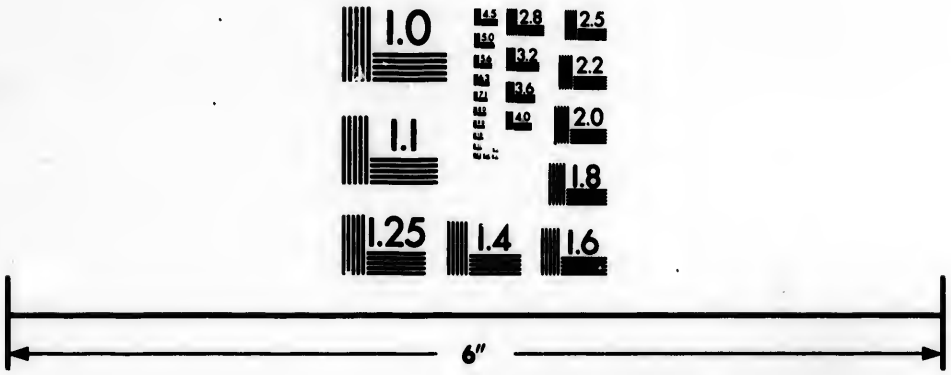

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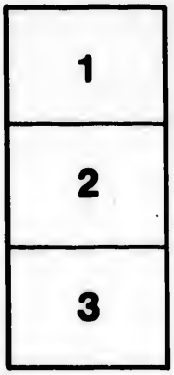

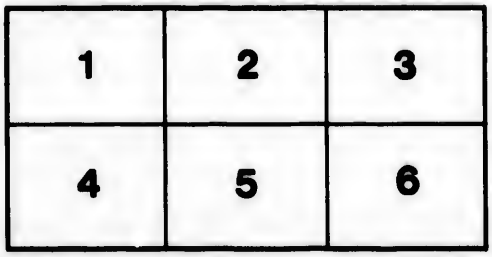

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A TALE.

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PREPARING THE SETTLEMENT.

THE FORTUNES OF MICHAEL HALE AND HIS FAMILY.

A TALE ABOUT LIFE IN CANADA.

CHAPTER I.

The sun shone brightly out of a deep blue sky. His rays glanced on the axes of several sturdy men, who with shirt sleeves tucked up and handkerchiefs round their waists, were hewing away lustily at some tall pine-trees. A few had already fallen before their strokes, making a small clearing in the thick forest. Through the trees the glittering water of a lake could be seen, but on every other side the thick forest alone stood up like a dark wall. Yet all that thick underwood and those tall trees must be cut down and cleared away before the newly arrived settlers would find means of living. It was enough to try the bold hearts of the men as they looked round and saw the work before them. Not an inch of ground turned up, nor a hut built, and winter not so very far off either. Yet it must be done, and could be done, for like work had been done over and over again in the country. The ground rose at first gently and then steeply from the lake, while the splashing sound of a stream on one side gave promise of good water-

power for the new settlement. There were not only firs but many hard-wood trees. Such are those which shed their leaves, maple, birch, oak, beech, and others, all destined soon to fall before the sturdy backwoodsman's axe.

The scene I have described was in that fine colony of Old England across the Atlantic Ocean, called Canada, and in a newly opened district of its north-west part between the great river Ottawa and Lake Ontario.

Old and young were all at work. There were some women and children of the party. The women were busy in front of some rough huts which had been built Indian fashion, something like gipsy tents in England, and covered with large sheets of birch-bark. They were soon made, with a ridge pole, supported by cross-sticks ten feet long. Other thin poles were placed sloping against the ridge pole, and then the birch-bark was put on. The bark comes off the trees in lengths of eight or more feet, and two and three wide.

By the side of the huts casks of provisions, pork, flour, tea, sugar, and such-like things, and household goods, were piled up, covered over with bark or bits of canvas. In front of each hut was a fire, at which some of the women were busy, while others were dressing or looking after the younger children.

"Breakfast ready, breakfast ready," cried out the women one after the other, as they placed ready for their husbands and sons savoury dishes of pork, or beef, and fish, with hot cakes of wheaten flour or

Indian corn, baked in the ashes, to be washed down with good tea, sweetened with maple sugar. Of milk and butter of course there was none. The men soon came in, and sat down on the trunks of trees rolled near for the purpose, with appetites sharpened by their morning's work.

With one of the families we have most to do. The father, Michael Hale, was a broad-shouldered, fair-haired, blue-eyed man, with a kind, honest look in his face. Following him came his three stout sons, Rob, David, and Small Tony, as he was called, and small he was as to height, but he was broad and strong, and so active that he did as much work as any of the rest. He was such a merry happy little chap, with such a comical face, so full of fun, that he was a favourite everywhere.

Two men also sat down to breakfast whom Michael had hired to help him clear his ground.

Mrs. Hale had two stout girls well able to help her, and three smaller children to look after, while her eldest girl, Susan, had gone out to service, and was getting good wages.

"Well, Martha, I hope that we shall have a house ready for you and the little ones in a few days, in case rain should come on. We've got stuff enough to build it with," said Michael, pointing to the huge logs he had been felling.

"We do very well at present in the hut," answered his wife, smiling. "I have a liking for it—no rent and no taxes to pay; it is ours—the first dwelling we ever had of our own."

"Ay, wife; and now we have forty acres of land too of our own: little value, to be sure, as they are; but in a few months, when we have put work into them, they'll yield us a good living," observed Michael, glancing his eye down his allotment, which reached to the lake. "We shall have four acres cleared, and our house up, before the snow sets in; and if the boys and I can chop three more in the winter, we shall have seven to start with in the spring."

"You'll do that, master, if you work as you've begun," said Pat Honan, one of the men Hale had engaged to work for him. "Arrah now, if I had the wife and childer myself, may be I'd be settling on a farm of my own; but, somehow or other, when I go to bed at night, it isn't often that I'm richer than when I got up in the morning."

"You won't have the whiskey here, Pat; so may be you'll have a better chance. Just try what you can do," said Michael, in a kind tone.

"Ah, now, that's just what I've thried many a day; and all went right till temptation came in my way, and then, somehow or other, the throat was always so dhry that I couldn't, for the life of me, help moistening it a bit."

Pat's companion, another Irishman, Peter Disney, looked very sulky at these remarks, and Michael suspected that he had often proved poor Pat's tempter.

Near Michael's tent there was another, owned by an old friend of his, John Kemp. They had come

out together from the same place in England, and for the same reason. They had large families, and found work hard to get at fair wages. Michael Hale was a day labourer, as his father was before him. He lived in a wild part of Old England, where schools were scarce. He had very little learning himself; but he was blessed with a good wife, who could read her Bible, and she had not much time to read anything else. Michael fell ill, and so did two of his children (that was in the old country); and when he got better, he found that his old master was dead. For a long time he went about looking for work. One day he called at the house of a gentleman, one Mr. Forster, five miles from where he lived.

"I cannot give you work, but I can give you advice, and may be help," said Mr. Forster. "If you cannot get work at home, take your family to a British colony. I am sending some people off to Canada, to a brother of mine who is settled there; and, if you wish, you shall go with them."

"Where is Canada, and what sort of a country is it, sir?" asked Michael.

"It is away to the west, where the sun sets, and across the Atlantic Ocean; and a vessel, sailing at the rate of nine or ten miles an hour, takes between twelve and fourteen days to get there. It is a country full of large rivers and lakes and streams, and has railroads running from one end to the other. There is much forest-land to be sold; and a man working for another for one or two years is generally

able to save money and to buy a farm, and set up for himself. The climate is very healthy. The summers are hotter than in England, and the winters much colder. The ground is then covered thickly with snow; but the snow is looked on as a blessing, as, when beaten down, a capital road is made over it, and besides it makes the earth fertile. Everything that grows in England will grow there, and many things besides, such as Indian corn, or maize. Though the summers are short, they are very hot, and corn is quickly brought to maturity. A man must work there, as everywhere, for a living; but if he keeps from drinking, he is sure to get plenty of work, and to be well paid."

"I think, sir, that country will just suit me," said Michael. "I find it a hard matter to get work; and when my boys grow up, it will be still worse."

"Well, think it over," said Mr. Forster. "If you can get work, stay where you are; if not, remember what I tell you, that Canada is a fine country for a hard-working, strong man; and that if you determine to go there, I will help you."

Michael thought over the matter, and talked over it with Martha, and they agreed to go. Michael Hale told his neighbour, John Kemp, what he was thinking of doing. When John heard that Michael was going, he said that he would go too, for much the same reason; he had five children, and might have many more; and the day might come when he could get no work for himself or them either.

Michael could not have got out if it had not been

for the help given him by Mr. Forster; but John Kemp had a cow and calf, two pigs, and some poultry; and, by selling these and the furniture, he had enough to pay his passage, and some money over. They went to Liverpool, where Mr. Forster took a passage for them on board a large ship, with nearly three hundred and fifty other persons, also going out to settle in Canada.

They felt very strange at first; and when the ship began to roll from side to side, and to dip her head into the big seas, they did not know what was going to happen; but it soon got smooth again, and though they were nearly a month at sea, they were not the worse for the voyage. The ship was some days sailing up a large river, called the St. Lawrence, which runs right across Canada, from west to east. They only went up part of the way in her, as far as Quebec, a fine city, built on a steep hill. They thought the high mountains very fine on the sides of the river, and wondered at the curious places where settlers had built their houses. Wherever there was a level spot on the side of the mountains, some quite high up, there was sure to be one or more fields, an orchard, and a cottage. They were told that these were the farms of French people, whose fathers had come over to the country many years ago, when it was owned by France; and that a great many French still live in the east part; but that in the west, where they were going, the inhabitants are nearly all English, or Scotch, or Irish. They found that there was an agent at Quebec, a government officer, as well

as at every large town, whose business it is to tell newly arrived emigrants all about the country, how to get up to where they want to go, and to help those who want it.

Michael and his friends went up to Montreal, another large city, in a big steamer. From Montreal they went on sometimes in a railway; then in a small steamer on a river, then on a canal; then across two or three lakes, and again on a river and canal; and then they landed, and went across country in a wagon, and for some miles over a lake, and along a river, in an open boat, till at last they reached the place where Mr. Forster's brother lived. Here Michael and John engaged themselves to serve two settlers, at good wages, for a year; their wives were to cook and wash; their cottages and food were found them; while the children were to go to school, and to help in harvest and other times when they were wanted. Michael and John agreed that they had good reason to be satisfied with the change they had made.

For two years Michael and John worked on steadily for their masters, as did their wives and elder children, getting good wages, and spending very little. They were employed in clearing the ground; that is, chopping down trees, under-brushing, cutting the underwood, building log huts, fencing, ploughing, and digging, road making—not as roads are made in England, though, but with logs and planks—and building carts and wagons, and bridges too; indeed, there were few things they did not turn their hands to.

Now, with fifty pounds each in their pockets, over and above what they had laid out in provisions and stores for the winter, they had come up to take possession of forty acres apiece of freehold land, for part of which they had paid, the rest was to be paid for by a certain sum each year. They had to lead a rough life, but they did not mind that; they knew what they were to expect. They did not fear the cold of winter; for their log houses would have thick walls, and they had large iron stoves with flues, and plenty of fuel to be had for the trouble of chopping. After the snow had fallen, the boys would chop enough in a few days to last them all the winter, and pile it up in a great heap near the house. They had plenty of clothing, and they had found the climate, in summer or winter, as healthy as they would wish.

They were not long at breakfast, and did not give themselves much time to rest, but up they were again, axes in hand, chopping away at the big giant trees which came crashing quickly down one after the other before their strokes.

CHAPTER II.

It seemed a difficult job to get rid of all the trunks now they were down cumbering the earth, after enough were kept for the log-house, and fencing, and firing. The only way was to burn them. It was done in this manner: the largest tree in a group

was felled first, and all round were made to fall across it, others were put above it with handspikes. The boughs and brushwood were placed under and above it, till a huge heap eight feet high was formed. A number of these heaps were made, and when the day's work was done, they were set on fire. It was a curious sight at night to see them all blazing together, lighting up the dark forest, and the faces of the men, and the huts, and those around them. On the first night several new settlers came rushing over to Michael's clearing to learn what was the matter, thinking the forest was on fire. The men had indeed to take care that the flames did not spread to the other trees. The stumps of course remained, and it would take six or eight years before they would rot away. Michael had learned to make potash out of the ashes which he could sell at £7 the barrel.

The log-house, or rather hut, was next built. Four logs were first laid down on the ground to mark out the shape of the hut, the ends being notched to fit into each other. The upper sides of the logs were then hollowed out, so that the next tier of logs fitted into them. These were also notched. In the same way others were placed above these till the walls were of the proper height. The front wall was higher than the back one, so that the roof sloped from the front to the back. There were now the four walls, but no door and no windows. These were sawed out and frames fitted into them. The roof was made of smaller logs. A log was split

in two and hollowed out so as to form a trough. A row of troughs was then put on side by side, sloping from the front wall to the back, the hollow part up. Over the edges of these were next placed other troughs with the hollow down. It was just as rounded tiles are used for roofs in England. The troughs stuck out some way both before and behind to protect the walls. This sort of roof, from being very thick, keeps out the cold in winter, and the heat in summer. The spaces in the walls between the logs were then filled up with clay. A well-made door and thick shutters being fixed up, and a large stove lighted, Michael found even in the coldest weather, that his log hut could be kept far warmer than had been his cottage in the old country. The hut was divided into three rooms, a large one in the middle to serve for the kitchen, the parlour, store-room, and boys' sleeping room; and one on each side,—one of them was for himself and wife and two youngest children, and the other for the girls.

Michael and his boys made all the furniture out of slabs. The slabs were made in this way: they took a clean straight-grained pine-tree and cut it into logs eight feet long. One end of each was lined out into planks, three or four inches thick, and then split with wedges. They then fixed the plank into notches with wedges between two logs, and smoothed them with the axe and plane. Thinner planks were made out of the white cedar, which splits very freely. The fir planks served for the flooring of their bed-rooms, and for shelves and cupboards.

As they for the first time sat round the table just finished by Michael, they thanked God heartily who had brought them to a country where steady hard work could gain for them so many comforts.

Some of the settlers were not quite so well pleased as Michael. They were not so handy with their tools. John Kemp had more daughters, and had not made or saved so much as Michael. He had no stove, but he made a fire-place after this fashion. Four very wide ladders were placed in a square, a little way from the wall, passing through the roof. In front some of the bars were left out. Clay mixed with straw was then kneaded round the rounds, or steps of the ladders and all the rest of the space between them filled up with clay, so that all the wood was thickly covered. The part where the bars were left out was the front of the fire-place. It drew very well and threw out a great heat.

It was a great thing to have all the stuff for building and fencing on the ground. The fences were made of rough logs piled up one on another in a zigzag form. This is called a snake fence. The stumps were still in the ground. It would take some years to get them out, but Michael knew that he could even plough between those farthest apart, and dig in other places, and that wheat and Indian corn and potatoes were sure to grow well.

Some time before, a road to the settlement had been marked out through the forest. This was done by blazing the trees, that is cutting a piece of bark off each with an axe. Choppers were now set to

work to cut down the trees, and burn them off, but the stumps were left standing, and the carts and wagons had to wind their way along between them. Where the ground was swampy, trunks of trees were placed close together across the road: this is what is called a corduroy road. Other roads were planked over with fir, and called plank roads; others were of gravel. In all of them the stumps had been grubbed up, or rotted out, or blown up.

Michael's settlement, Thornhill, as it was called, was able to get on pretty well without a road, as it could be reached by the lake and river. Michael and John together made a canoe that they might get about the lake. It was formed from a large log, and hollowed out. The boys learned soon to paddle in it almost as fast as the Indians could. When the winter set in, and the snow lay thick on the ground, roads were made on it by beating it down hard. Over these roads sleighs, that is carts on runners, were able to travel faster than those on wheels.

So hard had Michael and his sons worked, that before the frost set in and the snow came down, they had been able to sow three acres of their ground with wheat, which they hoped would give them a good supply of flour for the next year. "If the season is early, I hope that we may get a spring burn of three or four acres more;" said Michael to his boys. "Then we'll plant it with Indian corn, and pumpkins, and potatoes, and turnips, and carrots, and cabbages, and onions, and other garden stuff. In a short time we shall not have much to buy in the

shape of food, as soon as we can raise enough for pigs and fowls, and keep a cow or two."

As yet nothing particular had happened to Michael Hale and his family. They had worked on steadily, and were already reaping the reward of their industry.

CHAPTER III.

BEFORE October was over bad weather came on, and the settlers who had only just come to the country began to cry out that the winter would be upon them before they were ready. They were, it is true, much behindhand, for though many of them had far greater means than Michael Hale and John Kemp, they had not their experience, and often threw away much labour and time uselessly. They were wrong as to the weather, too, for the Indian summer came, and this year it lasted nearly three weeks. The air was pure and cool, though there was not a cloud in the sky, but there was a haze which made the sun looker redder than his wont, and did not let his rays strike as hot as they had done in the summer. It was a very fine time, and the new settlers said that they had seen nothing like it in the old country. The leaves on the trees too changed to all sorts of bright colours—orange and yellow and pink and scarlet and blue—till the wood looked like a big flower-garden; the beech turned to a straw colour; the maple on one side was light green, and on the other scarlet and yellow and pink and many other

colours; the oak became of a dark, shining copper, but there was more scarlet and yellow on most of the trees than any other colour.

Among the settlers was a Mr. Samuel Landon. He was a kind-hearted man, and had good means, but had not had the practical experience which Michael possessed, and which was of more value to him than money. Mr. Landon often came across to Michael's clearing to ask his advice. He and his family had reached Canada at the same time as the Hales. He had lived at the city of Montreal for some time, and spent much money; then he had travelled about the country and spent more. That money would not have been thrown away, but he bought land which he did not like, and sold it at a loss. Now he had bought a second lot. Anybody looking at his and Michael's lot at the end of the fall would have been able to say which of the two was most likely in the course of a few years to be the most prosperous settler.

Still Michael Hale was to have his trials. Few men go through life without them. A letter came from Susan to say that she was ill and wished to come home. She begged that some one would come and meet her. Michael could not leave, and he wanted one big boy to help him, so it was settled that Rob and Tony should go. They had a long journey before them. First the voyage along the lake and down the river, and then a long tramp through the forest of three or four days. There was no road, but the trees were blazed they knew, and they had no

doubt about finding the way. "Fanny sends her love to Susan, and is very glad she is coming home," said Mrs. Kemp, as Rob went to wish her good-bye. Fanny was Mrs. Kemp's eldest girl, and a very pretty, good girl she was. Her next girl, Ann, was not quite right in her mind, though she could do what she was bid. Their next girl was too young to be of much use. There were several boys—Bill, and Tommy, and John, all able to do something to help their father. Just as Rob Hale was shoving off, Tommy Kemp, who, though not so old as Tony, was a great friend of his, came running down to the lake, and begged that he might go with them. They were glad of a companion and took him in. They made very good way along the lake, but the weather began to grow bad before they reached the mouth of the river. Dark clouds gathered, the wind rose, the thunders roared, and the lightning flashed brightly.

"Let us get on shore, for we shall have the rain down thick upon us," cried Tony. "We shall keep dry if we get under a tree." As he spoke a flash of lightning struck a tall tree near the shore. It was split in a moment from top to bottom, and a huge branch torn off.

"It is well that we were not on shore," said Rob. "Where should we have been now if we had got under that tree? God saved us, for it is the very place I thought of going in for shelter. There is a sandy point farther on, we'll go there."

The lads drew their canoe up on the point; then they turned her bottom up and got under her. They

had just done this when the clouds seemed to break open and empty their contents down on them. The wind roared, the waves came rolling almost up to the canoe. They could scarcely hold it down. All this time the thunder roared, and the lightning flashed, and the crashing of falling trees was heard.

"Oh! oh! we are all going to be washed away!" cried Tommy in a fright.

"No fear, Tom," said Tony; "all we've to do is to hold on to the canoe, and to our baskets of grub, and then, if we are washed away, we shall be able to turn the canoe over and get into her."

This idea made poor Tommy happier till the wind ceased. When they got out from under the canoe, they found that the wind had blown down the trees right through the forest, just as if a broad road had been cut in it, but it had not touched them either on one side or the other. There were still some hours of daylight, so they paddled on. They passed many canoes with Indians in them. They are made of the birch bark, and sewed together with thread made from the root of a shrub; the seams are then covered over with gum and resin; the ribs are very thin, and made of white cedar. They look very pretty, and are so light that two men can carry one, which will hold eight or ten persons, a long way over land. It is in this way that people travel in the wild parts where there are many rivers. They paddle along the river till they come to the end of it, and then two of them lift the canoe out of the water, and run along over the ground—it may be a mile or it

may be a dozen—till they come to another river or lake, into which they launch it; the rest carry the freight on their backs. In that way they go hundreds of miles across North America, indeed almost from ocean to ocean.

The lads were going down the river, when they came near some very strong rapids, with a fall of several feet beyond. When the river in the spring was very full, this fall could be shot. Rob had got close to the rapid before he saw how strong the current was running. To get to land he turned the canoe round, and paddled across the river. There was a small island just below where the canoe was. Rob wished to cross above it. A tree with large branches had fallen, and stuck out into the stream. "Lie down at the bottom of the canoe," said Rob to Tommy, who looked frightened. "Now, Tony, paddle your best."

Do all they could, the canoe was carried quickly down by the current, close to the island. At that moment, Tommy, seeing the tree, caught hold of a branch, and swung himself up. As he did so, with a kick he upset the canoe, and both Rob and Tony were thrown out of it. Away it floated, but Rob and his brother had kept hold of their paddles; and Rob, seizing Tony, swam with him to the island.

Tommy was too much frightened to know what he was about; and when his weight brought the bough down into the water, instead of dragging himself up he let go, and away he was swept by the current. "Oh save me, Rob! save me! save me!" he cried out.

"Swim across the stream, lad, and I'll come to you," answered Rob, who was carrying Tony to the island.

Instead of doing that, poor Tommy tried to swim up the stream, and of course was carried lower and lower towards the rapid.

Rob found it a hard task to get Tony safe to land. As soon as he had done so, the two scrambled across the island to see what had become of poor Tommy and the canoe. They had not heard his voice for a minute or more. He was not to be seen. An eddy had taken the canoe and carried it nearly over to the other side. "That eddy will help us," said Rob: "we must go and look for Tommy."

Tony did not like to go into the water again; but Rob, telling him to hold on by the paddle, took the other end in his mouth, and swam boldly off towards the canoe. Tony held on, striking with his legs, but he could hardly help crying out for fear of sinking. He thought all the time of Tommy, and what had become of him.

Rob swam on. He was very thankful to reach the canoe. He then made Tony catch hold of it, and pushed it before them till they reached the bank. They lost no time in drawing it on shore, and they looked round for Tommy. He was not to be seen. Before they could launch the canoe again they had to drag it over the grass a hundred yards or more. Once more in the river below the falls they looked about on every side, shouting Tommy's name. No answer came. It seemed too likely that he was lost.

They hunted for him round every rock, and among all the bushes overhanging the stream, and the fallen trees floating in it, and clinging to the bank with their roots. Not a sign was there of Tommy. The evening was coming on; it was yet some way to the log hut, where they proposed to stop for the night. Though they feared that he was lost, they did not like to leave the place without finding his body. They paddled first on one side of the stream, then on the other; then they went up close to the falls. "We must give it up, I fear," said Rob.

"Poor, poor Tommy! Oh dear! oh dear!" cried Tony. "Why did he go and do it!"

"It will be sad news at home," said Rob. "I am thankful that it wasn't you, Tony; but I had rather it had been anybody but Tommy."

"Don't let us give up, then," said Tony. "May be he's farther down the stream. I won't believe that he's dead till I see him dead."

Strive to the last. That is a good principle. It was one Tony held to, young as he was. They slowly paddled down the stream, looking about them as before. There was a small island some way down like the one above the falls. They paddled up to it, and were going round it, when a log of timber was seen caught in the branches of a tree, which had been blown down, and hung into the water. On the inner end sat Tommy, clinging to the bough above his head. He still seemed too much scared to know exactly what he was about. When his friends shouted his name, he only answered, "Yes; here I

am." Tony, in his joy at getting him back alive, gave him a hug which nearly again upset the canoe. Tommy seemed scarcely to know what had happened, and thought that he was still on the island above the falls. It seemed that he had got hold of the log as it was floating by, and that he was carried with it over the falls, and thus his life was saved. The three lads now paddled on till, just at dark, they reached Roland's shanty, as it was called.

Roland, an old Scotchman, was an oddity. He called his shanty the White Stag Hotel; and had, chalked up on a board, a figure, under which he had written "The White Stag. Accommodation for man and beast." Except, however, a gallon of whiskey, a jar of beef-tallow, and some Indian-corn bread, he had nothing to set before his guests. The bread and tallow was washed down with burnt-crust coffee, as they did not touch the whiskey. "I ken ye'd be glad o' that if ye was lost in the woods," he said, when he saw the faces of the lads. "What mair can ye want? Dry your clothes, and then there are your beds for ye." He pointed to a heap of spruce fir tops, in a corner of the hut. Though the food was coarse, and their beds rough, the lads slept soundly. They had food of their own, but they wished to husband that for the woods, where they might get none.

Leaving the canoe under charge of Roland, the next morning they began their tramp through the forest. The trees were blazed, and there was a beaten track all the way. They were well known to Roland, and as they were setting off he offered Rob the loan

of his gun, with some shot and powder, he having had one left by a settler, who had not come back for it. With a good supply of food on their shoulders, and axes in their belts, they went on merrily.

CHAPTER IV.

ALONE a person feels somewhat sad walking on hour after hour through the dark forest, but that is not the case when there are several. The young travellers stopped to dine near a stream, and watched the squirrels busily employed in gathering in their winter stores of butter, hickory, and other nuts.

At night they camped out. Cutting a ridge pole, they fastened it between two trees; and then, on the side next the wind, leaned against it other poles with pieces of bark and branches. In front of this rude hut they made up a large fire, and cut a store of wood to last them all night. Their beds were spruce fir tops, and their coverlids their buffalo robes which they carried strapped on their backs.

On the second day, about noon, as they were walking along in Indian file, one after the other, Rob leading, a fine deer slowly trotted across his path. He had time to unsling his gun, which he carried at his back, and to fire before the animal was out of sight. He hit it, but the deer bounded on. He and his companions followed in chase, Rob reloading as he ran. The blood on the fallen leaves showed that the deer was ahead. On they went,

mile after mile; every moment they thought that they would come up with it. At last more blood was seen on the leaves, and in an open glade there stood the stag. Once more, as the young hunters drew near, he was starting off, when Rob fired, and he fell. Here was a fine supply of venison for the rest of their journey. It was a pity that they could not carry the skin. They cut up the animal, and loaded themselves with as much of the best part of the meat as they could carry. This they secured by thongs cut from the skin. The other joints they hung up by the thongs to a tree, while the carcase remained on the ground.

While they were so employed, some flakes of snow began to fall. At first they did not think much of this. The flakes were thin, and did not cover the marks on the grass. "Come, boys, we must hurry on, or we shall not easily find the blaze again," observed Rob.

They walked as fast as they could with their fresh loads. As there was no wind, they did not complain of the cold. The flakes fell thicker and thicker. "Where is the track?" cried Rob on a sudden. They could see their footmarks behind them, but in front there was not a trace left.

"Go ahead," said Tony. "The stag kept a straight line, and we have only to look behind us and see that ours is straight and we shall soon find the blaze."

Rob did not think this. He was sure before they had gone far that they were bending very much, now to one side, now to the other. No sun shone. There

was no wind to guide them. Rob, after some time, remembered that he had heard that the moss grew thickest on the north side of the trees. On that side the trunks looked light and cheerful and on the other dark and spotted. They had gone some way before he thought of this. Tony and Tommy cried out that they were very hungry, for they had had no dinner before they saw the deer. Rob wanted to find the blaze first. They walked on and on, looking carefully at the trees. No blaze was to be seen. At last the boys said they could go no farther without eating. and Rob himself was very hungry. So they picked up dry sticks; and soon had a fire blazing, and some bits of venison toasting before it. The snow fell thicker than ever. They scraped some up and put it into their kettle and made some tea. Once more they went on, feeling much stronger.

"We must soon find the blaze," Rob said more than once; but he was wrong. Night drew on. No blaze was to be found. "We must make a camp before it is too dark," he said at last.

No time was lost. He had his axe soon at work cutting poles and boughs and fire-wood, the boys helping him. A fallen trunk formed the back. Between two in front they fastened a long pole and rested the other poles and boughs between it and the trunk. They did not wish for better beds than the spruce fir tops gave them. A fire soon blazed up in front of the tent. Tony and Tommy were as merry as crickets. They had plenty to eat and the fir tops made them a soft bed, while the fire kept them warm. It was

settled that one of them at a time should keep awake to put wood on the fire. Tommy had the first watch. Then he called Rob when he thought he had watched long enough. Of course Rob got the most watching. At last he called Tony and charged him to keep awake.

"Never fear about me; I'll be broad awake till it's time to call Tommy again," said Tony.

Rob had built up the fire, so that Tony had not much to do. He sat up for some time, warming his hands and watching the blazing logs. Then he thought that he would sit down rather more inside the tent for a little time. He did nod his head now and then, but that was nothing, he thought. He was sure that he had his eyes wide open. After some time he heard a howl—then another, and another. A number of animals howled together—wild beasts—wolves. He thought, "I hope that they are a long way off." They were not loud enough as yet to awake his sleeping companions, but they were coming slowly nearer and nearer. Tony rubbed his eyes. Was he awake? He looked up. The fire was almost out. There was no doubt about the howl of the wolves. They were much nearer than he had fancied. The flame on a sudden burst out of the embers, and out of the darkness several pairs of fierce eyes glared at him.

"Rob! Rob! Tommy! wolves!" he shouted out, at the same time seizing a stick from the fire, and waving it about.

Rob and Tommy were on their feet in a moment,

and each taking up a burning stick they made a rush towards the wolves. They were not an instant too soon, for the fierce beasts having scented the venison, were just going to rush at them. The fire-sticks kept them off, but they did not go far. There they stood in a circle howling away at the three young travellers. While Tony and Tommy threw more wood on the fire, Rob stepped back and loaded his gun, which he had forgot to reload after the second shot at the deer. The wolves seeing that the fire-sticks did them no harm, and being very hungry, were coming on, when the boys once more shouting at the top of their voices, and stirring up the fire, Rob fired at the biggest of the pack, who seemed to be the leader. Over the creature rolled, and his companions taking flight with fearful yells drew back into the forest. Tony said he was sure they stopped and looked round, every now and then yelling together, and asking each other to turn back and renew the attack.

The lads at last lay down, but all night long the wolves kept up their howlings close to them with snarls and other noises.

"I dare say now that those fellows have got some carcase or other, and are making merry over it," said Rob.

The watchmen did not fall asleep again during the night. When daylight came back the snow had ceased falling, but it lay an inch thick on the ground.

"We must find the blaze before breakfast," said Rob, as they strapped their things on to their backs.

In all directions they saw the marks of the wolves' feet on the snow. They followed them up some little way to see what they had been feeding on during the night.

"Why if this isn't the very place where we killed the deer and there is our venison still hanging up in the tree, which the brutes couldn't get at, and that made them howl so," cried out Tony, who was a little before the rest. They found then that after all their wanderings in the afternoon they had come back to the very spot they had left at mid-day. They hoped that now, if they made a fresh start, that they might reach the blaze. They more carefully noted the moss on the trees. The sun too shone out brightly. They were stepping out merrily, and they thought that they must be near the blaze, when before them was seen a large cedar swamp. The tree in Canada called the cedar is low, twisted, and knotted, with straggling roots growing in moist ground. It makes a thicket which the wind cannot pass through. Indians often cut a way into a cedar swamp in winter to build their wigwams in it. The travellers knew that they could not pass through the swamp, which was all moist, so they had to find their way round it. They fancied that they could not fail to reach the blaze. At last they got very hungry and had to stop and light a fire and breakfast. They knew that they were fortunate in having plenty of food, for they had heard of people wandering about in the woods for days together without anything to eat. Noon came round again. No blaze yet seen.

"When shall we find our way out of this, Rob?" asked Tony.

"May be in a day or two, may be in a week," answered Rob.

Tony and Tommy looked very black at this. They were getting tired walking about all day in the snow, with heavy loads on their backs. Tommy began to cry. Just then a shot was heard. They ran on in the direction from which the sound came, and Rob fired his gun in return. In a few minutes they met a tall, thin, oldish man, with a gun in his hand and a bag at his back.

"Why, youngsters, where have you come from?" he asked.

Rob told him.

"Not much out, youngsters; why you are scarcely more than two hundred yards from the blaze, and haven't been for some time past," the old man replied. "Come, I'll show you."

The old hunter stalked away at a great rate, and they followed as fast as they could.

"That's your way," he said; pointing to the blazes on the trees. "Push on as fast as you can, or the snow may be down on you, and you 'll not be able to get on without snow shoes. It wouldn't be pleasant to you to be snowed up here in the woods."

"No, indeed, master," said Rob; "especially if we were to have such visitors as came to us last night."

The old hunter laughed when Rob told him of the wolves.

"They won't hurt any body who shows a bold front, for they are great cowards," said the old man. "But woe betide the boy who is caught out alone at night, if any of the savage beasts fall in with him. Still, though I've hunted through these parts more than thirty years, I've heard of very few people who ever got any harm from them."

Rob thanked the old man, who said that his name was Danby Marks.

They all walked on together for some time, chatting pleasantly. The snow began to fall very thickly again. Rob thought that old Marks was going to leave them.

"I see that you are young travellers, and I may help you a bit may be," said the old man; "your way shall be mine."

THE BLACK BEARS OF CANADA.

He told them much about the birds and beasts and fish of those parts. "The lakes and rivers are full of fish; the salmon are very fine. Then there

are sturgeon, and a fish called maskinonge, not known in England; and pike, and pickrel, and white-fish, and trout, and herrings, very like those in salt water; and bass, and sun-fish, and perch, and many others. Anybody may catch them who can. Many are killed with a spear, and others caught with nets of all sorts. Indians catch the white-fish with a scoop-net, like a landing-net, with a long handle. They stand up in their canoes, amid the rapids, and as they see the fish in some more quiet hollow, they, quick as lightning, slip in their nets and scoop him up. They carry torches in their canoes at night, and when the fish swim near, drawn by the light, they dart down their barbed spears and seldom fail to spike.

"This is a rich country, indeed," continued old Marks. "Just think of the numbers of deer, the moose, with a heavy head, bigger than the largest horse; and the cariboo, rather smaller, but more fleet; and then there's the elk, and other smaller deer. Many and many's the night I've camped out on the snow, with my feet to a blazing fire, wrapped up in a buffalo robe, going after them critters. Then we've black bears, but they don't often attack men, though they are mortal fond of honey, and sheep, or pigs, or poultry, when they can catch them. The wolverene, is the most savage animal we've got, and as cunning as a fox. They can climb trees, and spring down on their prey. I've known a man try to catch one, and very nearly got caught himself. The racoon is a curious critter, with the body of a

fox, the head of a dog, and a round, bushy tail. The hind legs are longer than the fore, and both are armed with sharp claws. They live in trees, and leap nimbly from branch to branch. We shoot them sitting on branches, or popping their heads out of some old hollow stump. Then there 's the lynx, and the otter, beaver, musk-rat, ground-hog, wood-chuck, flying squirrel, skunk, marten, mink, fisher, hedgehog, and many others. Most of them are eatable, and the skins of all of them sell for a good deal of money. We have no lack of birds either: wild turkeys, and geese, and ducks, and pigeons, which fly in flocks so thick as to darken the air. A man with a good gun, and who knows how to set traps, need never starve in this country. Not but what I say a settler's life is the best for most people. I took to the woods when I was young, and now I am old I have no wife or children to care for me, and that's not the fate I would wish for any of you young people."

The old man sighed deeply as he finished speaking.

Still Rob was so interested with the accounts of the old trapper's adventures, that he begged he would let him go with him some time into the woods to hunt. Old Marks readily promised to take Rob with him. They travelled on cheerily, talking on these subjects, though the snow fell so thickly that at last it became heavy work to walk through it. They had to camp out three nights, so little way did they make. Still they did not mind that, as they had plenty to eat, and old Marks told them no end of amusing stories.

At last they reached the town where Susan was at service. She was expecting them, and all ready to start. When, however, her mistress, Mrs. Mason, heard that she intended walking, she would not let her go. She said that it was not fit for a young girl who was delicate, and that she must wait till she could get a lift in a sleigh going that way. Rob said that he would not wait, as he ought to be back again to help his father. Still the good lady would not give in.

CHAPTER V.

Two days passed, and the snow came down again thicker than ever. Then it cleared up. The sky was bright, the wind keen, and there seemed every chance of the frost lasting for some days. It was likely, however, that there would be one or two thaws before the regular frost of winter set in.

At last Rob thought that he would hire a sleigh to carry his sister. Just then, who should he meet in the street but his neighbour, Mr. Landon. Rob told him of his difficulty.

"Just the very thing," said Mr. Landon. "I have bought two sleighs, one which I want to send home at once, as it is for the use of my wife and daughters. You shall take Susan in it, if your brother will wait two or three days longer, and drive the luggage-sleigh with my winter stores. By starting early you will be able to get through half the distance to Roland's shanty by night-fall. Take

fodder for the horse, and if you cover in the sleigh at night, and keep up a blazing fire, Susan won't be the worse for it.

Rob agreed to the proposal. Tony and Tommy were in great glee at the thoughts of driving a sleigh by themselves. Rob had told Mr. Landon that Tony was fully up to the work. As there was no time to be lost, Rob set off the next morning by daybreak, with Susan well wrapped up in buffalo robes.

Mr. Landon had to do some business in a distant town, and would not be back for two weeks or so. It seemed certain that the fine weather would last when Rob set out. At last Tony's turn came. His sleigh was only a large box, on runners, Before day broke, he and Tommy were on foot, ready to start. Mr. Landon cautioned them not to delay on the road.

"No fear, sir," said Tony.

"May be we'll catch up Rob, if he isn't very smart," observed Tommy.

Away they drove. There was nothing unusual in giving a sleigh in charge of two such boys as Tony and Tommy. Boys in the colonies are constantly employed in work which men only would undertake in the old country. Tony had often driven sleighs long distances for his former master, so he had no fear about the matter. The horse was a rough animal, well up to bush travelling. If he could not go round a log, he thought nothing of making a leap over it. Away they trotted, the sleigh-bells sounding merrily in the frosty air. Rob's sleigh and several others had passed, so that the snow was beaten

pretty hard, while the track was well marked. Tony and Tommy amused themselves by whistling and singing and telling stories, laughing heartily at what each other said. The country looked very different to what it had done ten days before. Everything was white, the boughs hung down with the weight of snow, and where in some places it had melted and frozen again, the trees looked as if they were covered with diamonds and rubies and other precious stones. The horse went well, and they got on famously all day. Before it was dark they reached the spot where Rob and Susan had camped.

The boys soon had a fire blazing in front of the hut Rob had built for Susan. They hobbled the horse, and gave him some hay and oats, and then they began to cook their own provisions. It would have been hard to find a couple of more merry and happy fellows; not that they had forgot the wolves, but they did not fear being attacked as long as they kept up a good fire. This time, however, the one on the watch took care not to fall asleep, and to keep the fire burning brightly. Now and then howls were heard from far off in the depths of the forest, which reminded them of the visitors they might expect if they let the fire out.

Daylight came again; they and the horse breakfasted; and they were once more gliding over the smooth snow, the sleigh-bells sounding merrily in the fresh morning air. As the sun rose, the air became warmer and the snow softer, which prevented them from getting on so well as they hoped. As the

sun went round, and the trees for a time were cast into shade, long icicles formed on the boughs, which, as a stray beam found its way through the wood, shone like masses of precious stones.

The snow had now lasted for some days, and at that early time of the season a thaw might any hour begin. This made the two lads eager to push on; but "too much haste is bad speed," and they almost knocked up their horse before half the day's journey was over. The evening was drawing on, and they were still a long way from Roland's shanty. Tony was driving, and making their tired horse go on as fast as he could, when Tommy, looking over his shoulder, saw a huge wolf following close behind them. "Drive on fast," cried Tommy, pointing at the wolf, "I don't like the looks of that chap."

"He's not a beauty, but he won't do us any harm as long as he's alone," said Tony, who was a brave little fellow.

"But he isn't alone," cried Tommy, "I see three or four other brutes skulking there among the trees —Push on! push on!"

It was high time, indeed, to push on, for the big wolf was drawing nearer and nearer, and his followers seemed only to be waiting his signal to begin the attack. As the horse, knowing his own danger, galloped on faster, the wolves set up a hideous howl, fearful that their prey would escape them. Tommy seized the whip from Tony and began to lash away at them.

"If I had Rob's gun I'd pay off those brutes,"

cried Tony, "slash away Tommy! keep them off! it won't be pleasant if they catch hold of us."

On went the horse; he did not think of being tired now. It was hard work to guide him between the stumps and fallen trees. Tommy lashed and lashed away, and shouted at the top of his voice. An overturn would have caused their death, as the wolves would have set on them before they had time to get upon their feet. They were coming to a bad bit of the road where they would have to drive down some steep and rugged places to avoid fallen logs. The wolves seemed to think that this would be their time, for all the pack made a dash at the sleigh. Tommy lashed with his whip with all his might. One big beast was on the point of springing into the sleigh, and the boys, with reason, gave up all for lost. Still, like brave fellows, they strove to the last. "Hit him with the butt end," cried Tony.

Tommy struck the brute with all his might between the eyes. The wolf fell back, but others were coming on. A moment afterwards two more sprang up at the sleigh. One of them Tommy treated as he had done the first, but the other was just seizing him by the leg, and a third was flying at Tony, who, having to guide the horse, could not defend himself, when a bullet whistled by and knocked over one of the animals. The others, frightened by the report, stopped short, and Tommy had time to hit the wolf just going to lay hold of Tony.

"Well done, youngster, well done," cried a man who just then stepped out of the bush. "If I hadn't

TOMMY AND TONY ATTACKED BY THE WOLVES.

come just in the nick of time it would have been the worse for you, though."

The boys saw that the man was their friend Danby Marks. Tony had hard work to stop the frightened horse, and could not have done it if the old man had not caught the reins and soothed the animal. A second shot from his rifle, by which another wolf was killed, sent the whole cowardly pack howling back into the forest. "You must let me go as your guard for the rest of the way," said the old hunter, as he stepped into the sleigh and bade Tony drive on, "Don't suppose, though, I came here by chance," he added; "nothing ever does happen by chance, and I am here to-day because I met Rob, and as his mind misgave him, he begged that I would come and look after you."

Tony and his friend thanked the old man heartily for the help he had given them. "Yes, indeed, Mr. Marks: we should have been made into mince-meat by this time if it hadn't been for you," said Tony.

It was, indeed, a good thing for the lads that the old trapper found them when he did, even if there had been no wolves; for the night came on very dark, and without him they could not have found their way to Roland's shanty. In the night the wind changed, the rain came down in torrents, and the remainder of the road along the banks of the river and the shore of the lake was impassable. They had, therefore, to follow Mr. Landon's orders, to leave the sleigh under Roland's care, and to go home in the canoe.

CHAPTER VI.

Old Marks offered, the next morning, to go with them, telling them that the current in the river was so strong that they would not stem it by themselves. They saw that he spoke the truth, and were very glad to have his help. The rain ceasing, they started soon after breakfast with as much of Mr. Landon's goods as the canoe would carry.

Tony thought Rob a very good canoe-man, but he found the old trapper a far better; and it was curious to see the way in which he managed the canoe, even among rapids, into which few persons would have ventured. His strength, too, was very great—for he dragged the canoe, heavily laden as it was, all the way along the portage over the snow; for the frost came on again that evening, and in exposed places hardened the ground. They found it much colder camping out by the lake than they had done in the woods.

As soon as it was dark, the old trapper lighted a torch, and with a spear went out in the canoe. The fish came up to the light as moths do to a candle, and were seen by the old sportsman's sharp eye; and in the course of a few minutes he had killed more fish than he and his two young companions could eat for their supper and breakfast. With the canoe to keep off the wind, and a blazing fire, they did not complain of the cold. The paddle across the lake, however, exposed to the biting wind, was the coldest part of the journey.

They had made some way along the lake, when Tommy, who had nothing to do but to look about him, said that he saw some one walking about on an island, and making signals.

"Some Indian just warming himself this cold day," said Tony laughing.

"May be, it's no business of ours," said Tommy.

"Boys, if a fellow creature is in distress, it's our business to go and see if we can help him," observed old Marks gravely, and turned the head of the canoe towards the island. "If he's not in distress it is only a little of our time lost, and better lose a great deal than leave a human being to perish, whatever the colour of his skin."

Tony and Tommy felt rebuked for their carelessness. On getting near the island, who should they see but Pat Honan, one of the men who had been employed chopping for Michael Hale. He now looked very blue. He could not speak, and could scarcely move his hands.

"He'd have been frozen to death in a few more minutes," said Marks. "Light a fire, lads, quick, and we'll warm him up."

He threw one of the buffalo robes over the man, and poured a few drops of whiskey down his throat, while the boys made up a blazing fire. Marks turned poor Pat round and round before it, rubbing and beating him. As soon as Pat could speak, he cried out, "Arrah, it was the whiskey, the whiskey did it all; ahone, ahone! if it wasn't for that, Pater Disney might have been alive and well."

"What about Peter Disney?" asked Marks.

"Oh, ahone, ahone! he lies out there stark and cold," answered Pat, pointing to the other end of the island.

As soon as Pat got well enough to be left for a little while, with Tommy to look after him and keep up the fire, Marks and Tony paddled round to where he pointed. There they found a boat knocking against some rocks, and, on landing, not far off was the body of Peter Disney, frozen stiff, though covered up with a blanket. He was sitting upright with his mouth open. A dreadful picture. Nothing could be done for him, so they again covered him up, and towed the boat out from among the rocks.

"I should like to write over his head, 'Drink did it,'" said the old man: "if I was more of a scholar I would."

As the canoe would not hold another passenger, they all got into the big boat and towed her. Marks, Pat, and Tommy took the oars while Tony steered.

"Well, Pat, how did it happen?" asked Marks.

"Why, do you see, Pater and I was going to do some work for a new settler at the farther end of the lake, and so we hired a boat to make a short cut—a long cut it'll be for Pater, seeing he'll never get there; och, ahone, ahone! Says Pater, 'We'll not do without provisions, Pat, and so I'll be after getting some, and jist a drop of whiskey to wash them down.' I axes him if he'd got them all right. 'All right,' says he, as we shoved off. All right it wasn't though, for when I came to ax for some bread and cheese

and a slice of pork, he hadn't got any. Indeed, faith, he'd forgotten all else but a big bottle of the cratur. 'It's a bad bargain,' says I; but I thought we'd make the best of it. We rowed, and we took a pull at the bottle, and we rowed again, and then another pull; but Pater took two pulls for my one—worse luck for him,—and so we went on till somehow or other we both fell asleep. When we woke up, there we were in the middle of a rice-bed. How to get out was a hard job, when Pater, in trying to shove with the oar, fell overboard. I caught him by one leg just as he was going to be drownded entirely, but he was little better than a mass of ice in a few minutes, in spite of the whiskey inside of him. I at last got him on shore, and covered him up with a blanket, but before long he was as stiff as an icicle, and though I shouted as loud as I could, and bate him with a big stick, I couldn't make him hear or feel. Ahone, ahone! och the whiskey! I'd rather that never a drop should pass my lips again, than to die as Pater Disney."

Several families of Irish had lately arrived at the settlement, to some of whom Peter Disney was related.

As soon as Pat Honan drew near the shore, where many of them were standing watching the boat, he shouted out that Peter was dead. Forthwith they set up a fearful howl, in which others as they came up joined them, till the whole party were howling away in concert, led by Pat, who cried out,

"Ah, it was drink—the cratur,—'twas drink, drink that did it."

Rob and Susan had arrived safely with the sleigh. As soon as the ground hardened, Rob set off in the canoe, and brought the luggage-sleigh home by the snow road formed through the woods, along the borders of the lake.

CHAPTER VII.

Though most out-of-door work comes to a standstill in winter, chopping can still be carried on, fallen trees cut up and fresh trees cut down. One of the customs of the country is to form a bee when any particular piece of work has to be done in a hurry. Such as a log hut or a barn raised, or some ground cleared.

The bees are the neighbours who come from far and near; they receive no wages, but are fed well, and whiskey is served out too well while they are at work. The more industrious among the settlers employed the time in the house in making household furniture, mending their tools, and in many other ways—not forgetting reading the Bible to their families.

The winter was already some way advanced when most of the inhabitants of Thornhill were invited to chop trees and to put up a log hut, by a gentleman, a Mr. Sudbury, who had bought land about three miles off and wished to get in some crops as soon as the snow was off the ground.

Michael Hale, and Rob, and John Kemp, and Mr. Landon, and many others went. They expected to

clear half an acre of ground, and to get the walls and roof of the log hut up in one day. Most of the settlers in Thornhill were well, in spite of the cold, except Mrs. Kemp. She had for some time been ailing, and expected soon to give birth to another child. Mrs. Hale had gone in to have a chat with her, and to help her in some household matters, when Tommy came running in breathless.

"What's the matter, Tommy; eh boy?" asked Mrs. Hale.

"A big tree has come down at Mr. Sudbury's clearing, and killed, or pretty nigh killed, some one. Nobody knows who it is, but I hope it's not father, nor Mr. Hale either."

These words frightened both the wives, who wanted to set off at once.

"No, no, I'll go," said Mrs. Hale. "You stay quiet at home, Mrs. Kemp. It's the only fit place for you."

Just then, one of the Miss Landon's came in to see Mrs. Kemp. She said, if Tony, who had come up with his mother, would go with her, she would set off at once, with such things as were likely to be of use to the sufferer, whoever he might be.

"You, Mrs. Hale, stay and take care of Mrs. Kemp," she said.

This Mrs. Hale promised to do, for Mrs. Kemp was looking very ill.

Mary Landon was a young girl of much sense. She hurried home, and collected all the articles she might require.

Tony said that he knew a short cut, but as it was not beaten down it could not be passed except on snow-shoes. His own he had brought with him. Mary had lately learned to walk in them, and had a a pair ready. They were wooden frames in shape something like an egg flattened out, only sharp at both ends. The centre part was net-work of leather thongs, like a very coarse sieve. They are fastened to the feet by thongs of leather. From covering so much space, they do not sink into the snow. On their feet, people in winter wear in the country soft leather socks, called mocassins, with one or two pairs of thick worsted socks inside. Mary's were made by an Indian woman, a squaw, as the natives call their wives and daughters. They were worked prettily with coloured porcupine-quills and beads.

Quickly putting on her snow shoes, Mary set off with Tony. Both had long sticks in their hands. They had got about half way, when Tony looked up, and said, "I hope, Miss Landon, that you are not afraid of bears:—

"Why?" she asked.

"Because I see the fresh marks of one on the snow," he answered. "We may meet the gentleman; if we do, we must attack him with our sticks, and shout, and he will go off; but if we attempt to run, he'll gain courage and follow."

Mary said that she would follow Tony's advice; but as she walked on, she looked anxiously on one side and on the other, expecting to see the bear appear. As to running away in snow shoes, that she could

not, and she was afraid that, in attacking the bear, she might topple over, and he might set on her.

"No fear, Miss Mary," said Tony, as he saw her looking about; "if he does come, I'll give him a taste of the tip of my stick, and he'll soon turn his tail to us; he is not far off, I see by his marks; he'll show himself presently. Now don't run, Miss Mary, but shout out like a man, as if you wasn't afraid."

Scarcely had Tony given this advice, than a brown, shaggy-coated bear was seen moving along the snow between the trees. He soon caught sight of the travellers, and sat up, watching them as they passed.

"I told you he wouldn't hurt us," said Tony; "we used to see plenty of them where we were last." They had not, however, gone far, when Tony, looking over his shoulder, cried out, "Here he comes though; but don't fear, there's a rise a little farther on, and from the top of it we can see Mr. Sudbury's clearing." Still the bear followed, and got closer and closer. Tony kept facing him every now and then. At last he cried out, "Now's our turn, Miss Mary, turn round and shout as you never shouted before." Mary did as she was advised, and Tony at the same time setting up a loud shriek and hallo, and shaking his stick, the bear was so astonished that he turned round and waddled off. Once or twice he looked back, but Tony's shout made him hasten away faster than before. Thus it will be seen, that though there are bears in Canada, they are not much to be dreaded.

In a short time Mary and her companion arrived

at the clearing. She inquired anxiously who was the sufferer, for she knew that it might be her own father as likely as any one else.

"It is John Kemp, he is there in the hut," was the answer.

"Bless you, Miss Mary," said Michael Hale, when he saw her come to assist his friend; "but I'm afraid that help comes too late. The best surgeon in the land couldn't cure him."

Poor John Kemp lay in a corner of the unfinished hut on a bed of spruce fir tops, a fire lighted near to give him some warmth. He was moaning and complaining of the cold. He had been cut by his axe as the tree fell, which at the same time crushed one of his legs and hurt his side. Mary bound up the wound more carefully than it had been done, and fomented his side; but she saw that she could do no more, and advised his being carried home at once. No surgeon was to be found nearer than forty miles. One had been sent for, but it was very doubtful if he could come. A litter of boughs was at once formed, and poor John, wrapped up in buffalo robes, was at once placed on it, and Michael and Rob Hale, and other members of the bee, undertook to carry him home. He thanked his friends, and Mary in particular, but told them that he was sure he should never get there. He did, however; but those who carried him saw, as they drew near his cottage, that something was wrong. Michael sent Tony on to ask. Tony came back shaking his head: some one had told Mrs. Kemp, in a hurry, that her husband

was killed. The shock was too great for one in her weak state. Just before her husband was brought home, she had died, giving birth to a tenth child. "God's will be done," whispered John Kemp, when he heard of his wife's death, "He will take care of our poor orphan children."

Before the night was over John himself had rejoined his wife in another world. His prayer was heard, and his faith in God's love rewarded. A meeting of all the settlers was called. Mr. Landon proposed raising a subscription for the orphans. "That is not wanted," said Michael Hale, "I will take charge of two of them, and more, if the rest do not find homes—Fanny and Tommy shall become my children."

"And I will take another girl then," said Mr. Landon; "and the poor infant, my daughter will nurse it."

"I will take a boy," said Mr. Sudbury.

Thus the children were quckly disposed of among some of the kindest and best of the people in the settlement. The orphans became really and truly their children, and were treated in no respects differently. There was nothing uncommon in this. The same thing is done in all parts of the province, and those who thus protect the orphans seldom fail to receive a blessing on their homes. Fanny and Tommy soon learned to look on Mr. and Mrs. Hale as their parents, and to render them the same obedience and affection that they would have done had they really been so.

CHAPTER VIII.

No one finds settling in a new country all smooth work; and if a man cannot look ahead and think of what his labour is sure to produce, he will often be very much down-hearted. Some people give up when, if they had held on, they would have succeeded at last. Michael Hale was not one of the give-in sort. The winter in Canada lasts a long time, but most people who have plenty to do like it very much. Michael Hale's public room was a good large one, and as soon as the day's work was over, and supper eaten, he set everybody to doing something or other. The girls had always plenty to do to spin and knit and sew. The boys, too, learned to knit, so that they could knit their own stockings. There was a handloom weaver among the settlers, and from him David learned to weave what his sisters spun. From this time, except a little calico, there was very little in the way of clothing the family had to buy. Tony learned cobbling, and, in time, to make shoes. Rob was a first-rate carpenter. The younger boys helped their brothers. Those were pleasant evenings, as they sat round the blazing fire which made amends for the poor light of the tallow lamps.

One evening Rob and David had to go out to look after one of the cows which was sick. They did not much like leaving the cozy fireside for the freezing night air. "It must be done though," said Rob; "come along, David." No sooner did they open the door than they heard a strange squeaking from the

pig-sty, which they had wisely built at some little distance from the house. It was a bitter night. They stopped an instant to listen, and in that instant their hair and eyebrows and eyelashes were frosted over. The squeaking went on. "Some creature must be among the pigs," cried Rob. "Run back for the gun, David, I'll go and see."

While David went in to get the gun, Rob, with a thick stick and a lantern in his hand, hurried down to the pig-sty. One fine porker lay bleeding on the ground, and another was not to be seen. A faint squeak from the forest on one side showed where he was gone. Rob calling on David to follow, ran on in the hopes of catching the thief. He hadn't got far when the light of the lantern fell on the back of a shaggy-haired beast, which he at once knew to be that of a bear. In its fore-paws it carried the missing porker, which still sent forth a piteous cry for help. Rob soon overtook the bear and gave him a no gentle tap on the back of his head. Bruin, not liking this, dropped the pig and turned round to face Rob, while piggie, having still the use of his legs, ran off towards his sty. The bear seemed resolved to vent his rage on Rob, who stood ready to receive him with his thick stick, flourishing it before his face. With a loud growl the angry bear sprang on Rob. "Fire! fire!" cried Rob, "he is biting my shoulder."

David was afraid of hitting his brother, he did not therefore fire till he got close up to them, and then, putting the gun to the bear's head, he pulled

the trigger. Over rolled the creature, and Rob was set free. He was much hurt, but his thick coat had saved him from a worse wound. The snow was hard, so that they were able to drag the carcase over it to the house. One of the pigs was so much hurt that Rob was obliged to kill it, while the other, which had been carried off, escaped without much damage. After doctoring the cow they appeared at home with their prize. It made more than amends for the loss of the pig; for in Canada, in winter, it matters not how much meat is in store, as once frozen it will keep till the warm weather returns. Often people have a dozen turkeys and twice as many fowls, and small animals, and fish hanging up in their larders, at once. In the markets, fish, flesh, and fowl are also sold in a frozen state. The bear was quickly skinned and cut up, but he was frozen almost hard before the work was finished.

The next day Rob's shoulder hurt him so much that he was obliged to stay at home. Susan and his mother doctored it as best they could, but he did not get better. At last they went up to Mr. Landon's house, to ask what they ought to do. Though it was one of the coldest days, Mrs. and Miss Landon hurried down to the hut. They soon saw that, without great care, the matter might become serious. Having left a lotion and some medicine, with directions how to treat Rob, they were on their way, home when they saw a thick smoke curling up into the sky above where their house stood. Mary hurried on till she could see the house itself. Fire was coming out of the roof.

"Oh, mother, do you go back to the Hales and ask for help, and I will run on and see what can be done at once," she exclaimed.

As soon as Mrs. Landon reached the Hales, Tommy ran to call Michael and his two boys, and Pat Honan, who was working for them. Mr. Landon and his only son, George, was away. Mary found Biddy M'Cosh, the servant-girl, wringing her hands and running about not knowing what to do, while her youngest sister was asleep, and the next was crying, seeing that something was the matter but not knowing what it was.

Mary's first thought was to place her little sisters in safety, the next was how to put out the fire and save the furniture. The children she carried, with some bedding, to an outhouse, and wrapped them up warmly. While doing this, she sent Biddy in search of a ladder. By it she bravely mounted to the roof. Biddy had made up too large a fire in the stove and heated the flue. This had set fire to the wooden roof. No water was to be had; every drop around was frozen.

"Biddy, a shovel!" cried Mary. With it she shovelled the snow over the roof, but it did little even in checking the flames. While she was so employed, her mother and Mrs. Hale and Susan arrived. Rob followed—nothing would stop him. Susan climbed, up to the roof, with her, and the two girls worked bravely together. Rob said that he must go up and help them, but his mother held him back.

"It will be his death if he goes up there," said

Mrs. Landon. "If you must work, Rob, help us to get out the furniture."

While they were thus employed, Michael Hale and his two sons and Honan and other neighbours arrived. The two girls came down from their post of danger and the men took their places, but they could not with the snow alone stop the flames. There seemed every chance of Mr. Landon's house being burnt down.

"I've seen salt melt snow. If there is in the house a cask of meat in brine that may help us," exclaimed Rob.

There was one. It was brought out, the head knocked in, and the brine poured out in small quantities on the snow. Wherever the brine dropped the snow melted, and the fire was put out. It was some time, however, before all danger was passed. A large part of the roof was damaged and the house made unfit to be inhabited.

"Oh, Mrs. Landon, ma'am, I hope that you will honor us by coming down and taking up your abode with us till the roof is on again," said Mrs. Hale in a kind voice. "Susan will take care of Miss Mary and the little ones, and Mr. Landon and your son George will be sure to find lodgings with other friends till the house is set to rights again."

Mr. Landon had suffered so many ups and downs in life that when he arrived he was not very much put out at the injury done to his house. He was only thankful that his wife and children had escaped injury.

A bee was formed, and in a couple of days the roof was replaced, and in less than a week the house again habitable.

CHAPTER IX.

The winter was drawing to an end. It had not appeared very long, after all—everybody had been so busy. Michael and his sons were now at work cutting out troughs for sugar making. In Canada the maple yields a sap which, when boiled, turns into sugar. A number of maple-trees together is called a sugar-bush. The troughs are made of pine, black ash, or butter-nut, and each holds three to four gallons of sap.

The snow was still on the ground, when early in March, Michael and his sons, and Susan and Fanny and Tommy set off with their sugar kettles, pails, ladles, big store troughs, small troughs, and moulds, to the sugar-bush two miles from the house. They first built huts for the kettles and for themselves; fixed the store trough and cut a supply of fuel for the fires. They next tapped the maple-trees on the south side, with an auger of an inch and a half. Into this hole a hollow spile was driven. Under each spile a trough was placed. As soon as the sun grew warm the sap began to flow and drop into the troughs. The girls and boys had soon work enough to empty the troughs into a large cask on the sleigh. This, when full, was carried to the boiling-

sheds and emptied into the store trough. From this the kettles are filled and kept boiling night and day, till the sap becomes a thin molasses. It is then poured into pails or casks, and made clear with eggs or milk stirred well into it. The molasses are now poured again into the boilers over a slow fire, when the dirt rises to the top, and is skimmed off. To know when it has boiled enough, a small quantity is dropped on the snow. If it hardens when cool it has been boiled enough. It is then poured into the moulds, when it quickly hardens and is ready for use. Very good vinegar can be made by boiling three pails of sap into one, and then adding some yeast, still better is made from the sap of the birch; beer is made both from maple and birch sap, and a flavour given by adding essence of spruce or ginger. Boiling the sap and molasses requires constant attention, as there is a danger of their boiling over.

While Michael and Rob attended to the boiling, David and Tommy drove the sleigh, and the rest took care of the troughs. They had a large number of troughs, and some were a long way from the boiling-sheds.

Michael and his son had filled the kettles, which they did not expect would boil for some little time, when Tommy came running up to say that the sleigh had stuck fast between two stumps, and that he and David could not clear it, while one of the oxen had fallen down and hurt itself against a log. On hearing this, Michael and Rob, thinking that there

would be plenty of time to help David, and to get back before the sugar boiled, ran to assist him. They found the sleigh firmly fixed, and it took them longer to clear it than they had expected it would. They had just got it clear, when a loud bellow reached their ears from the direction of the boiling-sheds. Leaving David and Tommy to manage the oxen, Michael and Rob ran back to their charge. They arrived in time to see one of their cows, with her muzzle well covered with molasses, galloping off through the bush, followed by her companions, while the kettle lay upset, the contents streaming out on the fire, and burning away, and threatening to set all the sheds in a blaze. The cows had found their way into the bush, and being fond of sugar, one of them had put her muzzle into the boiling liquid, little expecting to have so warm a greeting.

"I hope it will teach her not to steal sugar for the future," observed Michael, as he and his son righted the kettle. They had to pull down some of the shed before they could put the fire out; but such trifling events were too common in the bush to disturb their tempers, and they were thankful that matters were no worse.

Just before this, a neighbour's cow had got into his sugar bush and drank so much cold molasses that she burst and died. Michael determined another year to enclose his sugar bush to prevent any such accidents.

In two weeks enough sugar was made to last the family all the year, to make all sorts of preserves,

besides a good supply of beer and vinegar. With the vinegar they could pickle onions, and all sorts of vegetables, for winter use. Vegetables are also preserved during the winter in cellars, dug generally under the fire place, in a log hut. A trap-door leads to the cellar. Here potatoes, carrots, turnips, and other roots are stored, and kept free from frost.

The snow at length melted, and spring came on as it were in a day. From sunrise to sunset every man and boy was now hard at work, chopping, burning, and clearing the ground to put in the spring crops. Not an hour was to be lost, for the sun shone bright and warm, the grass sprang up, the leaves came out, and flowers burst forth, and it seemed as if the summer had begun as soon as the winter had ended. The summer was hot, and soon ripened the crops, and the harvest was good and plentiful.

CHAPTER X.

Four years had passed away, and Michael Hale and his family had began to reap the fruits of their industry. They had forty acres of land cleared, enough to bear crops. Two acres were planted with apple-trees, which already yielded a large supply of fruit. The apples were packed in casks, and were then fit to be sent off to distant markets. Some were peeled, cut in slices, dried in the sun, and hung up for home winter use.

They had several cows and oxen, and a flock of

sheep, and pigs, and poultry. As they frequently killed oxen, and sheep, and pigs, for their own use, they were able to form a store of fat for making candles and soap at home. Indeed, Michael was rapidly becoming a substantial farmer. He was not, however, without his sorrows and trials.

Susan had never completely recovered, and the year after he settled at Thornhill she had died of consumption. Fanny Kemp watched over and attended her as a sister to the last, and now so completely filled her place, that no one would have thought that she was not a daughter.

Rob, indeed, hoped to make her one ere long. He had loved her for many years; but, like a good son, felt that he ought not to marry and set up for himself till he had helped his father to settle comfortably. He now opened the matter to his father. "There's one thing, however, I want to do first, that is to see you and mother in a well-plastered house," he said, after he had got Michael's consent to his marriage. "We'll get that put up during the summer, and this old log house will do for Fanny and me for another year or two. There's only one thing I ask. Don't tell mother what we are about. It will be a pleasant surprise to her. She was saying, only the other day, that she wished that she had a house with another floor."

When Mr. Landon heard that Rob was going to marry Fanny Kemp, he called him aside one day, and said, "If your father will give you twenty acres of his land, I will give you another twenty acres alongside

it, and will, besides, stand the expense of a bee, and have a house put up for you in no time. Your father was kind to me when I was burnt out of my house, and has given me much good advice, by which I have profited. His example made me work in a way I do not think I should have otherwise done."

Rob thanked Mr. Landon very much, but told him of his wish first to help his father build and settle in a comfortable plastered house.

"You set a good example, Rob; and I hope other young men will follow it. A dutiful son will make a good husband, and little Fanny deserves one."

The new house was to be in a very different style from the old one. The first thing was to burn the lime. It was found on the top of the hill, and brought down in carts to a piece of ground, the trees on which had just been cut down. These were now piled up in a large heap, and the limestone placed above. By the time the log heap was burned, the lime was made, but it took some time to clear it from the ashes. A wood of fine elm-trees grew near. A number of them were felled to form the walls. In many respects, a well-built log house, when well plastered, is better than one of brick or stone in that climate. At the end of the lake a saw-mill had lately been established. Rob, David, and Tommy set out in the canoe to bring home a supply of planks from the mill. Rob took his gun, in the hopes of getting a shot at wild-fowl. On their way, when passing an island, a deer, which seemed to have taken refuge there, started out, and plunging into the water, swam rapidly across the lake.

Rob fired, and hit the deer, which made directly for the shore. Just as it neared it, some Indians who had been fishing in a canoe overtook it; and weak from loss of blood, it was killed by a few blows from their paddles. The Indians seemed to think it their prize.

"Come shore—you have part," said their chief, in broken English.

CANADIAN INDIANS IN THEIR WAR DRESSES.

Rob thought this was better than the risk of a quarrel. Near the spot was an encampment of Indians. Those in the canoe let him know that they would consult their friends as to how much of the deer he ought to have.

Rob and his companions climbed up the hill, and watched the Indians, who stood grouped below. They were dark-skinned men, of a dull copper hue. They were in their full war dresses. Their cheeks were mostly painted red, but some had put on other colours. In their heads they wore feathers and bead ornaments. Their coats were of untanned leather,

ornamented with beads, as were their leggings and boots, or mocassins. Some, however, were dressed more comfortably, in coats cut out of blankets, making the dark borders come in as ornaments. Their tents, or wigwams, were in the shape of a sugar-loaf. They were formed of long poles, stuck in the ground, about six inches apart; the round being about ten feet across, and the poles fastened together at the top. This was thickly covered with large pieces of birch bark. Mats were spread on the ground, except in the middle, where a place was left for a fire. On one side a hole was left to serve as a door, with a blanket hung upon a line across it. This is the Indian's house throughout the year, and in winter, when put up in a sheltered spot, can, with the help of a fire inside, be kept quite warm. Rob and David went inside one of them. The women, who were dressed in blanket, petticoats, and cloaks, received them very kindly, and laughed and chatted away as if their visitors could understand what they said. Lines were fastened from side to side across the tent, on which were hung household utensils, clothes, and all sorts of things, and a sort of cradle, with a baby fastened on to it. The little creature could not move hands or feet, but seemed perfectly happy.

In a little time the men came back, saying that a haunch and a leg should be theirs. These parts were placed in the canoe; and, after a friendly parting with the Indians, Rob and his companions, paddled off towards the mill.

It was late when they reached it; but the weather

was fine, there was a bright moon at night, and they determined to start back at once. They bought three thousand feet of boards, with which they formed a raft. Soon after the sun rose they reached the landing place near their home.

Mr. Landon kept to his promise to call a bee, and in three days a substantial log house was erected. and the planks laid down of the ground and upper floors. The rest of the work, it was left to Rob and his brothers to finish.

Great was the surprise of Mrs. Hale, when her sons, with her husband and Fanny, took her to see the house which she had thought was being built for some stranger coming to the settlement.

"It's yours and father's, mother, just an offering from your children," said Rob. "If you will let Fanny and me have the old one, we hope to make ourselves happy in it."

Mrs. Hale thanked her dutiful children, and thanked God for having brought them to a country where their industry and perseverance had been so fully rewarded.