

THE MICMAC'S BRIDE;

A TALE OF NEW BRUNSWICK.
From Fraser's Magazine, published in 1850.

PART I.

A broad river, bright and clear as glass, lay sleeping in the sun. Its shores, miles apart, dipped, with many a bold headland, abrupt slope, and rocky steep, into the blue water, while several islands, some small and picturesque, and others great and lofty, divided the expanse and rendered the course of the stream indefinite to the eye in its range above and below.

It was a beautiful and yet a solemn scene. Every portion of the great amphitheatre of heights, save only the face of some perpendicular cliff, was covered with the primeval forest, and above these could be descried the fringed outlines of more distant ridges, blue and indistinct in the glare of noonday. It was a solitude vast and profound, looking with its mighty flood, its verdant woodland and azure sky, as peaceful and immaculate as a newly-created world.

In the midst of this spacious river, propelled slowly by oars against the current, was a large boat, deeply laden, and towing an empty canoe of birch bark, which slid lightly over the surface, and left scarcely a ripple in its course. Within the larger vessel were six grown persons (three of either sex) and several children. The men, athletic and sun-embrowned, in loose frocks of coarse woollen homespun, and straw hats, were stamped with the physiognomy of the Anglo-Saxon and the frank bearing of rangers, while their companions clothed in garments equally rude and serviceable, showed by the dark hue of their smooth and not uncomely face, that they had borne already no slight share of the toil and exposure incident to an emigrant's lot.

The river was the Kennebecasis, an Indian name signifying "The small river of many streams;" not that it was really so compared with the other tributaries of the St. John, that grand artery of New Brunswick, whose first and greatest tributary it was; but only in contradistinction to that called the Kennebec, a more extensive river in the State of Maine.

The lonely wayfarers were one of those families of loyalists, that, upon the close of the revolutionary struggle in the North American provinces in 1784, relinquished property, connections, and interests, and left their homes in New England; preferring rather to undergo fresh privations in the wild of Acadia, than forswear allegiance to the British crown.

The little band had only that morning left Parr Town, situated at the mouth of the St. John, about eight miles below, and were en route in search of a new home. It consisted of the father and acknowledged leader, Captain Jacob Dacre, a resolute and vigorous provincial officer, with gray hair, who had fought and bled for his king throughout the recent troubles; a tall, ruddy cheeked woman, to whom he had lately been espoused, after living a widower for some years, together with his son and daughter by his first wife, with their respective partners and offspring. They were all imbued with the same ardent affection for the institution of the mother-country, and were prepared with cheerful hearts to share the fortunes of the faithful colonists in this remote but unalienated land.

The hardy pioneers plied their oars hour after hour, opening ever, as they advanced, some new reach in the romantic river, and hailing with enthusiasm the bright prospects, each more gorgeous than the last, that came successively into view. Betimes also, the women would make their husbands exchange places with them and take a spell at rowing, for they were robust and active, and would lend a helping hand to the rougher sex, where a town-bred female would have proved a useless clog. Necessity and stern trials had driven out false delicacy from their hearts, and made them what they were—fitting mates and mothers of a race destined within a short period to convert that wild solitude into a busy and enterprising colony.

As the boat ascended, the stream insensibly diminished, until at the approach of evening the travellers found themselves in a narrow water-way, bordered by natural lawns and wild meadows that skirted a mountain ridge close on the left, and intersected by alluvial islands covered with foliage in the wildest profusion. On one of these low patches of land they kindled a fire and cooked their suppers; after which, plucking young boughs from the fragrant silver fir, they laid them on the ground, spread a few blankets and coverlets thereon, and erected over all an old sail, in the form of a shed, with the oars and a few poles. Under this they slept. Not, however, until Jacob, the patriarch, had read aloud out of a well-worn Bible, which he took from a tarpaulin bag, and kneeling bareheaded around him, his little flock sang their evening hymn to that Being in whom they confided for protection and success in this their bold adventure from the living world.

The ensuing day, the boat with its precious burden pursued the course of the beautiful river, but with hourly-increasing difficulty, for the channel began to be obstructed by shallows, rapids, and arboreal, or barriers of dead trees, through which a passage had to be cleared by means of the canoe and their chopping

axes, before the heavy boat could pass. The progress was therefore retarded, and it was not until noon on the third day that they arrived at a place where the river divided into two branches, and formed a rich delta at the commencement of an extensive valley, the alluvial plains and undulating slopes of which were clothed with a huge growth of elm, maple, butternut, and oak; denoting the fertility of the soil, and presenting altogether a most attractive picture of luxuriance and repose.

"This, with God's blessing, shall be our new location," exclaimed Captain Dacre, lifting his hat devoutly as he spoke. "Didst ever see a more likely spot for a plant, boys?"

"No, father, by King George! not ever in New England," replied the son with conviction.

"And see," added his wife, pointing to a little glade on the border of the little branch they were ascending, "there's a place all ready to build upon. I will have that for my shanty, Grace. We won't need to fell a single tree from before it; and it faces the pretty island."

"And my wigwam, dame Patience," replied the daughter, with a laugh, "shall stand here, close by the bank; so I can catch trout from the windows."

"Very well," observed the captain's wife; "you have taken the first choice, but look yonder;"—and she indicated a wooded knoll in the rear—"mine shall stand there. It will overlook the settlement, as befitting the squire's; and then we can keep your young folk in order."

"Bravo, Annie!" shouted Jacob Dacre, as he stepped ashore, "thou beest a real plucky woman. But we won't fight about camping-ground, I reckon—there is room enough and to spare for us all here."

And with many a good-humored sally and lusty whoop, that rang in peals over the solitary valley, the self-exiled loyalists disembarked on that virgin sward, and took possession of their future homes. The little store of property was soon landed, for it comprised only a few indispensable, among which were farming implements, salt provision, and guns. But the grand weapon of all, with the aid of which they could mainly hope to conquer the wilderness, was the backwoodsman's axe. This each male clenched with a simultaneous impulse, eager to begin the fight and for a fortnight after their arrival the sharp sound of chopping scarcely ceased in the vicinity, accompanied, at intervals, by a splintering crash, as some tall monarch of the woods stooped its leafy crest and fell thundering to the ground.

Gradually, also, three square inclosures, formed of unhewn pine logs laid horizontally one over the other, and notched at the ends, arose in the grove. These being pierced at length with doors and windows, and roofed in with pine bark, assumed the character of habitations. Then chimneys were added of rough stones cemented with clay, the crevices between the logs filled with moss, and when the interior was partitioned off into dormitories, the embryo village was complete; presenting an assemblage as rustic and primitive as the most unsophisticated could desire.

"Stop," said Jacob Dacre, as he surveyed the work with folded arms; "there is one thing wanting to finish the job. Bring me the axe, Annie." And taking the implement from his wife, he went into the forest.

In a short time he returned, bearing with him a long straight pole. This he peeled, capped, and mounted with a tackle-block and halliards; then setting it up at the side of his door, he called the little community together.

"My children," said he, "after God we have another master and sovereign whom it becomes us to honor. The ground we stand upon is British, and we only hold it in trust for the crown. Heaven confound all rebels and preserve the king!"

As he uttered the sentiment the stanch colonist hoisted a ship's ensign to the top of his flag-staff, and while the crimson folds opened out in the upper current of air, and displayed the national cross for the first time in the valley, every head was bared, and men, women, and children, united in a hearty cheer.

Prosperity smiled upon the efforts of the loyalists. In due time sufficient land was cleared to provide for their immediate wants, and as soon as the felled timber could be piled and burned, potatoes, wheat, maize, and other grain, were sown among the stumps, and in the wild meadows, which germinated rapidly in the dark, loamy soil. And while their first crop was maturing in the warm atmosphere, the sturdy settlers, who were expert trappers and trailers, took their guns and went hunting on the neighboring hills.

From these expeditions they were sure to bring in either a deer, moose, or caribou, and sometimes a bear. But all were acceptable, as an addition to their stock; for they converted the flesh into food, both smoked, salted, and dried, and the skins into moccasins, frocks, harness, mittens, and snowshoe nettings (babish)—the three last in readiness for the winter.

It may be asked where the salt was procured? That is soon explained. Jacob one day chanced to mention his want of that valuable article to an Indian acquaintance, who hunted in the vicinity, when the latter made a sudden gesture, and told him to follow. They had not gone far up the valley when the son of the forest stooped down, dipped a bark cup in a lit-

tle spring, and held it to his companion, saying, "Drink, brother." The astonishment of Jacob was very great when he found that the draught was a strong brine, and availing himself of the discovery, he obtained afterwards, by simple evaporation of the water, as much of the very finest salt as he required.

Hunters belonging to the Micmac and Milicete tribes visited occasionally the cabins in Dacre vale in their passage to and fro, but never together; for the former tribe occupied, by right of conquest, the country bordering on the coasts of La Baie Française and the lower St. John; while the latter held the wild region through which it winds in its upper course and kept proudly aloof from neighbors who were once their most inveterate foes.

In their rambles the whites would often come upon a birchen tent ensconced in some quiet glade, but they stood on friendly terms with both nations, and mingled without distrust. When they first ascended the stream in their canoes, after the arrival of the loyalists, the red men would gaze at the intruders with wonder and grave thought depicted in their faces, but after a while their reserve wore away, and they deigned to approach and even to assist those who had come peacefully into their haunts, and brought with them the habits of a strange land.

From the time that they had smoked together under the roof of Jacob, the Indians regarded themselves as the patrons of the English family, and often, when scarcity threatened, the latter were rejoiced by an ample present of game from their generous brethren of the forest, which was believed, however, to be purely unmeditated. They little thought that their wants had been foreseen, and that the simple-minded natives had toiled day after day in seeking a supply for, as they called them, "those poor, lonesome people who had strayed from their homes."

The winter set in, the stern northern winter, sealing up the water courses, and hiding the log-huts in snow. But this was a grand opportunity for the settlers, who packed the latter well against the pine walls to keep the inside warm; drove up oxen, cows, and sheep, on the frozen highways, from the sea coasts to their very doors; and blazed roads through the woods, by chipping the bark off the trees occasionally in the direction required—a work of easy accomplishment then, for the tangled undergrowth was buried in the snow; and over this they walked as lightly as birds on their broad snow-shoes.

Never for an hour were they idle while the daylight lasted. Sometimes they set rabbit-snares and deadfalls for bears; sometimes the sable-traps which they set, fifty or a hundred in a line, to catch that wary and valuable little animal, had to be visited or dug out from the snow. Sometimes, also, an Indian companion would call to say that he had found a moose-yard, or winter pen, in which those animals assemble; and then they would be off, hot foot, with their *tolaugans*, to the hills, and stay away for days, surprising and running the game down. Nothing came amiss to them, for necessity is the mother of invention; they were carpenters, upholsterers, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, and teamsters, by turns. They did a little in the fisherman's line also, through holes cut in the ice of the valley brook, out of which they brought magnificent trout, and occasionally a golden salmon, transfixed by an Indian spear. From time to time one of them would yoke the oxen to the sled and drive down to Parr Town, (the present city of St. John) to procure whatever little necessity their limited means could afford or the place supply.

Neither was the female part of the establishment less thrifty of the time passed within doors, for besides the important duties of the culinary and dairy department to attend to, there was yarn to spin, cloth to weave; there were furs to dress, and clothes to make; and, more than all, a number of unruly urchins to keep in subjection.

The spring opened at length, the bright and sunny spring. That churlish old fellow, Winter, did his best to drive her back, but it would not do, for the nymph triumphed over him with a smile. What a smile it was! It burst his ice-chains, dissolved his snows, and made buds, and flowers, and wended life, burst forth everywhere in the forest.

Yet the fairest flower she brought first saw the light in the cabin of Jacob Dacre. This was a little girl with which his young wife presented him at this time, to the delight of the kindred community, who welcomed her as a good omen, and lavished upon the small blue-eyed stranger those endearments and attentions which are the dues of the first-born of a settlement in the West.

But old Jacob, how he doted on that child! She was his last, the child of his age. She came to him like a pure angel robed in the innocence of heaven, to gladden his fireside in that remote land. He would gaze upon her for hours, as she lay sleeping unconsciously in her cradle, wondering all the while—whimsical fancy as it was—how so fair a skin and beautiful a creature could be born out of England.

And when Annie (for she was named after her mother) was old enough to accompany him in his labors about the farm and to sit on his knee and talk to him as he smoked in the twilight under a great butternut tree that stood before the door,

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Note a few of the many Bargains we are offering at our SPECIAL MARK DOWN SALE now going on. The season has been cold and backward and our stock of Spring and Summer Goods is still very large. We have marked everything down to prices that are bound to effect a speedy sale. Buyers will find this a splendid opportunity to secure nice Goods at Low Prices.

Ladies' Fine French Kid Gloves, former price \$1.22, marked down to 89c.
Ladies' Black Kid Gloves, Mosquitaire Cut, 6 and 8 button lengths, former price \$1.65, marked down to \$1.25.

Black Silk Warp Henrietta, former price \$1.38, marked down to \$1.10.

Fine quality All Wool Black Henrietta, Silk Finish, former price \$1.00, marked down to 75c.

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Real Estate Sale

There will be sold by public auction on the premises, near Weldford Station, Harcourt, County of Kent, pursuant to a license for that purpose granted by the Probate Court for the said county on Saturday the 20th day of September next at the hour of ten o'clock in the forenoon, the following described lands and premises: On the north by lands owned by Thomas Ingram, on the south by a reserved street and lands owned by J. Dorothy, on the east by lands owned by said Thomas Ingram and on the west by the highway road or main street running from the Weldford Station to the Beckwith road, containing sixty feet by one hundred and fifty feet, or one-quarter of an acre more or less. Terms—10 per cent. of purchase money at the time of sale and the balance to be paid on execution and delivery of deed. Harcourt, 18th August, A. D. 1891.

The above sale has been postponed until Wednesday, the 23rd September, at the same place and hour.

B. S. BAILEY,
Administrator of the estate of George R. Bailey.

NEW BRUNSWICK, ss.

To the Sheriff of the County of Kent or any Constable within the said County—

Greeting—
Whereas, Isaac B. Humphrey and Matthew T. Glenn, executors of the last will and testament of Duncan McDonald, late of the Parish of Harcourt, in the said County of Kent, deceased, hath prayed that the heirs and all parties interested in said estate, may appear before me to attend the passing of the final accounts of the said estate,

You are therefore required to cite the said heirs and all others interested to appear before me at a Court of Probate to be holden at Buctouche within and for the said County on Thursday, the 10th day of September next at 11 o'clock in the forenoon at my office in Buctouche to attend the passing and allowing of said accounts.

Given under my hand, and the seal of the said Court, the eighth day of August, A. D. 1891.

(Signed) HENRY H. JAMES,
Judge of Probate County of Kent.
C. RICHARDSON,
Registrar of Probate for Kent County.
PHINNEY & CARTER, PROCTORS.

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