

IN BLEAK PINE WOODS.

AN ENGLISHMAN IN NEWFOUNDLAND FORESTS.

An Article of Interest to Canadians, as it compares the Lot of the Canadian Lumberman with That of the Newfoundland One—Unpleasant Incidents.

The following account of an experience in the Pine woods of Newfoundland by Mr. Robert H. Pinsent, of Montreal, appeared in a recent number of The Field:

After a series of untoward circumstances I found myself in Newfoundland, last winter, in such a position that it was necessary for me to embark myself and my very small capital in some enterprise. While still undecided I fell in with the manager of a large lumbering or timber firm on the Terra Nova river, a district recently opened up by the railway, and supposed to contain pine forests equal to those of Canada. Having had a thorough training in this business in the Province of Quebec, and understanding the lumbering trade in all its branches, I considered I ought, by taking some land from the company on contract, and putting in my own men, to make a good thing of it.

Being young and hopeful, I was quite unprepared for the disappointments before me, and, accustomed to the comparative civilization of Canada, thought I understood the hardships and discomforts to be experienced in the Newfoundland bush. So in excellent spirits one morning last January, I met the manager of the Terra Nova Company at the railway station of St. John's. The journey, a long one, occupied the whole day, and the early darkness prevented me seeing the country as I wished. The scene revealed by the morning light on the following day was very far from realizing the suggestive name given to this district of the "pine garden."

Spending Sunday at the mill, we started on Monday morning to visit the camps already placed. The day was lovely, but intensely cold—an advantage to us, as the walking on the hard snow was pleasant. In Canada no one would dream of undertaking journeys of fifteen or twenty miles a day on foot to visit established camps.

At one of these last we resolved to pass at night. We had no blankets or covering of any description, but, stretching ourselves on some wooden boxes, after replenishing the fire with huge logs, we were soon fast asleep after our hard day's tramp.

When I awoke the fire was out, the cold intense, my stockings frozen solid to my feet. Turning off my hard couch, I quickly with the help of large pieces of birch bark set the fire going, thawed and dried my stockings, and then for two hours kept the stove red hot, waking my friend at the end of that time to perform the same office, while I, in my turn, slept. After such a night daylight was welcome, and we were glad to start again after a frugal meal of "raw" tea (no milk) and hard tack or ship's biscuit; at every camp we visited, some five or six, the same refreshment was given to us. "Mug up," it is called by the lumberers. Our second night we spent in a comparatively luxurious manner, on beds of sweet hay, close to the red-hot stove, and, having walked forty miles in two days we were greatly in need of our well-earned repose. As good trees were very scarce in the neighborhood, I had to search further; and having been told that timber in great quantities was to be found up the south-west river, we explored in that direction. Again we were disappointed, not a stick of pine was to be seen; and I began to think the much vaunted pine and spruce limits of Terra Nova Lake were a delusion and a snare.

Taking a different course on our return down the river, we struck a fine patch of trees; it appeared to stretch far back into the country, but, as it was late we took this for granted, and made the fatal mistake of only examining the bare fringe of the wood. On this promising piece of land I determined to place my camp, after I had procured man and a suitable horse for my purposes.

A hurried visit to St. John's ensued, where I bought an apparently strong serviceable horse and hired a teamster, (who unfortunately never could succeed in getting on good terms, with the quadruped under his charge) and then, attired in suitable bush costume of oilskin overalls and sou'-wester, and Indian boots of sealskin, I boarded the train and made fair start, as I hoped, on the road to fortune.

The journey this time was not to be so easily performed. All went well till we reached Whitbourne, where our horse and impedimenta had to be transferred to the inland line. From this time the wind rose till it blew half a gale, the light snow drifted rapidly, and the rock cuts quickly filled; in one of these last we came to a stop, and there was nothing for it but for all hands to turn out and clear the road. This happened again and again, so that we were two days performing a journey of a few hours; a great annoyance to me, as I was anxious to push ahead. Arrived at the mill, and having engaged on the road as many men as I thought necessary, with a cook to attend to our meals and keep the camp in order, we started for the place where I had determined to commence lumbering operations.

To my great annoyance, the weather now became very mild, the ice melted rapidly, so that hauling a load through the

wet snow was hard work. In fact, when only half way it became necessary to throw off the load and return to the mill for the night. Again the weather changed; for in Newfoundland, unlike Canada, these changes are very rapid, the snow having frozen hard in the night and all morning. We started about noon. It became quite dark before we reached the camp, where we intended to remain till our own was built; and, though we again threw off our load, and travelled light for the last two miles, we had great difficulty in finding our way, particularly as I was the only one of the party who had visited the district before. Our first care was to house our tired horse in a hastily-built shed of spruce boughs, and then, on the hard floor of the hut (out this time not without blankets), we got what rest we could. At daylight we were en route again, to lay the foundation of the shanty in which we expected to pass the winter.

My first work was to dislodge another contractor, who although knowing the land was mine, had actually built on it, and was preparing to make logs. While the camp was building I made several journeys to the mill, bringing up provisions and other camp requisites. The men, worn out with the tramp through the soft snow, several times gave up completely and just dragging themselves along left to me the task of forcing on the horse, which was far from being the docile willing creature it had been represented. On arrival at the camp the teamster gave up, and refused to go again that night on the road. He was about right; but I determined not to give in, and after a short time spent in refreshment, started alone in the pouring rain on the backward journey. The ice was now so thin, both on the river and lake, that it buckled under the sleigh. The horse would only crawl, and hitting only intensified that crawl. There was nothing to do but to hope for the best, which for once did happen, and we crossed the perilous place without accident. When almost at the end of the journey, I came to another lake, where the ice was even more rotten. I was about half over it when the animal went through and at once disappeared; but, finding bottom, he managed after a few plunges to get ashore, dragging me on the sleigh through the ice cold water. Of course I was drenched, but having been wet to the skin before, a little more or less water did not make much difference.

In a few days after this ill-starred journey we were settled in our camp ready for work; so, taking the axe, I cut down the first tree myself, trimmed it, and placed it on the river, and then the work proceeded merrily enough. We all worked hard, never pausing except at meal times or when it was necessary to settle the constantly recurring disputes between the teamster and our very stubborn and unmanageable team.

After a fortnight of hard work, snow fell in great quantities, increasing tremendously our labor, and worse than all, it became evident that we should soon exhaust the narrow strip of timber on which we were camped. Under these circumstances, it became necessary for me to visit the mill, which I did on foot through soft snow nearly three feet deep. I did the double journey in one day, but I nearly lost my way in consequence; for the winter days are short, and the thickly falling snow very quickly obliterated my track of the morning. However, I did reach the camp that night, and a good night's rest so invigorated me that I forgot my weary tramp of twenty-six miles through the snow, and started the next morning, with a brisk step, on the search for the ever-receding pine forests of Newfoundland.

I need not describe the hunt for timber; it meant miles of heavy walking. Sometimes we were elated by some slight sign of good forests, then correspondingly depressed when our hopes proved futile; and we returned to camp sadder but wiser men. Morning, however, brought hope, and making a fresh start in another direction, we saw from an eminence an alley between us and the far-off hills. I guessed immediately from former experience that there was certainly a river running through this valley and probably timber. I struck across country to reach it, regardless of the remonstrances of the men, who thought it but a wild goose chase. This time they were wrong, for it was long before plenty of fine timber gladdened our sight, and the men gave a loud and hearty cheer; but, though joining in it, I still felt doubtful of our good fortune, for timber without a river to bear it to the mills would be useless. I cast searching glances around, and at length I caught a glimpse of water. We now had trees and a highway for our lumber, and it was with light hearts we followed down the stream to its mouth, which proved to be not far from our old camp. For us this was a grand discovery, as we could now build our new camp, while we still had the shelter of the old one at night. We set to work in earnest, but, owing to the unavoidable delays, we were too late in the season. The ice was undermined, being some 6 ft. from the water. Our horse was continually going through, and we were consequently in danger of losing him. Again I tramped to the mill, and fifteen miles further, to hire more men to do the work the horse could no longer manage; and then I set to work to measure the logs and ascertain

what was my profit or loss. Unfortunately, I found I was losing money; and I at once determined that the best thing I could do, after such a winter of difficulties and disappointments, was to close my camp and give it up.

But though the resolution was a good one, my difficulties were not ended. We still had to get the horse and sleigh and all our household goods to the mills. It was very late in March, the hot sun and rain had opened and flooded the river, so that it was useless as a road. The snow was so deep that the horse, though relieved from the weight of the sleigh by the men, sank constantly to his shoulders, when it was necessary to put ropes under him and haul him out bodily. So we fought our way, with great expenditure of patience and strength, till we reach the main river where at least the road was passable, though bad enough still. It was a very joyful moment when we, tried, wet and faint with hunger, reached the warm and hospitable shelter of Campbell's Mill.

Even then I could not rest: for the train was nearly due, and to miss it at least meant twenty-four hours' delay; so, tired weary, we look anxiously for the moment when, safely on board the cars, we might snatch a few hours' rest.

When the next day I stepped from the train in soiled and weather-beaten clothes, and unshaven face, I looked very different from the bright, and smiling, and hopeful young fellow who had gone into the woods a few short weeks before. A bath and a shave soon made another man of me; but, unfortunately, could not restore the money I had wasted in a vain attempt to make my fortune in the forests of Terra Nova.

LADS AND LASSIES AT SCHOOL.

When I was a lad at school. How long ago is that? Men whose beards are getting full of the sort of frost that does not thaw in the spring may love to gossip about the past, but they do not love to think of it when alone. Oh, the infinite pathos, penitence, and heartbreak of that appealing line in Cardinal Newman's "Lead, Kindly Light"—"Remember not past years." Like spilled water, memory spreads unpleasantly when let go.

What I want to recall now is whether my school-days were my happiest, healthiest days. The facts show clear through the mists, and the answer is, No. The writer came of a sound stock, and was well cared for, yet his great pains and most frequent dangerous illnesses were when he was a lad at school. I do not affirm this to be the rule with boys but it was so, without especial reason, with me.

And here is another man who says: "All my life even as a lad at school, I suffered from illness. I had dizziness, violent headaches, nausea, and saw spots floating before my eyes. Sometimes I vomited a greenish yellow fatty matter, and again was quailish and sick without vomiting. While in my teens and up to manhood I had bilious attacks every week, more or less severe. At times I felt fairly well, and then would be taken with cold shivers, and obliged to go to bed. During each attack my appetite left me, and I could touch no food whatever. Often would I come home from my work and sit down to my dinner without taking a mouthful."

"As time went on, although I was muscularly stronger, I felt a great strain on my nervous system, oppression and soreness in the head, and pain and heat behind the eyes. I felt tired and low-spirited and got but little rest at night."

The writer's next sentence should stand by itself, like a monument.

"In this way I continued better and worse for over thirty-four years, and what I suffered none can imagine."

Let the reader try to round up that statement in his mind and see how large a fact it is, and what a lesson it teaches.

The witness proceeds: "I underwent every sort of medical treatment and took every medicine that I heard of, but they all left me in a short time as bad as ever."

"In May, 1890, a cousin of mine, Joseph Pyke, of York, West Australia, paid us a visit and mentioned what Mocher Seigel's Curative Syrup had done for him when similarly afflicted in Australia. For a time I refused to try it, but being at my wife's end, I got a bottle from Mr. Frank May's store in Erie Street, and began using it. The contents of that single bottle relieved me, and I kept on with the medicine in faith and hope."

"Soon all my ailments vanished, and from that time to this I have been in good health, for which my thanks are due to Mocher Seigel. Her remedy it is that has built me up, and made me stronger and more energetic than I have been for many years. Had I known of it earlier, how much misery I might have avoided I have worked for Messrs. Huntley and Palmer, biscuit manufacturers, Reading, for thirty-nine years, and am still in their employ. Yours truly, (Signed) CHARLES PYKE, 16 York Place, Chatham Street, Reading, October 25th, 1892."

What now are we to conclude from Mr. Pyke's experience? You see, of course, the meaning of it; that disease does its most damaging work among the young. The great majority of the human race die in childhood. The fittest, that is, the strongest, survive, just as Darwin says. We fellows with the frosty beards were able to fight through, and beat the diseases, the drugs, and the doctors. The weaklings fell and were buried. Next, parents don't watch the ills of their children with half an eye. Age and maturity are blind and selfish. It is the chicks that need care and protection. If our friend at Reading had met with Mocher Seigel's Curative Syrup in boyhood—but alas! it was not in existence then. It is to be had now, however, and if there are many pained and suffering children, who is to blame? Answer us that.

Fresh Lobster.

Two gentlemen entered a restaurant and sat down at different tables.

"Waiter!" cried the first, "bring me a plate of lobster."

"For me too," exclaimed the second guest "but fresh, mind."

The conscientious waiter shouted down the speaking-tube: "Two lobsters—one of them fresh!"

ROUND TO GET THERE.

A Railroad Official's Story of English Lads Who Were in a Hurry.

"The English tourist is often a surprising person," said a railroad official, "and I have frequently had cause to wonder at him. Some time ago I had an experience with two English tourists that was out of the ordinary. I was in a large Western city in charge of the passenger business of a trans-continental railroad which ran two special trains a week to the Pacific coast. One afternoon I was about to close my desk and go home, when the local ticket agent came into my office with two young men. It was not necessary to look at them twice to understand that they were Englishmen. They were the typical tall, big-boned, blonde-haired men whom one recognizes immediately as being English. They were dressed in ultra-English style, and carried themselves with the self-confidence and independence of men who thoroughly believe in themselves and are utterly indifferent to the estimate placed upon them by others. I call them men, though they could not have been over eighteen or nineteen years old. The agent told me that they wished to see me about a matter of business. I assured them that I was at their disposal, and waited, wondering what they could want of me. The taller of the two acted as spokesman."

"We want to get to San Francisco," he said, "in time to connect with the next steamer for Japan."

"I am very sorry," I replied, "but our special train which connects with the steamer passed through here two hours ago."

"They looked serious at this, but did not seem overcome."

"I suppose," said the tall one, "that the next regular train will be too late to connect with the steamer."

"Oh, yes," said I, "you would be delayed about a week in San Francisco."

"Oh, that will never do," he replied.

"We must catch that steamer. You will have to make some arrangement by which we can overtake this train."

"I was paralyzed by the cool assurance with which he suggested this. The train he wished to overtake was known as the Golden Gate Special, and was a record breaker. It was one of the fastest trains on our road, and we were proud of the time it made. Yet here were a couple of youngsters who wanted to know whether they could not arrange to catch it with the same calmness that they might have asked for a cup of coffee. I smiled on them pityingly."

"Don't you know," said I, "that that is an exceptionally fast train, and it is almost impossible to do what you asked. The expense would put it out of the question."

"They listened calmly and without change of expression. Then the one who had spoken before said:

"Yes, I know all about that, but we have got to catch that boat. We are attached to the British embassy at Tokio, and have been travelling on a leave of absence. Our time will be up the very day that that boat reaches Japan. We must be there at that time because we have promised to."

We had intended to catch the previous boat, but we were having such a good time that we thought we would change it and wait over. Now nothing can be allowed to interfere with our plan."

"Well," I said, "I don't see how I can aid you, sorry as I may be for you."

"The Englishman looked at me in a bored sort of way, and said:

"I don't see why there is any need of arguing about this. We want a special train to overtake that special, and if we can't do it any other way we will have to follow it across the continent."

"I looked in amazement at these two clerks—that is what they amounted to, I suppose, at least what we would consider them in this country—who were coolly asking for a special train to cross the continent. I was not at all convinced that they appreciated the enormity of their demand. In fact, I felt more amused than credulous."

"I suppose," I said, "you have some idea of what it will cost you to do this?"

"Oh, we are willing to pay whatever it is," was the reply in a drawing tone.

"It will cost you \$300 if we overtake the special at the first stop," said I; "\$500 if we have to wait for the second stop, and \$1,000 if we go clear across. It is barely possible that we can make a connection at the first stop."

"The Englishman made no other reply than to thrust his hand into his trousers pocket and pull out a big roll of bills. He counted out \$1,000 and laid them down on the desk."

"Of course," he said, "I presume if we make the connection that you speak of, I will get back what I have paid in excess."

"I saw then that he was in earnest. I took out \$300 to guarantee us, and returned the rest to him with the understanding that he was to pay the conductor if he missed the first connection according to the terms I had outlined. I at once set the machinery in motion to get out the train. It required a good deal of work."

In the first place we had no engine in which the fires were up, and found it would save time to have one brought on from another station. Then we had to send for an engineer who would be capable of running the train at the high rate of speed that was demanded, and still avoid unnecessary risks. As ours was in the main only a single-track road we had to telegraph all along the line to keep the track clear of freight trains and arrange to have the ordinary passengers side-racked at convenient times and places. Altogether about four hours were taken up in these preliminaries. During that time the Englishman loaded around, looking very bored, and not at all interested in our parts to hurry things. When it was announced that the train was ready they invited me to drink to the success of the trip in a bottle of wine, a condensation on their part that amazed me, and the last I saw of them they were bowing from the rear platform of their car as the train went flying out of the depot. They made the connection at the first junction, as I learned that night by telegraph. How they ever did it I don't know, but I have a shrewd suspicion that they bribed the conductor and engineer to run the train at a rate never known before, and that would have been condemned by the higher authorities if they had heard of it."

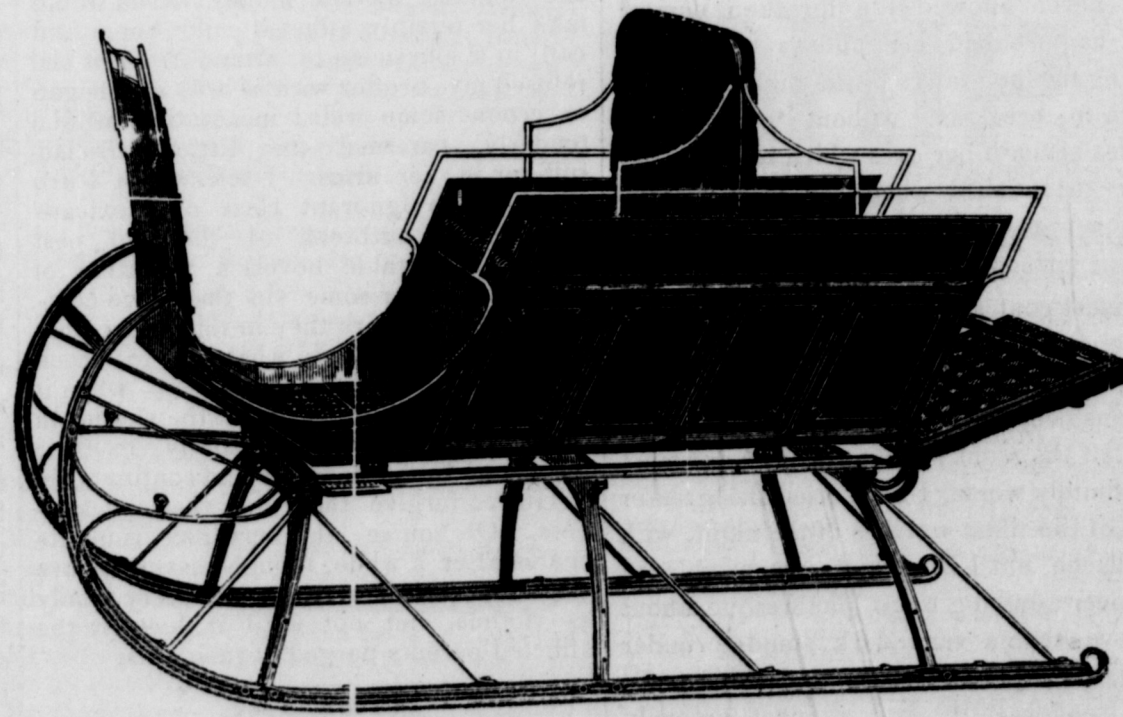
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