

# "ROUGHING" IT IN THE BUSH.

CHAPTER IV.  
TOM WILSON'S EMIGRATION.

"Of all odd fellows, this fellow was the oddest. I have seen many strange fish in my day, but I never met with his equal."

About a month previous to our emigration to Canada, my husband said to me, "You need not expect me home to dinner to-day; I am going with my friend Wilson to Y— to hear Mr. C— lecture upon emigration to Canada. He has just returned from the North American provinces, and his lectures are attended by vast numbers of persons who are anxious to obtain information on the subject. I got a note from your friend B— this morning, begging me to come over and listen to his palaver; and as Wilson thinks of emigrating in the spring, he will be my walking companion."

"Tom Wilson going to Canada?" said I, as the door closed on my better-half. "What a back-woodman he will make! What a loss to the single ladies of S—! What will they do without him at their balls and picnics?"

One of my sisters, who was writing at a table near me, was highly amused at this unexpected announcement. She fell back in her chair and indulged in a long and hearty laugh. I am certain that most of my readers would have joined in her laugh, had they known the object which provoked her mirth. "Poor Tom is such a dreamer," said my sister, "it would be an act of charity in Moodie to persuade him from undertaking such a wild-goose chase; only that I fancy my good brother is possessed with the same mania."

"Nay, God forbid!" said I. "I hope this Mr. ——— with the unpronounceable name, will disgust them with his eloquence; for B— writes me word, in his drool way, that he is a coarse, vulgar fellow, and lacks the dignity of a bear. Oh! I am certain they will return quite sickened with the Canadian project." Thus I laid the flattering unctuous to my soul, little dreaming that I and mine should share in the strange adventures of this oddist of all odd creatures.

It might be made a subject of curious inquiry to those who delight in human absurdities, if ever there was a character drawn in works of fiction so extravagantly ridiculous as some which daily experience presents to our view. We have encountered people in the broad thoroughfares of life more eccentric than ever we read of in books; people who, if all their foolish sayings and doings were duly recorded, would vie with the drollest creations of Hood, or George Colman, and put to shame the flights of Baron Munchausen. Not that Tom Wilson was a romancer; oh no! He was the very prose of a man in a mist, who seemed afraid of moving about for fear of knocking his head against a tree, and finding a halter suspended to its branches—a man as helpless and as indolent as a baby.

Mr. Thomas, or Tom Wilson, as he was familiarly called by all his friends and acquaintances, was the son of a gentleman who possessed a large landed property in the neighborhood; but an extravagant and profligate expenditure of the income which he derived from a fine estate which had descended from father to son through many generations, had greatly reduced the circumstances of the elder Wilson. Still, his family held a certain high rank and standing in their native country, of which his evil courses, bad as they were, could not wholly deprive them. The young people—and a very large family they made of sons and daughters, twelve in number—were objects of interest and commiseration to all who knew them, while the worthless father was justly held in contempt. Our hero was the youngest of the six sons; and from his childhood he was famous for his nothing-to-doism. He was too indolent to engage heart and soul in the manly sports of his comrades; and he never thought it necessary to commence learning his lessons until the school had been in an hour. As he grew up to man's estate, he might be seen dawdling about in a black frock-coat, jean trousers, and white kid gloves, making lazy bows to the pretty girls of his acquaintance; or dressed in a green shooting-jacket, with a gun across his shoulder, sauntering down the wooded lanes, with a brown spaniel dodging at his heels, and looking as sleepy and indolent as his master.

The slowness of all Tom's movements was strangely contrasted with his slight, elegant, and symmetrical figure; that looked as if it only awaited the will of the owner to be the most active piece of human machinery that ever responded to the impulses of youth and health. But then, his face! What pencil could faithfully delineate features at once so comical and lugubrious—features that one moment expressed the most solemn seriousness, and the next, the most grotesque and absurd abandonment to mirth? In him, all extremes appeared to meet; the man was a contradiction to himself. Tom was a person of few words, and so intensely lazy, that it required a strong effort of will to enable him to answer the questions of inquiring friends; and when at length aroused to exercise his colloquial powers, he performed the task in so original a manner, that it never failed to upset the gravity of the interrogator. When he raised his large, prominent, leaden-coloured eyes from the ground, and looked the inquirer steadily in the face, the effect was irresistible; the laugh would come,—do your best to resist it.

Poor Tom took this mistimed merriment in very good part, generally answering with a ghastly contortion which he meant for a smile, or, if he did trouble himself to find words, with, "Well that's funny! What makes you laugh? At me I suppose? I don't wonder at it; I often laugh at myself."

doubtful—but his honesty of heart and purpose never.

When you met Tom in the streets, he was dressed with such neatness and care (to be sure it took him half the day to make his toilet), that it led many persons to imagine that this very ugly young man considered himself an Adonis; and I must confess that I rather inclined to this opinion. He always paced the public streets with a slow, deliberate tread, and with his eyes fixed intently on the ground—like a man who had lost his ideas, and was diligently employed in searching for them. I chanced to meet him one day in this dreamy mood.

"How do you do Mr. Wilson?" He stared at me for several minutes as if doubtful of my presence or identity.

"What was it you said?" I repeated the question; and he answered, with one of his incredulous smiles. "Was it to me you spoke? Oh, I am quite well, or I should not be walking here. By the way, did you see my dog?"

"How should I know your dog?" They say he resembles me. He's a queer dog, too; but I never could find out the likeness. Good night!"

This was at noonday; but Tom had a habit of taking light for darkness, and darkness for light, in all he did or said. He must have had different eyes and ears, and a different way of seeing, hearing, and comprehending, than is possessed by the generality of his species; and to such a length did he carry this abstraction of soul and sense, that he would often leave you abruptly in the middle of a sentence; and if you chanced to meet him some weeks after, he would resume the conversation with the very word at which he had cut short the thread of your discourse.

A lady once told him in jest, that her younger brother, a lad of twelve years old, had called his donkey Brahm, in honour of the great singer of that name. Tom made no answer, but started abruptly away. Three months after, she happened to encounter him on the same spot, when he accosted her, without any previous salutation.

"You were telling me about a donkey, Miss—, a donkey of your brother's—Brahm, I think you called him—yes, Brahm; a strange name for an ass! I wonder what the great Mr. Brahm would say to that. Ha, ha, ha!" "Your memory must be excellent, Mr. Wilson, to enable you to remember such a trifling circumstance all this time."

"Trifling, do you call it? Why, I have thought of nothing else ever since." From traits such as these my readers will be tempted to imagine him brother to the animal who had dwelt so long in his thoughts; but there were times when he surmounted this strange absence of mind, and could talk and act as sensibly as other folks.

On the death of his father, he emigrated to New South Wales, where he contrived to doze away seven years of his valueless existence, suffering his convict servants to rob him of everything, and finally to burn his dwelling. He returned to his native village, dressed as an Italian mendicant, with monkey perched upon his shoulder, and playing airs of his own composition upon a burdy-gurdy. In this disguise he sought the dwelling of an old bachelor uncle, and solicited his charity. But who that had once seen our friend Tom could ever forget him? Nature had no counterpart of one who in mind and form was alike original. The good natured, old soldier, at a glance, discovered his hopeful nephew, received him into his house with kindness, and had afforded him an asylum ever since.

One little anecdote of him at this period will illustrate the quiet love of mischief with which he was imbued. Travelling from W— to London in the stage-coach (railways were not invented in these days), he entered into conversation with an intelligent farmer who sat next him; New South Wales, and his residence in that colony, forming the leading topic. A dissenting minister who happened to be his *vis-à-vis*, and who had annoyed him by making several impertinent remarks, suddenly asked him, with a sneer, how many years he had been there.

"Seven," returned Tom, in a solemn tone, without deigning a glance at his companion.

"I thought so," responded the other, thrusting his hands into his breeches pockets. "And pray, sir, what were you sent there for?"

"Stealing pigs," returned the incorrigible Tom, with the gravity of a judge. The words were scarcely pronounced when the questioner called the coachman to stop, preferring a ride outside in the rain to a seat within with a thief. Tom greatly enjoyed the hoax, which he used to tell with the merriest of all grave faces.

Besides being a devoted admirer of the fair sex, and always imagining himself in love with some unattainable beauty, he had a passionate craze for music, and played upon the violin and flute with considerable taste and execution. The sound of a favourite melody operated upon the breathing automaton like magic, his frozen faculties experienced a sudden thaw, and the stream of life leaped and gambolled for a while with uncontrollable vivacity. He laughed, danced, sang, and made love in a breath, committing a thousand mad vagaries to make you acquainted with his existence.

My husband had a remarkably sweet-toned flute, and this flute Tom regarded with a species of idolatry.

a pause of some minutes, during which he seemed to be groping for words in the alcove, having deliberately turned out its contents upon the table-cloth. "We were hungry after our long walk and he gave us an excellent dinner."

"But that had nothing to do with the substance of his lecture," said Moodie, laughing; "and his audience seemed to think so, by the attention they paid to it during the discussion. But some, Wilson, give my wife some account of the intellectual part of the entertainment."

"What! I—I—I— I give an account of the lecture? Why, my dear fellow, I never listened to one word of it!" "I thought you went to Y— on purpose to obtain information on the subject of emigration to Canada?"

"Well, and so I did; but when the fellow pulled out his pamphlet, and said that it contained the substance of his lecture and only cost a shilling, I thought that it was better to secure the substance than endeavor to catch the shadow—so I bought the book, and spared myself the pain of listening to the oratory of the writer. Mrs. Moodie! he had a shocking delivery, a drawing, vulgar voice; and he spoke with such a nasal twang that I could not bear to look at him, or listen to him. He made such grammatical blunders, that my sides ached with laughing at him. Oh, I wish that you could have seen the wretch! But here is the document, written in the same style in which it is spoken. Read it; you have a treat in store."

I took the pamphlet, not a little amused at his description of Mr. C—, for whom I felt an uncharitable dislike.

"And how did you contrive to entertain yourself, Mr. Wilson, during his long address?" "By thinking how many fools were collected together to listen to one greater than the rest. By the way, Moodie, did you notice Farmer Flitoh?"

"No; where did he sit?" "At the foot of the table. You must have seen him, he was too big to be overlooked. What a delightful squint he had! What a ridiculous likeness there was between him and the roasting pig he was carving! I was wondering all dinner time how that man contrived to cup up that pig; for one eye was fixed upon the ceiling, and the other leering very affectionately at me. It was very droll; was it not?"

"And what do you intend doing with yourself when you arrive in Canada?" said I.

"Find out some large hollow creeper, and live like Bruin in the winter by sucking my paws. In the summer there will be plenty of mast and acorns to satisfy the wants of an abstemious fellow."

"But joking apart, my dear fellow," said my husband, anxious to induce him to abandon a scheme so hopeless, "do you think that you are at all qualified for a life of toil and hardship?" "Are you?" returned Tom, raising his large, bushy, black eyebrows to the top of his forehead, and fixing his leaden eyes steadfastly upon his interrogator, with an air of such absurd gravity that we burst into a hearty laugh.

"Now what do you laugh for? I am sure I asked you a very serious question."

"But your method of putting it is so unusual that you must excuse us for laughing."

"I don't want you to weep," said Tom; "but as to our qualifications, Moodie, I think them pretty equal. I know you think otherwise, but I will explain. Let me see; what was I going to say?—ah, I have it! You go with the intention of clearing land, and working for yourself, and doing a great deal. I have tried that before in New South Wales, and I know that it won't answer. Gentlemen can't work like labourers, and if they could they wouldn't—it is not in them, and that you will find out. You expect, by going to Canada, to make your fortune, or at least secure a comfortable independence. I anticipate no such results; yet I mean to go, partly out of a whim, partly to satisfy my curiosity whether it is a better country than New South Wales; and lastly, in the hope of bettering my condition in a small way, which at present is so bad that it can scarcely be worse. I mean to purchase a farm with the three hundred pounds I received last week from the sale of my father's property; and if the Canadian soil yields only half what Mr. C— says it does, I need not starve. But the refined habits in which you have been brought up, and your unfortunate literary propensities—I say unfortunate, because you will seldom meet people in a colony who can or will sympathize with you in these pursuits—they will make you an object of mistrust and envy to those who cannot appreciate them, and will be a source of constant mortification and disappointment to yourself. Thank God! I have no literary propensities; but, in spite of the latter advantage, in all probability I shall make no exertion at all; so that your energy damped by disgust and disappointment, and my laziness will end in the same thing, and we shall both return like bad pennies to our native shores. But, as I have neither wife nor child to involve in my failure, I think, without much self-flattery, that my prospects are better than yours."

This was the longest speech I ever heard Tom utter; and, evidently astonished at himself, he sprang up abruptly from the table, overcast a cup of coffee into my lap, and, wishing us good day (it was eleven o'clock at night), he ran out of the house.

There was more truth in poor Tom's words than at that moment we were willing to allow; for youth and hope were on our side in those days, and we were most ready to follow the suggestions of the latter.

My husband finally determined to emigrate to Canada, and in the hurry and bustle of a sudden preparation to depart, Tom and his affairs were for a while forgotten.

How dark and heavily did that frightful anticipation weigh upon my heart! As the time for our departure drew near, the thought of leaving my friends and native land became so intensely painful that it haunted me even in sleep. I seldom awoke without finding my pillow wet with tears. The glory of May was upon the earth—of an English May. The woods were bursting into leaf, the meadows and hedge-rows were flashed with flowers, and every grove and copsewood echoed to the warbling of birds and the humming of bees. To leave England at all was dreadful—to leave her at such a season was doubly so. I went to take a last look at the old Hall, the beloved home of my childhood, and youth; to wander once more beneath the shades of its venerable oaks—to rest once more upon the velvet strand that carpeted its lawn. It was while ruminating on these things that I had first indulged in those deli-

icious dreams which are a foretaste of the enjoyment of the spirit-land. In them the soul breathes forth its aspirations in a language unknown to common minds; and that language is Poetry. Here annually, from year to year, I had renewed my friendship with the first primrose and violet, and listened with the untiring ear of love to the spring roundelay of the blackbird, whistled from among his power of May blossoms. Here, I had discoursed sweet words to the tinkling brook, and learned from the melody of waters the music of natural sounds. In these beloved solitudes all the holy emotions which stir the human heart in its depth had been freely poured forth, and found a response in the harmonious voice of Nature, bearing aloft the choral song of earth to the throne of the Creator.

How hard it was to tear myself from scenes endeared to me by the most beautiful and sorrowful recollection, let those who have loved and suffered as I did, say. However the world has frowned upon me, Nature, arrayed in her green loveliness, had ever smiled upon me like an indulgent mother, holding out her loving arms to enfold to her bosom her erring but devoted child.

Dear, dear England! why was I forced by a stern necessity to leave you? What heinous crime had I committed, that I, who adored you, should be torn from your sacred bosom, to pine out my joyless existence in a foreign clime? Oh, that I might be permitted to return and die upon your wave-encircled shores, and rest my weary head and heart beneath your daisy-covered sod at last! Ah, these are vain outbursts of feeling—melancholy relapses of the spring sickness! Canada! thou art a noble, free, and rising country—the great fostering mother of the orphan of civilization. The offspring of Britain, thou must be great, and I will and do love thee, land of my adoption, and of my children's birth; and, oh, dearer still to a mother's heart—land of their graves!

Whilst talking over our coming separation with my sister C—, we observed Tom Wilson walking slowly up the path that led to the house. He was dressed in a new shooting-jacket, with his gun lying carelessly across his shoulder, and an ugly pointer dog following at a little distance.

"Well, Mrs. Moodie, I am off," said Tom, shaking hands with my sister instead of me. "I suppose I shall see Moodie in London. What do you think of my dog?" patting him affectionately.

"I think him an ugly beast," said C—. "Do you mean to take him with you?" "An ugly beast!—Duchess a beast! Why she is a perfect beauty!—Beauty and the beast! He, ha, ha! I gave two guineas for her last night. (I thought of the old adage.) "Mrs. Moodie, your sister is no judge of a dog."

"Very likely," returned C—, laughing. "And you go to town to night, Mr. Wilson? I thought as you came up to the house that you were equipped for shooting."

"To be sure; there is capital shooting in Canada."

"So I have heard—plenty of bears and wolves; I suppose you take out your dog and gun in anticipation?" "True," said Tom.

"But you surely are not going to take that dog with you?" "Indeed I am. She is a most valuable brute. The very best venture I could take. My brother Charles has engaged our passage in the same vessel."

"It would be a pity to part you," said I. "May you prove as lucky a pair as Whittington and his cat."

"Whittington! Whittington!" said Tom, staring at my sister, and beginning to dream, which he invariably did in the company of women. "Who was the gentleman?"

"A very old friend of mine, one whom I have known since I was a very little girl," said my sister; "but I have not time to tell you more about him now. If you go to St. Paul's Churchyard, and inquire for Sir Richard Whittington and his cat, you will get his history for a mere trifle."

"Do not mind her, Mr. Wilson, she is quizzing you," quoth I; "I wish you a safe voyage across the Atlantic; I wish I could add a happy meeting with your friends. But where shall we find friends in a strange land?"

"All in good time," I said. "I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you in the backwoods of Canada before three months are over. What adventures we shall have to tell one another! It will be capital Good bye."

"Tom has sailed," said Captain Charles Wilson, stepping into my little parlour a few days after his eccentric brother's last visit. "I saw him and Duchess safe on board. Odd as he is, I parted with a full heart; I felt as if we never should meet again. Poor Tom! he is the only brother left me that I can love. Robert and I never agreed very well, and there is little chance of our meeting in this world. He is married, and settled down for life in Wales; and the rest, John, Richard, George, are all gone—all!"

"Was Tom in good spirits when you parted?" "Yes, he is a perfect contradiction. He always laughs and cries in the wrong place. 'Charles,' he said, with a loud laugh, 'tell the girls to get some new music against I return; and, hark ye! if I never come back, I leave them my Kangaroo Waltz as a legacy.'"

There may be a good deal of poetry in this description but it is nevertheless true that an intimate acquaintance with an oyster will surely inspire one with an added respect and admiration for the little creature. During the summer months, oysters come "sick," and are then out of season. But if a sick oyster be examined under a microscope, it will be found to contain a slimy substance, which first white and then colored, is composed of little eggs. It is said that the number furnished by a single oyster varies from eight hundred and twenty to two hundred and seventy-six thousand.

On some fine, hot day, the mother oyster opens her shell; and the little ones escape from it, like a cloud of smoke. They are provided with swimming organs composed of delicate cilia, and by means of them they enjoy for a few days an active existence. As middle-aged creatures upon their becoming fixed and stationary, and very soon might reasonably be expected to degenerate like the wise oyster of the poem, that they "do not choose To leave the oyster bed."

The oyster's food consists of such minute organisms as float freely in the water, a constant current made by tiny hairs, sweeping unsuspecting minute into its slit-like mouth. It does not lead an untroubled existence. Sponges tunnel in its shell, dog-walks beat neat holes in it, and suck its juices, and the starfish waits for it to gape, and then inserts an insinuating finger in its holes.

But the young oyster is exposed to still greater dangers during this period of early life. It is exceedingly sensitive to cold, and yields readily to an inclement season. It is a savory morsel, and likely to be snapped up by some marine monster, and when it would fain settle down, a current is likely to sweep it to some unfavorable spot, where it may choke in attempting to find a safe location.

Mammoths in Siberia.

The existence of ivory in Siberia is a subsoil condition, but still sufficiently durable to be used for all the purposes to which recent ivory is applied, has been known since the Middle Ages, and formed one of the earliest exports from Siberia to China. The very name given to the gigantic creature which produced it, mammoth of mammoth—probably a corruption of the word—was introduced by the Arab traders who initiated the traffic in fossil ivory in the tenth century. It was not, however, until the middle of the eighteenth century that the trade became considerable. In or about 1750, Lachof, a Russian merchant, discovered vast stores of elephant tusks and bones in the northern districts of Siberia, and especially on the islands off the mouth of the Lena, which have since borne his name. The ivory brought thence, says the traveller Wrangell, "is often as fresh and white as that from Africa." Since Lachof's discovery it has been computed that the tusks of at least 20,000 mammoths have been exported, while even a larger number are too much decayed to be worth removal, and others are so large that they have to be sawn up at the spot where they are found. These buried herds of elephants abound throughout the frozen soil of Siberia, but they are more numerous the further we advance northward, and most plentiful of all on the islands above-named and in those termed New Siberia. More remarkable still are the mammoth mummies—several of which have been discovered—wholly or partially untroubled by their flesh "as fresh as if just taken out of an Esquimaux cache or a Yakoot subterranean meat safe." The most wondrously known of these is that discovered in 1828 by an English botanist named Adams, and by the skeleton, or such parts of it as could be recovered—for in the interval between its being laid bare and the information of its being a dead animal had preyed on the flesh and carried off many of the bones—in the museum of St. Petersburg. Carcasses of the rhinoceros have also been found under similar conditions.

Ministers and Money.

One of the most celebrated divines in New York city is a millionaire, and the great sum of money of which he is possessed was wholly earned by himself. In Toronto the names of clergymen are very frequently transferring as principals in real estate transactions.

In these years of money worship do we not continually see ministers of the Gospel rushing along in the mad chase of the almighty dollar side by side with those who sit at their feet as disciples? Amid the din of their holy calling they find time to edit papers, given lectures, write novels, run farms, and stocks and real estate, and money-making various ways engage in money-making pursuits.

Is not the master becoming weak when he follows his pupil's ideal? How can a teacher of religion, of morality, a searcher for the truth, maintain his high purposes when the accumulation of a fortune is his chief aim? How can he instruct his disciples not to lay up treasures on earth when he is gathering his own grain into barns?

Money is good; money is important, but wealth is not for the prophet or teacher who would rightly lead men up to a higher plane of thought and action.

A house is no home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as for the body.

## A STRANGE DELIRIUM.

Probably the strangest malady that is known to the human being is that which is called insanity. It is commonly supposed to be an increase generally all of over the faculties, and in certain localities it is called mania. Hundreds of volumes have been written upon the subject in which many theories upon the disease are advanced, and a good deal of the definition of the term, and the manner in which it is to be cured, has been learnedly upon the disease and its effects, but which we are

JUST AS MUCH IN THE DARK

QUEEN VICTORIA, AND A LABORER

ALL THAT CAN BE KNOWN

HARD WORK TO HER,

BECAME VIOLENTLY INSANE

THE CAUSE OF HER CONDITION

OVERSTUDY AND WORRIMENT, if long continued would have brought her there, but she had a strong physical constitution, and her temperament was such that she could stand a amount of brain work without injury.

THESE WERE NO SOBERS

MEMBRANE WAS INTACT.

DESTROYING THE MIND

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