

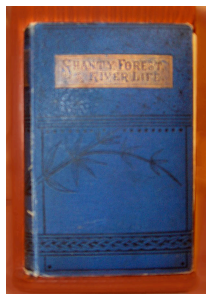


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Shanty, Forest & River Life - 1884 **by Rev. Joshua Fraser**

CA0244

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ABOUT THIS BOOK:

You will notice that the title page of this book does not actually credit the author by name but identifies him as “Author of “Three Months Amongst the Moose.” The copyright on the back of this title page, however, identifies the copyright as being granted to Joshua Fraser.

Then one of the books previous owners has hand written the following on the dedication page:-

“The author was the Rev. Joshua Fraser, an ex-Presbyterian minister who lost his standing in the church through his addiction to drink. He was burn to death in a backwoods stopping-place.”

The Library of Canada agrees that Joshua Fraser was indeed the author of this book but does not list him with his title, perhaps because of his loss of standing. His vital dates are given as 1858 to 1883.

By reading the text it can be concluded that some of the illustrations were made from the author’s own sketches. However there are at least six illustrations which are signed by a William Brymner. I believe we must assume this William is the original artist and not the person who made the wood-cut or “photo-lithograph.” This leaves only a couple of unsigned sketches which we might credit to Joshua. The overall credit for most of the lithography is given to Geo. Bishop & Co. of Montreal.

In common with many books of this age the printing and publishing technology leaves something to be desired, particularly as we are used to the very high standards of print and production possible using today’s technology. We have cleaned up some of the worst instances of multiple word images and “tails” (where the paper contacted parts of the print block it was not intended to touch.) You will notice some odd looking text in places and this is exactly as it occurred in the original. Despite these minor issues the OCR seems to be very accurate - for this age and class of book.

You will also notice that the book contains two chapter XXV’s. They are both listed in the contents as chapter XXV although there is nothing which would obviously relate them in terms of subject. In our book-marking of this edition we have marked them as XXVa and XXVb - if we may be forgiven the mixture of “language.” This seems preferable to having two chapters with the same number.

SHANTY, FOREST AND RIVER LIFE

IN THE

BACKWOODS OF CANADA.

BY THE

Author of "Three Months Among the Moose."



MONTREAL:
PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL & SON
1883.

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SHANTY, FOREST AND RIVER LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

Reminiscences. Reflections.



REMEMBER well the first gun I ever possessed, and that was many, many years ago. I was a youngster of about twelve, and the piece was proportionate in size to my years. It was a little old-fashioned thing, no more than three feet long, stock, barrel and all. I found it in the garret of one of my father's parishioners, to whom I was paying a visit at the time in company with my mother.

Long Peter—for so our host was called, to distinguish him from several others of the same name and clan in the settlement—was as long-headed as he was long-bodied, and as big in heart as he was in frame. I had always been a great favorite with him, and in my boyish conceit had the idea that I could wheedle almost anything out of him that was at all in reason. So as soon as my eyes lit on the gun I set my heart on it, and that gun I was bound to have. My importunities finally prevailed


freely and fully. Even with the best and most *experimental* precautions there are few shanties but will smoke sometimes. It depends greatly upon the weather: when the atmosphere is damp, foggy and depressed it is often impossible to prevent it. Our shanty is one of the best in this respect I have ever been in; and in it, until I moved to the mill quarters, I spent a most comfortable and happy time.

Monahan's "gang" of forty men is a fair sample of the shanty *genus homo*; English, Scotch, Irish and French are its constituent elements, and among them are some splendid specimens of physical humanity.


Jim himself is a capital type of the shanty foreman. He is a tall, well proportioned, powerful man; with great push and energy of character. And, though he has all the "*brusqueness*" of manner which perhaps too much belongs to men of his position, yet he is greatly liked and respected by his men. He is always ready to grant a reasonable favor, and do a kind and generous action, and at the same time, both by example and rule, he endeavors to inculcate sobriety and good behavior among the men. He is an intelligent, well-educated man, and a most insatiable reader. He is

CHAPTER XI.

A Game of Bluff.

HERE is no honester class of men living than shantymen, and the dwellers in the backwoods generally. Trunks and boxes lie about for the most part unlocked, and socks, moccasins, boots, and underclothing are scattered about, or hanging from nails and pegs in every nook and corner of the shanty; and yet every man can always find his own, and seldom or never appropriates the property of another. There is one article, however, which is a notable exception to this honest rule of conduct, and that is liquor of any kind. The shantyman has no conscience in the matter of whiskey. It is considered fair plunder, wherever he can lay his hands on it. If, therefore, you go to the backwoods with a supply of liquor for your private use, you must keep it constantly under lock and key, otherwise it is certain to be pilfered from you before you are a day in the shanty. In the matter of scenting out and appropriating whiskey, the thirsty shantyman is as keen as a weasel, as cunning as a fox, and as unscrupulous as a wolf.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Ride on a Deer's Back in the Lake.

ONE morning Jim and I started off in our "fathom and a half" bark canoe to watch a part of the lake in which we fully expected the deer would be watered by the dogs.

It was a glorious morning in October, which, to my mind, is the most delightful month in the year for backwoods sport. The weather then is generally sufficiently bracing to make vigorous exercise an agreeable recreation, and not too cold to make it unpleasant to lie in ease and comfort in the open air. The woods, too, are clothed in their most beautiful dress. The autumn tints and colors are in their full ripeness of mellow golden glory. Every possible hue and shade of prismatic radiance is displayed in grand effulgence. Every reed and shrub and plant and tree has its own distinctive and peculiar coloring, and each seems to rival the other in its showy finery. All Nature seems to be out for a gala-day in holiday attire.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Night on the Lake in a Snow-storm.




ONE of the most perilous and terrible experiences a man can pass through is to be caught in a snow-storm on one of our broad backwoods lakes. These storms then assume the form of what are called in our North-west prairies "blizzards," and can be braved with impunity by neither man nor beast.

One can have no conception of their wild, furious nature until he has witnessed them. It is a blinding chaos of whirling snow. Owing to the peculiar surroundings of some of these lakes—generally high precipitous banks fissured by wide, deep gullies—the wind comes sweeping down in howling, isolated tornadoes. These meet and intersect each other with terrific violence, and produce a most appalling effect. The stoutest heart will soon quail, and the sturdiest frame succumb before their power. In such circumstances it is most dangerous to go more than a few yards from the shore, for the moment you lose sight of it your course is all hap-hazard, and, becoming bewildered, you flounder about at the mercy of the tempest.

CHAPTER XXI.

Among the Wolves.

 RECOLLECT many years ago how the very name wolf used to strike terror into my boyish heart. In fact, my earliest reminiscences of our backwoods are associated with terrible wolf stories.

In those days, and even with many people to this day, the animal is invested with a fierce, ravenous blood-thirsty character. He is the destroying demon of the wild woods. The Ishmael of the forest, neither giving nor receiving quarter from any hand. I do not believe that there is a single particle of pity, sympathy, or respect in any human breast, or for that matter in any other breast, for the wolf. And not only so but with those who are familiar with the backwoods, and know the nature and habits of the animal, is there any fear, or dread of him. He is despised as much as he is hated. The old stories of early backwoods life, and which some people are still fond of retailing if they find a credulous awesome hearer, concerning the ferocity and boldness of the wolf in pursuing and




GEO. BISHOP & CO. PHOTO. LITH. MONTREAL

Robbing the Wolves of their Prey,

CHAPTER XXIX.

Shooting the Rapids and Slides of the Grand River.

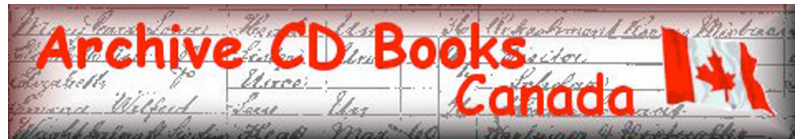
T is quite a common thing when you are speaking to these backwoods river-men about the Ottawa, for them to ask "is it the Grand River you mean?" for by this and no other name will they recognize and designate it. The origin of this name is traceable, as far as I can ascertain, to the earliest days of Canadian history. When Jacques Cartier, the gallant, noble and Christian navigator of imperishable memory, caught his first glimpse of this magnificent river, in a burst of joyous pride he exclaimed "*La Grande Rivière.*"

Ottawa, however, is the old Indian, and of course proper, name; and if pronounced according to the Indian dialect the accent should be placed upon the second syllable, and would thus sound Ot-tà-wa. The Ottawa is one of the grandest rivers on the American continent, and in common with most of

lable benefit in every way, and, equally with the Savings Bank in Quebec, would, after its benefits have been proved and realized, be hailed by the shantymen as an inestimable boon. The experiment has been a wonderful success in London with sailors, and, from what I know of the characters and feelings of shantymen, would prove equally, if not far more so, with them.

Reader, my book is finished. If I have told you anything new about Shanty, Forest and River Life that has interested or, perhaps, instructed you; if I have awakened any warmer feeling in your heart for the sublime scenery and unutterable pathos of our lonely Canadian backwoods; above all, if I have called forth a single kindly thought, and any truer appreciation of the simple-hearted, open-handed, manly toilers of the forest, then I will consider my study and labor in this work amply repaid, and that I have not toiled in vain.

END.



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