THE GREAT MIGRATION

triloba), and now returned, bringing their spoil with them. The saplings were laid across the top of the pit, thus  
extemporising over it a huge gridiron. The ox, which was to form the staple of the day’s feast, had been killed and   
dressed; and, having been split in halves after the fashion of the barbecue, was laid upon the bars to roast. Proudly   
presiding over the operation was the major domo of the planter’s household, assisted by several celebrated cooks of the  
neighbourhood, and a score of chosen farm hands, whose strength was ever and anon invoked to turn the beef ; while the  
chef ordered a fresh basting, or himself sprinkled the browning surface with the savoury dressing of pepper, salt, and fine  
herbs, for the composition of which he had attained a grand reputation. The morning wore swiftly on in the observation  
of these novel manœuvres; and with the noon came the guest in numbers from the neighbouring plantations and  
settlements. Even the determined resistance of the toughest beef must have failed before the lot attack of such an army  
of live coals, as had lain intrenched in the deep fireplace; and the tender joints of the enormous bœuf roti were ready to  
bear their share in the festivities almost as soon as the invited company. Separated with great cleavers, and laid into white  
buttom wood trays hollowed out the purpose, they were borne rapidly to the shady nook selected for the dining  
place, followed by vast supplies of sweet potatoes, roasted in the ashes, and of rich, golden maize bread. A barred of rare  
cider was broached; while good old fashioned puddings, and the luscious fruits of the region completed the bill of fare in   
honour of the day. Of course joy was unconfined. Everybody pronounced the roast a grand success; and the young  
russians thought that they had never tasted so appetising a meal. With the exhilaration of the fresh, clear air, the  
encouragement of hearty appetite, and the full flavour of the meat for it is well known that the sap which exudes from  
the pawpaw, when thus exposed to fire, adds a new relish to whatever is cooked upon it combined to make a dinner fit  
for the czar himself; and they determined to attempt, at some time, an imitation of the southern barbecue under the  
colder sky of russia. Merriment was unbounded; healths were drunks, songs sung, odd speeches made, and stories told.  
One of the last in particular made an impression upon our heroes; party, because it was a bear story, and partly because  
it illustrated a very characteristic phase of squatter life and practical humour. In fact, alexis made a sketch of it in his  
journal, and from his notes we now reconstruct it. Squatters had occupied lands not far from each other, and within  
some or miles of a small town. Busted in clearing off the woodland, each bethought himself of a source of revenue  
beyond the produce of this tilled ground. He would occupy an occasional leisure day in hauling to the town, the logs  
which he cut from time to time, and then selling them as firewood. This unity of purpose naturally brought the men into  
competition with one another for the limited custom of the settlement; and a rivalry sprang up between them, which  
was fast ripening into jealousy and ill will, when a curious coincidence occurred. Each owned a single yoke of oxen,  
which he used regularly in this farm labour, and also in dragging his wood to market. Within a week each lost an ox one  
dying of some bovine distemper, the other being so injured by the fall of a tree, that his owner had been obliged to kill  
him. As one ox could not draw a wood wagon, the occupation of both squatters as wood merchants was gone and even  
farm operations were likely to suffer. Each soon heard of this neighbour’s predicament; and proposed to himself to make a  
bargain for the remaining ox, that he might be the possessor of the pair, continue his clearing prosperously, and  
command the wood hauling business. But, as one might suppose, where both parties were so fully bent upon  
accomplishing their own ends, the trade was no nearer a conclusion when a dozen negotiations had taken place than at  
first. So matters stood in statu quo, the days rolled by, and our squatters found their condition waxing desperate. One   
fine morning, squatter the first started off to make a last attempt determined to close the bargain peaceably if he could,  
forcibly if he must. Revolving project upon project in this mind, he had traversed the or miles of woodland which lay   
between him and his neighbour’s clearing, and was just entering it, when a sudden rustle and significant growl coming  
from behind broke in upon his reverie, turning hastily, he saw almost at his heels a bear of the most unprepossessing  
aspect. To reach the cabin before bruin could overtake him was impossible; and to turn upon the creature would be folly;  
for, in the depth of this deliberation, he had forgotten on leaving home to take any kind of weapon with him. Some dead  
trees had been left standing in the field, and to one of these he sped with flying steps, hoping to find shelter behind it till  
help could come. He did not hope in vain for this protection. He found that by pretty active dodging, he could keep the  
trunk of the tree between himself and the bear whose could hardly follow the numerous shifts made by the   
squatter to escape the frequent clutches of his claws. Rising indignantly upon his hind legs, the bear made a fierce rush at

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