

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Wilde Carroll Fitzerald Byron Engels Schiller  
Garnett Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Goethe Dostoyevsky Cotton Kipling Doyle  
Baum Henry Flaubert Nietzsche Willis  
Leslie Dumas Stockton Vatsyayana Crane  
Burroughs Verne  
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain  
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott  
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte  
Kant London Descartes Cervantes Voltaire Hesse  
Poe Aristotle Wells Bunner Shakespeare Cooke  
Hale James Hastings Richter Chambers Irving  
Doré Chekhov da Shaw Benedict Alcott  
Swift Dante Pushkin Newton  
Wodehouse



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

## TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com).



The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

# **Canadian Crusoes**

Catharine Parr Strickland Trail

# Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Catharine Parr Strickland Traill  
Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany  
ISBN: 978-3-8424-3337-3

[www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)  
[www.tredition.de](http://www.tredition.de)

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

CANADIAN CRUSOES.  
A TALE OF THE RICE LAKE PLAINS

By Catharine Parr Traill

Authoress Of "The Backwoods Of Canada, Etc."

Edited By Agnes Strickland

Illustrated By Harvey

London:  
Arthur Hall, Virtue, & Co.  
25, Paternoster Row.  
1852.

Dedicated  
To The Children Of The Settlers  
On  
The Rice Lake Plains,  
By Their  
Faithful Friend And Well-Wisher

THE AUTHORESS.

OAKLANDS, RICE LAKE,

15th Oct 1850

Contents

PREFACE

LIST OF ENGRAVINGS.

CHAPTER I.

CHAPTER II.

CHAPTER III.

CHAPTER IV.

CHAPTER V.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAPTER VII.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHAPTER IX.

CHAPTER X.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAPTER XII.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHAPTER XV.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHAPTER XVII.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A. — *Preface.*

APPENDIX B.

APPENDIX C.

APPENDIX D. Page 157, *note*.

APPENDIX E.

APPENDIX F.

APPENDIX G.

APPENDIX H.

APPENDIX I.

APPENDIX K.

APPENDIX L.

APPENDIX N.



## PREFACE

IT will be acknowledged that human sympathy irresistibly responds to any narrative, founded on truth, which graphically describes the struggles of isolated human beings to obtain the aliments of life. The distinctions of pride and rank sink into nought, when the mind is engaged in the contemplation of the inevitable consequences of the assaults of the gaunt enemies, cold and hunger. Accidental circumstances have usually given sufficient experience of their pangs, even to the most fortunate, to make them own a fellow-feeling with those whom the chances of shipwreck, war, wandering, or revolutions have cut off from home and hearth, and the requisite supplies; not only from the thousand artificial comforts which civilized society classes among the necessaries of life, but actually from a sufficiency of "daily bread."

Where is the man, woman, or child who has not sympathized with the poor seaman before the mast, Alexander Selkirk, typified by the genius of Defoe as his inimitable Crusoe, whose name (although one by no means uncommon in middle life in the east of England,) has become synonymous for all who build and plant in a wilderness, "cut off from humanity's reach?" Our insular situation has chiefly drawn the attention of the inhabitants of Great Britain to casualties by sea, and the deprivations of individuals wrecked on some desert coast; but it is by no means generally known that scarcely a summer passes over the colonists in Canada, without losses of children from the families of settlers occurring in the vast forests of the backwoods, similar to that on which the narrative of the Canadian Crusoes is founded. Many persons thus lost have perished in the wilderness; and it is to impress on the memory the natural resources of this country, by the aid of interesting the imagination, that the author of the well-known and popular work, "The Backwoods of Canada," has written the following pages.

She has drawn attention, in the course of this volume, to the practical solution [FN: See *Appendix A*; likewise p. 310.] of that provoking enigma, which seems to perplex all anxious wanderers in an unknown land, namely, that finding themselves, at the end of a day's toilsome march, close to the spot from which they set out in the

morning, and that this cruel accident will occur for days in succession. The escape of Captain O'Brien from his French prison at Verdun, detailed with such spirit in his lively autobiography, offers remarkable instances of this propensity of the forlorn wanderer in a strange land. A corresponding incident is recorded in the narrative of the "Escape of a young French Officer from the depôt near Peterborough during the Napoleon European war." He found himself thrice at night within sight of the walls of the prison from which he had fled in the morning, after taking fruitless circular walks of twenty miles. I do not recollect the cause of such lost labour being explained in either narrative; perhaps the more frequent occurrence of the disaster in the boundless backwoods of the Canadian colonies, forced knowledge, dearly bought, on the perceptions of the settlers. Persons who wander without knowing the features and landmarks of a country, instinctively turn their faces to the sun, and for that reason always travel in a circle, infallibly finding themselves at night in the very spot from which they started in the morning. The resources and natural productions of the noble colony of Canada are but superficially known. An intimate acquaintance with its rich vegetable and animal productions is most effectually made under the high pressure of difficulty and necessity. Our writer has striven to interest children, or rather young people approaching the age of adolescence, in the natural history of this country, simply by showing them how it is possible for children to make the best of it when thrown into a state of destitution as forlorn as the wanderers on the Rice Lake Plains. Perhaps those who would not care for the berry, the root, and the grain, as delineated and classified technically in books of science, might remember their uses and properties when thus brought practically before their notice as the aliments of the famishing fellow-creature, with whom their instinctive feelings must perforce sympathies. When parents who have left home comforts and all the ties of gentle kindred for the dear sakes of their rising families, in order to place them in a more independent position, it is well if those young minds are prepared with some knowledge of what they are to find in the adopted country; the animals, the flowers, the fruits, and even the minuter blessings which a bountiful Creator has poured forth over that wide land.

The previous work of my sister, Mrs. Traill, "The Backwoods of Canada, by the Wife of an Emigrant Officer," published some years since by Mr. C. Knight, in his Library of Useful Knowledge, has passed through many editions, and enjoyed, (anonymous though it was,) too wide a popularity as a standard work for me to need to dwell on it, further than to say that the present is written in the same *naïve*, charming style, with the same modesty and uncomplaining spirit, although much has the sweet and gentle—author endured, as every English lady must expect to do who ventures to encounter the lot of a colonist. She has now devoted her further years of experience as a settler to the information of the younger class of colonists, to open their minds and interest them in the productions of that rising country, which will one day prove the mightiest adjunct of the island empire; our nearest, our soundest colony, unstained with the corruption of convict population; where families of gentle blood need fear no real disgrace in their alliance; where no one need beg, and where any one may dig without being ashamed.

## LIST OF ENGRAVINGS (Not included)

LOUIS CONFESSING HIS DECEPTION OF CATHARINE  
FIRST BREAKFAST, THE  
CATHARINE FOUND BY THE OLD DOG  
WOLF FINDING THE WOUNDED DOE  
HECTOR BRINGING THE INDIAN GIRL  
KILLING WILD FOWL  
INDIAN WOMAN AT THE DOOR OF THE HUT  
CATHARINE CARRIED OFF  
INDIANA BEFORE THE BALD EAGLE  
INDIANA AT THE STAKE  
ATTACK ON THE DEER  
RETURN HOME THE  
CANADIAN CRUSOES.

## CHAPTER I.

"The morning had shot her bright streamers on high, O'er Canada, opening all pale to the sky; Still dazzling and white was the robe that she wore, Except where the ocean wave lash'd on the shore." *Jacobite Song*.

THERE lies between the Rice Lake and the Ontario, a deep and fertile valley, surrounded by lofty wood-crowned hills, the heights of which were clothed chiefly with groves of oak and pine, though the sides of the hills and the alluvial bottoms gave a variety of noble timber trees of various kinds, as the maple, beech, hemlock, and others. This beautiful and highly picturesque valley is watered by many clear streams of pure refreshing water, from whence the spot has derived its appropriate appellation of "Cold Springs." At the time my little history commences, this now highly cultivated spot was an unbroken wilderness,—all but two small farms, where dwelt the only occupiers of the soil,—which owned no other possessors than the wandering hunting tribes of wild Indians, to whom the right of the hunting grounds north of Rice Lake appertained, according to their forest laws.

To those who travel over beaten roads, now partially planted, among cultivated fields and flowery orchards, and see cleared farms and herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, the change would be a striking one. I speak of the time when the neat and flourishing town of Cobourg, now an important port on the Ontario, was but a village in embryo—if it contained even a log-house or a block-house it was all that it did, and the wild and picturesque ground upon which the fast increasing village of Port Hope is situated, had not yielded one forest tree to the axe of the settler. No gallant vessel spread her sails to waft the abundant produce of grain and Canadian stores along the waters of that noble sheet of water; no steamer had then furrowed its bosom with her iron wheels, bearing the stream of emigration towards the wilds of our Northern and Western forests, there to render a lonely trackless desert a fruitful garden. What will not time and the industry of man, assisted by the blessing of a merciful God, effect? To him be the glory and honour; for we are taught, that "without the Lord build the city, their labour

is but lost that build it; without the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

But to my tale. And first it will be necessary to introduce to the acquaintance of my young readers the founders of our little settlement at Cold Springs.

Duncan Maxwell was a young Highland soldier, a youth of eighteen, at the famous battle of Quebec, where, though only a private, he received the praise of his colonel for his brave conduct. At the close of the battle Duncan was wounded, and as the hospital was full at the time with sick and disabled men, he was lodged in the house of a poor French Canadian widow in the Quebec suburb; here, though a foreigner and an enemy, he received much kind attention from his excellent hostess and her family, which consisted of a young man about his own age, and a pretty black-eyed lass not more than sixteen. The widow Perron was so much occupied with other-lodgers—for she kept a sort of boarding-house—that she had not much time to give to Duncan, so that he was left a great deal to her son Pierre, and a little to Catharine, her daughter.

Duncan Maxwell was a fine, open-tempered, frank lad, and he soon won the regard of Pierre and his little sister. In spite of the prejudices of country, and the difference of language and national customs, a steady and increasing friendship grew up between the young Highlander and the children of his hostess; therefore it was not without feelings of deep regret that they heard the news, that the corps to which Duncan belonged was ordered for embarkation to England, and Duncan was so far convalescent as to be pronounced quite well enough to join them. Alas for poor Catharine! she now found that parting with her patient was a source of the deepest sorrow to her young and guileless heart; nor was Duncan less moved at the separation from his gentle nurse. It might be for years, and it might be for ever, he could not tell; but he could not tear himself away without telling the object of his affections how dear she was to him, and to whisper a hope that he might yet return one day to claim her as his bride; and Catharine, weeping and blushing, promised to wait for that happy day, or to remain single for his sake, while Pierre promised to watch over his friend's interests and keep alive Catharine's love; for, said he, artlessly, "la belle

Catrine is pretty and lively, and may have many suitors before she sees you again, mon ami."

They say the course of true love never did run smooth; but, with the exception of this great sorrow, the sorrow of separation, the love of our young Highland soldier and his betrothed knew no other interruption, for absence served only to strengthen the affection which was founded on gratitude and esteem.

Two long years passed, however, and the prospect of re-union was yet distant, when an accident, which disabled Duncan from serving his country, enabled him to retire with the usual little pension, and return to Quebec to seek his affianced. Some changes had taken place during that short period: the widow Perron was dead; Pierre, the gay, lively-hearted Pierre, was married to the daughter of a lumberer; and Catharine, who had no relatives in Quebec, had gone up the country with her brother and his wife, and was living in some little settlement above Montreal with them.

Thither Duncan, with the constancy of his nature, followed, and shortly afterwards was married to his faithful Catharine. On one point they had never differed, both being of the same religion. Pierre had seen a good deal of the fine country on the shores of the Ontario; he had been hunting with some friendly Indians between the great waters and the Rice Lake, and he now thought if Duncan and himself could make up their minds to a quiet life in the woods, there was not a better spot than the hill pass between the plains and the big lake to fix themselves upon. Duncan was of the same opinion when he saw the spot. It was not rugged and bare like his own Highlands, but softer in character, yet his heart yearned for the hill country. In those days there was no obstacle to taking possession of any tract of land in the unsurveyed forests, therefore Duncan agreed with his brother-in-law to pioneer the way with him, get a dwelling put up and some ground prepared and "seeded down," and then to, return for their wives and settle themselves down at once as farmers. Others had succeeded, had formed little colonies, and become the heads of villages in due time; why should not they? And now behold our two backwoodsmen fairly commencing their arduous life; but it was nothing, after all, to Pierre, by previous occupation a hardy lumberer, or the Scottish soldier, accustomed to

brave all sorts of hardships in a wild country, himself a mountaineer, inured to a stormy climate, and scanty fare, from his earliest youth. But it is not my intention to dwell upon the trials and difficulties courageously met and battled with by our settlers and their young wives.

There was in those days a spirit of resistance among the first settlers on the soil, a spirit to do and bear, that is less commonly met with now. The spirit of civilization is now so widely diffused, that her comforts are felt even in the depths of the forest, so that the newly come emigrant feels comparatively few of the physical evils that were endured by the older inhabitants.

The first seed-wheat that was cast into the ground by Duncan and Pierre, was brought with infinite trouble a distance of fifty miles in a little skiff, navigated along the shores of the Ontario by the adventurous Pierre, and from the nearest landing-place transported on the shoulders of himself and Duncan to their homestead:—a day of great labour but great joy it was when they deposited their precious freight in safety on the shanty floor. They were obliged to make two journeys for the contents of the little craft. What toil, what privation they endured for the first two years! and now the fruits of it began slowly to appear. No two creatures could be more unlike than Pierre and Duncan. The Highlander, stern, steady, persevering, cautious, always giving ample reasons for his doing or his not doing. The Canadian, hopeful, lively, fertile in expedients, and gay as a lark; if one scheme failed another was sure to present itself. Pierre and Duncan were admirably suited to be friends and neighbours. The steady perseverance of the Scot helped to temper the volatile temperament of the Frenchman. They generally contrived to compass the same end by different means, as two streams descending from opposite hills will meet in one broad river in the same valley.

Years passed on; the farm, carefully cultivated, began to yield its increase, and food and warm clothing were not wanted in the homesteads. Catharine had become, in course of time, the happy mother of four healthy children; her sister-in-law had even exceeded her in these welcome contributions to the population of a new colony. Between the children of Pierre and Catharine the most charming harmony prevailed; they grew up as one family, a pattern

of affection and early friendship. Though different in tempers and dispositions, Hector Maxwell, the eldest son of the Scottish soldier, and his cousin, young Louis Perron, were greatly attached; they, with the young Catharine and Mathilde, formed a little coterie of inseparables; their amusements, tastes, pursuits, occupations, all blended and harmonized delightfully; there were none of those little envyings and bickerings among them that pave the way to strife and disunion in after life.

Catharine Maxwell and her cousin Louis were more like brother and sister than Hector and Catharine, but Mathilde was gentle and dove-like, and formed a contrast to the gravity of Hector and the vivacity of Louis and Catharine.

Hector and Louis were fourteen—strong, vigorous, industrious and hardy, both in constitution and habits. The girls were turned of twelve. It is not with Mathilde that our story is connected, but with the two lads and Catharine. With the gaiety and naïveté of the Frenchwoman, Catharine possessed, when occasion called it into action, a thoughtful and well-regulated mind, abilities which would well have repaid the care of mental cultivation; but of book-learning she knew nothing beyond a little reading, and that but imperfectly, acquired from her father's teaching. It was an accomplishment which he had gained when in the army, having been taught by his colonel's son, a lad of twelve years of age, who had taken a great fancy to him, and had at parting given him a few of his school-books, among which was a Testament, without cover or title-page. At parting, the young gentleman recommended its daily perusal to Duncan. Had the gift been a Bible, perhaps the soldier's obedience to his priest might have rendered it a dead letter to him, but as it fortunately happened, he was unconscious of any prohibition to deter him from becoming acquainted with the truths of the Gospel. He communicated the power of perusing his books to his children Hector and Catharine, Duncan and Kenneth, in succession, with a feeling of intense reverence; even the labour of teaching was regarded as a holy duty in itself, and was not undertaken without deeply impressing the obligation he was conferring upon them whenever they were brought to the task. It was indeed a precious boon, and the children learned to consider it as the pearl beyond all price in the trials that awaited them in their eventful career. To her

knowledge of religious truths young Catharine added an intimate acquaintance with the songs and legends of her father's romantic country, which was to her even as fairyland; often would her plaintive ballads and old tales, related in the hut or the wigwam to her attentive auditors, wile away heavy thoughts; Louis and Mathilde, her cousins, sometimes wondered how Catharine had acquired such a store of ballads and wild tales as she could tell.

It was a lovely sunny day in the flowery month of June; Canada had not only doffed that "dazzling white robe" mentioned in the songs of her Jacobite emigrants, but had assumed the beauties of her loveliest season, the last week in May and the first three of June being parallel to the English May, full of buds and flowers and fair promise of ripening fruits. The high sloping hills surrounding the fertile vale of Cold Springs were clothed with the blossoms of the gorgeous scarlet enchroma, or painted-cup; the large pure white blossoms of the lily-like trillium; the delicate and fragile lilac geranium, whose graceful flowers woo the hand of the flower-gatherer only to fade almost within his grasp; the golden cypripedium, or mocassin flower, so singular, so lovely in its colour and formation, waved heavily its yellow blossoms as the breeze shook the stems; and there, mingling with a thousand various floral beauties, the azure lupine claimed its place, shedding almost a heavenly tint upon the earth. Thousands of roses were blooming on the more level ground, sending forth their rich fragrance, mixed with the delicate scent of the feathery ceanothus, (New Jersey tea.) The vivid greenness of the young leaves of the forest, the tender tint of the springing corn, were contrasted with the deep dark fringe of waving pines on the hills, and the yet darker shade of the spruce and balsams on the borders of the creeks, for so our Canadian forest rills are universally termed. The bright glancing wings of the summer red-bird, the crimson-headed woodpecker, the gay blue-bird, and noisy but splendid plumed jay, might be seen among the branches; the air was filled with beauteous sights and soft murmuring melodies. Under the shade of the luxuriant hop-vines, that covered the rustic porch in front of the little dwelling, the light step of Catharine Maxwell might be heard mixed with the drowsy whirring of the big wheel, as she passed to and fro guiding the thread of yarn in its course: and now she sang snatches of old mountain songs, such as

she had learned from her father; and now, with livelier air, hummed some gay French tune to the household melody of her spinning wheel, as she advanced and retreated with her thread, unconscious of the laughing black eye that was watching her movements from among the embowering foliage that shielded her from the morning sun.

"Come, ma belle cousine," for so Louis delighted to call her. "Hector and I are waiting for you to go with us to the 'Beaver Meadow.' The cattle have strayed, and we think we shall find them there. The day is delicious, the very flowers look as if they wanted to be admired and plucked, and we shall find early strawberries on the old Indian clearing."

Catharine cast a longing look abroad, but said, "I fear, Louis, I cannot go to-day, for see, I have all these rolls of wool to spin up, and my yarn to wind off the reel and twist; and then, my mother is away."

"Yes, I left her with mamma," replied Louis, "and she said she would be home shortly, so her absence need not stay you. She said you could take a basket and try and bring home some berries for sick Louise. Hector is sure he knows a spot where we shall get some fine ones, ripe and red." As he spoke Louis whisked away the big wheel to one end of the porch, gathered up the hanks of yarn and tossed them into the open wicker basket, and the next minute the large, coarse, flapped straw hat, that hung upon the peg in the porch, was stuck not very gracefully on the top of Catharine's head and tied beneath her chin, with a merry rattling laugh, which drowned effectually the small lecture that Catharine began to utter, by way of reproving the light-hearted boy.

"But where is Mathilde?"

"Sitting like a dear good girl, as she is, with sick Louise's head on her lap, and would not disturb the poor sick thing for all the fruit and flowers in Canada. Marie cried sadly to go with us, but I promised her and petite Louise lots of flowers and berries if we get them, and the dear children were as happy as queens when I left them."

"But stay, cousin, you are sure my mother gave her consent to my going? We shall be away chief part of the day. You know it is a long

walk to the Beaver Meadow and back again," said Catharine, hesitating as Louis took her hand to lead her out from the porch.

"Yes, yes, ma belle," said the giddy boy, quickly; "so come along, for Hector is waiting at the barn; but stay, we shall be hungry before we return, so let us have some cakes and butter, and do not forget a tin-cup for water."

Nothing doubting, Catharine, with buoyant spirits, set about her little preparations, which were soon completed; but just as she was leaving the little garden enclosure, she ran back to kiss Kenneth and Duncan, her young brothers. In the farm yard she found Hector with his axe on his shoulder. "What are you taking the axe for, Hector? you will find it heavy to carry," said his sister.

"In the first place, I have to cut a stick of blue-beech to make a broom for sweeping the house, sister of mine; and that is for your use, Miss Kate; and in the next place, I have to find, if possible, a piece of rock elm or hiccory for axe handles; so now you have the reason why I take the axe with me."

The children now left the clearing, and struck into one of the deep defiles that lay between the hills, and cheerfully they laughed and sung and chattered, as they sped on their pleasant path; nor were they both to exchange the glowing sunshine for the sober gloom of the forest shade. What handfuls of flowers of all hues, red, blue, yellow and white, were gathered only to be gazed at, carried for a while, then cast aside for others fresher and fairer. And now they came to cool rills that flowed, softly murmuring, among mossy limestone, or blocks of red or grey granite, wending their way beneath twisted roots and fallen trees; and often Catharine lingered to watch the eddying dimples of the clear water, to note the tiny bright fragments of quartz or crystallized limestone that formed a shining pavement below the stream; and often she paused to watch the angry movements of the red squirrel, as, with feathery tail erect, and sharp scolding note, he crossed their woodland path, and swiftly darting up the rugged bark of some neighbouring pine or hemlock, bade the intruders on his quiet haunts defiance; yet so bold in his indignation, he scarcely condescended to ascend beyond their reach.