

Nine Weeks in Canada.

Vacation tourists and notes of travel in 1860 [1861], [1862-3] (1861)

By

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SITTING in my arm-chair one day last June, I was disturbed in the perusal of a novel by an unexpected offer of a temporary appointment in Canada. As that was a part of the world I had never seen, I at once accepted the attached conditions, that I should depart by the next mail ; so I engaged my passage in the *Canadian*. But in that vessel I was not fated to go, as on my reaching Liverpool she had not arrived, and the *Nova Scotian* was substituted. On our passage to Derry, we fell in with the *North Briton*, and heard from her of the loss of the *Canadian* in the ice. A few words may be admissible here in reference to that disaster. Much has been said in blame of the *Canadian* having taken the Belleisle Straits so early in the season, and the period for using this passage (which is 226 miles shorter than that to the southward of Newfoundland) has been changed, in consequence, from the 20th of May to the 20th of June. But two seasons are seldom alike, and observations show that fogs are less frequent in the Belle-isle Straits than to the southward. The average number of days of fog at the Belleisle lighthouse in 1859 was eight per month ; while to the southward the fogs sometimes extend for 800 to 1,000 miles without a break. It also appears that field-ice was fallen in with, in the parallel of Cape Race and 300 miles east of it, twenty-three days after the loss of the *Canadian*. With respect to this unfortunate occurrence, it may be remarked that, as the gale was coming on from the southward, it would have been more prudent to have taken the southern channel, for the loose pack was sure to be closed by the effect of the wind ; and, again, that four to five knots is too great a speed for an iron vessel with ice in close vicinity. I also think that half a dozen wooden fenders, strung together five feet apart, with a guy forward, to keep them in their place while the vessel was going through the water, would in all probability have obviated the calamity.

The Company, hitherto, have been very unfortunate, this being the fourth vessel they have lost. Fog, no doubt, is the great difficulty in preventing the ascertainment of the ship's position by observation. Could an artificial horizon be devised, it would lessen the risk one-half. [1]

Our passage was a favourable one, so far as wind and weather were concerned ; but on coming upon the Newfoundland banks we fell in with the fog, which compelled us to go slowly ; and on the evening of the 29th, just as we had completed our last rubber, came the cry, " Ice ahead !" whereupon we rushed on deck, in time to feel the cold, clammy atmosphere, and to satisfy ourselves that there was a huge mass of something, more palpable than the air, towering high above our heads within 200 feet of us. Falling in with these floating islands is not a pleasant sensation ; but I did what I advise all passengers to do under similar circumstances : go to bed prepared for a sudden rise, and lay in a stock of sleep for any emergency. When the fog cleared off in the morning, we were able to resume our speed ; eight bergs were revealed, for the benefit of those who had not seen ice before, and to satisfy the curiosity of those who were not content with the opaque glimmer last evening.

Our enemy, the fog, closed again around us, compelling us to reduce our speed, and to grope our way by the lead, so that it was not until the afternoon of the 2d of July that we were

enabled to comprehend our position positively. The opening of the fog then disclosed the summit of the land ; but we were in doubt for some time, not being able to recognise its contour. It will, probably, be found advantageous to crown the summits of the hills with different-shaped beacons, as is done on the coast of Norway, so that a glimpse will be sufficient to identify them. In a little time, however, the land to the northward appeared, and we were enabled to fix our position nearly midway between Cape Race and St. Paul's Island, and shaped our course for Anticosti, which we passed in the dark, and picked up our pilot at Father Point, at five A.M. on the 4th. Favoured with a fine day, we had an opportunity of admiring this, the most beautiful of all rivers I have seen. The mountains, on either side, rise to the height of near 4,000 feet in successive slopes clothed with forest, while the shore-line is ornamented with villages, approaching nearer and nearer to each other as you ascend the river, until they become one continuous street, studded with churches, whose bright tinned spires and red roofs sparkle in the sun, and give a pleasing foreground to the clearings and cultivation in the rear. The river itself, studded with islands, and ornamented with vessels, boats, white porpoises, and birds, is of a width sufficient to impress you with its grandeur, and maintain its claim as the noblest outlet to the most wonderful water system in the globe. Lighthouse after lighthouse, buoys and beacons, all proclaim the use to which man has turned it, and give an inkling of that vast internal communication which, bringing a vessel from 2,000 miles inland, here launches her upon the ocean to perform her voyage to another continent.

Night closed in upon us before we reached our destination, and, sorry though we were to lose the view of Quebec, we had the comet to console us for our disappointment and excite our admiration by its sudden appearance.

Midnight found us alongside the Grand Trunk Railway pier at Point Levi ; and, taking a hurried but friendly leave of those of our fellow-passengers who were bound to Montreal, we embarked, after the usual custom-house difficulties, in the ferry-boat, and were carried over to Quebec. If this city is beautiful in its approach by daylight, no one who ever enters it for the first time in the dark will deny that it is wonderful : such a pavement, such a jolting, and such a hill, made one anxious for daylight to see what the streets were made of and how the horses ever got up them.

Six the next morning found me doing the town. Its quaint architecture at once attracts sympathy and veneration : large collegiate buildings, numerous churches, and a class of well-to-do houses, proclaim its civic position, while the predominance of wood gives it a strange character. There are wooden trottoirs, wooden crossings (which accounted for the jolting of last night), wooden steeples, wooden gutters, shingled roofs. Many of the stone houses are also coated with wood, as a protection from the frost. The cliff rises abruptly on the south-east side, leaving barely space between it and the river for one street ; the bastions follow the brow of the hill, separating the city from the suburb of St. Roche on the north-west ; while the Plains of Abraham, which are nearly on a level with the citadel, are free from houses, and protected by Martello towers to the south-west. The citadel rises to the height of 320 feet above the river, and commands a most magnificent prospect. Mountain ranges terminate it in every direction, while the intervening spaces are strewn with villages and clearings. Beneath, the river is separated by the Isle d'Orleans into two branches, and forms a grand object, with its numerous shipping, its steamboats, and its rafts ; the steep pitched roofs of the houses, many of them glittering with their tin covers, combine to render the scene more effective. Though the wall which surrounds the town shows unmistakable signs of decay, the casemates on the summit of the hill form an entirely independent position, and would require siege operations to effect their capture. Breakfast introduced me, for the first time, into American hotel life, about which so much has been written that I will only add my name to

the general English verdict of its discomfort. I suppose the general habit of living in hotels and feeding at a common table has come upon the Americans by necessity ; but to us it is a strange contrast, and leaves anything but the impression of “ taking mine ease at my inn.” The system of the bar, and its universal concomitant, the barber’s shop, require to be seen to be thoroughly realized : why they should be in close connexion, it is difficult to imagine, as it certainly cannot add to the zest of Jones liquoring up, to witness Smith, with his legs on high, undergoing tonsure by the hands of a black artist. Perhaps it may be, that at the one any gentleman can relieve himself of the semblance of being so, and at the other any ruffian may have his personal appearance improved upon.

The general off-hand manner in which matters are conducted in these establishments may be exemplified by the following anecdote. In the course of our travels, one of my colleagues, being dissatisfied with his room, made application for another, whereon he was referred by the waiter to the chambermaid, in these words : “ Miss, this man says he wants another apartment.”

My business not being likely to be forwarded at present at Quebec, I took the steamboat to Montreal on the afternoon of the 5th. The excellent accommodation of these vessels enabled us to take on board two companies of the 47th Regiment in addition to the usual passengers. The lower deck, into which you step from the wharf, is ten feet high. A staircase leads up to the saloon, which occupies the whole length of the vessel, and is surrounded, except at the bow and stern, by sleeping cabins. Here there are spacious balconies, whence the scenery can be viewed with great comfort and pleasure. The width of the river at Quebec is 1,400 yards, a breadth which it maintains generally, all the way to Lake St. Peter’s, ninety-seven miles, where it expands to six miles and a half. The lake is shallow (ten to twelve feet) ; but a navigable channel of eighteen feet has been dredged through it ; and, though the course of the river is obstructed by rocks and shoals in many places, it is so well lighted that vessels of that draught are enabled to perform the voyage to Montreal by night as well as by day. The river banks rise usually at once to two hundred feet ; but there is no longer the noble background of mountains that was seen at the entrance to the river. The houses still continue their street-like appearance, a proof of the value of river frontage, as well as of the gregariousness of the French Canadian, who does not appear to be happy unless he has a neighbour within hail of him. We reached Trois Rivières after nightfall, which is at the embouchure of the St. Maurice, an important river on the left bank. The rivers St. Francis, Yamaska, and Richelieu, also empty themselves into the lake on the southern shore. The town of Richmond is situated forty miles up the former, and is of importance, as here the Quebec and Montreal railroad joins the branch to Portland. The latter, before the introduction of railways, was the main communication between the river St. Lawrence and New York. There are rapids on it at Chambly ; but this obstruction has been overcome by locks, which are capable of taking vessels of seven feet draught of water.

Montreal, though lacking the grandeur of site which contributes so much to the look of Quebec, has a noble appearance from the river. Spacious, well-built quays, with a depth of water sufficient to admit large vessels to lay alongside, are backed by a row of buildings which would do honour to any city in the world. Nor is this impression at all impaired on landing. Well-paved, broad streets, with many public and private edifices of dark grey limestone, are seen ; while a bustling thoroughfare and handsome shops pronounce undoubtedly that Montreal is the commercial, if not political, capital of the Canadas. Here the navigation of the St. Lawrence used to terminate ; but the energy of man has overcome the obstruction of nature ; and by means of the Lachine, and other canals, the farther end of Lake Superior may be reached by vessels of nine feet draught of water, twenty-six feet broad, and a hundred and forty feet long, thus opening out a communication which has called into play, up to the

present time, a shipping of 390,000 tons, four-fifths of which are in the hands of the United States.

The river opposite to Montreal attains a width of 2,600 yards ; but of this, the navigable channel comprises only four hundred.

The island of St. Helen's, opposite the town, has no navigable channel between it and the right bank of the river ; and though Montreal may not be so clever a strategic position, in a military point of view, as Quebec, yet the possession of this island, and of the Mont Real, affords means of deterring an enemy from any attack that has no other object than plunder. They are 5,000 yards apart, and the latter is 760 feet above the river.

No one can approach Montreal without talking of that wonder of our time, " The Bridge." Tremendous as it is, it falls far below expectation. The straight line has done away with that grand conception of man's genius, the key-stone of the arch, and the bridge is a matter-of-fact affair, looking like a gigantic fence to keep in mammoth cattle. With a tribute of great respect to the engineer who overcame the difficulties of rapid current and overwhelming ice, and raised from a Yankee friend of mine one of the few acknowledgments I have ever heard one of their nation bestow on a Britisher, " Well, sir, I calculate you beat us there ;" it cannot be looked upon otherwise than as a work before its time, and, unless it be the link forged to connect Maine more intimately with Canada, the money it has cost had better never have been spent.

Having accomplished the object of my visit, I returned to Quebec by the rail, through the most dreary country, I think, I ever saw. There were miles upon miles of forest, with an occasional opening of blackened stumps and barked trees. But that the soil has got in it that which will repay for these clearings, was amply proved by the luxuriant growth of clover which has sprung up along the edges of the railway. Richmond appeared an oasis in the desert, with its undulating hills, flowing river, and cleared tracts, and would have been a much greater place than it is, but for the fear of war ; for here surely, one of these days, will be a frontier fight.

A general election for the Houses of Parliament having summoned Canadian ministers to their constituents, it was ten days before my provincial colleague could be appointed, and I had, therefore, time to look about me at Quebec. The Houses of Parliament are contained in a large block, built of brick, with a flat roof, situated on the east bastion. The Chambers for the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly are very convenient, and there is an excellent library. Since the junction of the two provinces, Parliament has met alternately at Toronto and Quebec, involving a change of residences as well as a shifting of public documents, books, and papers, every four years. It is, however, understood that the new buildings at Ottawa will be complete in time to prevent another adjournment to Toronto, and Ottawa will become the political capital. The elections were looked forward to with much interest, parties being nearly equal, and the platform of the Opposition being a cry for representation by population, which would involve a preponderance to the upper province. The census of 1861 gives as follows :—

CANADA WEST, 1,395,222 ; CANADA EAST, 1,103,666.

The population of the large towns is in—

CANADA WEST : Hamilton, 19,096 ; Kingston, 13,743 ; Toronto, 44,743.

CANADA EAST : Montreal, 90,498 ; Quebec, 51,109.

The buildings connected with the Romish Church, as well as the general appearance of the priesthood, betoken a prosperous condition. The priests, in particular, appeared to me to be selected from a higher class than those I have seen in other countries ; and I have good authority for stating that their general conduct is as irreproachable as their appearance is good.

The city at this period of the year is at the height of its commercial activity ; but it was crammed on this occasion more than was usual, by the arrival of the *Great Eastern* ; and I was heartily glad when arrangements were made which enabled me to leave on the afternoon of the 20th. After picking up one of my colleagues at Montreal, we left by the evening train for Toronto on the 22d, journeying in a sleeping car, where the accommodation is very simply adapted for lying at full length, and a pillow and a rug are supplied. There is also a washing-closet at one end ; but I would recommend the traveller to provide his own towel. We reached Kingston at 7.15 A.M., and, halting a short time for breakfast, proceeded on to Toronto, where we arrived at 3 P.M., performing the journey of 333 miles in fifteen hours and a half. The crops in Upper Canada were ten days in advance of the lower province ; and we passed numerous clearings with large fields of yellow corn. The contrast of the two races of inhabitants showed itself in a remarkable way. Instead of the continuous street and cluster of houses, here every man appeared to have set up for himself, and isolated homesteads in lieu of dense forest bounded the view, while the progress of prosperity was strongly marked. First came the shanty alone ; then the shanty and log-hut ; again shanty, log-hut, and boarded house. At length the summit of prosperity was reached by brick or stone houses, with garden and orchard ; the boarded house becoming the barn ; the log-hut, the stable ; and the shanty, the pig-stye. The recurrence of these homesteads in each stage of their progress, together with an occasional peep of the lake, made our day's journey a very enjoyable one.

Toronto does not give the impression of a commercial city, though it owes its locality to its excellent harbour. This is formed by what was formerly a long tongue of shingle, but is now an island, the lake having, in the course of the last two years, broken through a passage at its eastern extremity, in which there is now a depth of eight feet water. The timber brought by the Northern Railway from Lakes Simcoe and Huron is here formed into rafts for transmission to Quebec ; but all the commerce is represented by a few schooners and steamboats. There are, however, important manufactories, and a well-endowed university ; and as it is the terminus of the Great Western as well as of the Great Northern Railway, and as the Grand Trunk passes through it, it will, doubtless, retain its position as the metropolis of Upper Canada. Though not so well built as Montreal, the streets have a handsome appearance ; and besides handsome public buildings, there are many private houses indicating a prosperous condition. Following the example of the United States, the railway passes through the town. Accustomed as we are to fences and gates, it is a matter of astonishment to the European that accidents should not occur more frequently than they do, upon the unguarded railway.

Here we were joined by the third commissioner, and on consultation it was agreed that we should commence our labours from the westward (our farthest point in that direction being the island of St. Joseph) ; but as no vessel proceeded straight to that island, it was determined to take advantage of the weekly packet from Collingwood to the Sault St. Marie. We left Toronto on Thursday morning, passing through a beautiful country, the clearings extending on each side as far as the eye could reach, and getting glimpses of Lake Simcoe at Bell, Ewart, and Barry. Near the former place are steam saw-mills, but at present they have little occupation, and there is upwards of a million feet of boarding stacked ready for use.

Formerly grain from Chicago was landed at Collingwood, and the vessels that brought it took back boards ; but, in the last year, the trade has been diverted to Goderich. The war no doubt has also put a great check upon house building in the far west.

Collingwood is a small, but rising town, in the bottom of Nottawasaga Bay, on Lake Huron. There is a small harbour protected by a breakwater, which will admit vessels of nine feet ; but the commerce is represented by two steamers, one of which finds occupation in visiting the settlements in the Georgian Bay, and the other, *The Ploughboy*, has the contract for carrying the mails to and from Sault St. Marie.

Embarking in this vessel, we put into Owen Sound, at the bottom of which is the thriving settlement of Sydenham, and then struck across for the east end of Manitoulin Island, off which we arrived at daylight the following morning, and where we were met by two boats, into which were put barrels of flour and groceries. Manitoulin Island is one of our large Indian reserves, and here are collected the remnants of a tribe whom we have dispossessed of their country : only one or two white men now reside on the island. One of my companions told, as an instance of how much the Indian desires to cultivate civilization, that when he had passed up here a few weeks ago, he had seen a young English girl put into the canoe, just as we had witnessed the discharge of our cargo : she had accepted a situation as governess to the family of an Indian chief. Poor thing, he told us, she said nothing, but she looked back to the steamer, as if she knew she had severed every tie. The navigation to the north of the Manitoulin group is exceedingly intricate : the channels are so narrow, and the islands so numerous, that you feel you want a clue to the labyrinth, while to enhance the gratification of contrast between rock and tree, you now and then come upon the canoe and the wigwam. One place, where we stopped for wood, the Indian children were prepared with baskets of raspberries and strawberries, and took back as payment the broken victuals of our breakfast-table. Towards evening, our engine broke down ; but we were fortunately in a position where there was room enough to admit of the vessel's drift, during repairs ; and though I had been greatly charmed with the accommodation I had on board the American steamers, I could not help admiring the wisdom which gives to the Margate steamer some control over her proceedings in the event of accident to her engine. We reached the Bruce Mines at 3.30 A.M. and hastily got rid of our despatches : the settlement did not look inviting, and from the wharf had the appearance of an " every-one for himself place." The copper mines have ceased to be profitable, but a good lode has been found in the adjoining bay. We had a continuance of our beautiful scenery of yesterday, and reached the Sault St. Marie at 11.30 A.M. On our passage up, we stopped at two places on the United States shore ; one of which was the celebrated manufactory of Mr. Church, of raspberry jam, and were told that he had made no less than twelve tons that year ; at the other, was the following novel machine for fly-fishing. In the eddy caused by the jetty was fixed an upright post, across the top of which were two sticks, at right angles to each other ; at the end of each of the four arms was the model of a vessel under sail, which caused the sticks to revolve, and to each arm was attached a line with a fly on it.

The village on the Canadian side of the Sault St. Marie consists of a few scattered houses, but is likely to become of importance, as the Canadian government, with a view to attract settlers, have declared it a free port. The houses on the American side have much more the appearance of a town ; but, since the opening of the canal, there is no longer a necessity for a portage, and the place now appears to be going to decay. The canal is 17.8 miles in length, and is capable of taking vessels 48 feet wide, 290 feet long, and 12 feet draught of water. It has had the effect of completely opening out Lake Superior. The value of the merchandise annually passing through it exceeds a million sterling, and the tonnage is upwards of 300,000 tons. The height of the fall is 17½ feet ; and it is a beautiful sight to watch the canoes running

the fall, bringing up in an eddy, and catching fish with a poke-net at the end of a pole. The Comptroller of the Customs not only granted us the loan of his boat, to go to the south end of St. Joseph's Island, but also promised to accompany us. We procured tent equipage, &c, from the Hudson's Bay Company's post, but did not get away until 9.15 on the morning of the 29th. Favoured with a fine breeze, we ran down to the west of Sugar Island, through the Neebish Channel, round the north end of St. Joseph's, to Milford Haven, at its south-east point, where we arrived at 3.45. While the tent was pitching, we visited the only inhabited house on the point, and found a man who had been settled here twenty-eight years : formerly it was a calling-place for the steamers, for wood, but latterly he has very little communication with the outside world. Understanding from him that the property we had come to look at would be found by following the path, I induced one of my companions to accompany me. We, however, soon lost our way ; and, after wandering through rotten wood and swamp, tormented by mosquitoes and in dread of snakes, we were heartily glad when our boat rescued us from the bough of a tree overhanging the lake. There are but few settlers as yet on St. Joseph's Island, and their numbers are declining ; some of them have been attracted by the offer of employment at the Bruce Mines. Leaving Milford Haven, we touched at the Hudson's Bay Company's old post, and at the Fort at the south point of the island ; the latter was captured by the Americans and destroyed during the last war. Then we crossed over to the Detour Channel, where we were picked up at noon by the American steamer, *Planet*, a fine vessel of 2,000 tons, trading between Lake Superior and Detroit. Our friend, the Comptroller, had amused us much with his American antipathies. I was told, after he had left us, that, in the execution of his duty, he seized an American boat, attempting to smuggle a cargo on the Canadian side. Jonathan with his usual effrontery, however, decided that the boat, in the course of the chase, had crossed the boundary line, and our friend, the first time he put his foot on the ground of the United States, was seized and incarcerated for having violated the territory of the stars and stripes ; after he had been kept some time in gaol, he was told he might go about his business. He, however, being imbued with a *civis Romanus sum* feeling, refused to be liberated without an apology ; whereupon the judge ordered his cell to be unlocked and his provisions stopped ; an effectual way of getting rid of a troublesome prisoner. On board the *Planet* were two companies of western volunteers bound to the war. The men appeared in very good spirits, and, when we got into the St. Clair River, commenced a fusillade at the ducks with their revolvers.

About ten at night we were visited by one of those electric storms for which this region is famous. It came up from the south-west in a dense black cloud, illumined by vivid sheet lightning, which was answered in the north-east with forked lightning, and burst upon us in a torrent of rain, which came down in such quantities that the scuppers were unable to free the decks. We arrived, after daylight, at the entrance of the St. Clair River, which is 600 yards wide ; the land on both sides is low. Here there is a steam ferry which connects the Grand Junction, as well as the Great Western Railway, with the Port Huron and Detroit Railway. We reached Detroit at noon, when, finding that the *Planet* was going on to Cleveland, and the captain being civil enough to consent to put us on board the steamboat, that is attending the erection of the lighthouse at Point Pelee, we determined to continue our voyage.

Detroit is one of those towns which has sprung up with wonderful activity ; and a quay, crowded with shipping, extends all along the river-side, quite throwing into the shade our village of Windsor, opposite. On reaching Point Pelee we found that the steamer had been damaged and gone away for repairs ; we had, therefore, no alternative but to go on to Cleveland, which we reached just in time to save the train to Buffaloe, and arrived at that place at 2.30 A.M., when my companions determined on perambulating the town, until the starting of the early train to Port Colborne.

Very few of the shops were wholly closed by shutters ; not that we saw much property of value exposed to tempt the housebreaker, but the custom forms a curious contrast to our European notions, and says a great deal for the morality of the people. On arriving at Port Colborne we took the train to St. Catherine's, and, after inspecting Port Dalhousie, drove back to Port Colborne, along the banks of the Welland Canal. We found them busy deepening it, so as to admit of Lake Erie becoming the feeder instead of the Grand River. The locks, both at the entrances to the canal on Lake Erie and Ontario, will admit vessels of 45 feet wide, but, in the centre, they are only 26 feet wide ; they are twenty-seven in number, and lift the vessels 330 feet above Lake Ontario. The country round about the Welland Canal is more open than usual, the forest having been cleared away long ago.

After sleeping at Port Colborne, we drove early the next morning to the Grand River, by the lake shore, passing through a park-like country. The under-bush in many places had been cleared away, letting air and light into the forest, and exposing the bolls of the trees for our admiration. The farmers complained that the army-worm had made its appearance in the wheat and was committing great devastation. The Grand River was originally intended as the outlet of the Welland Canal, but it turned out an unhealthy place, owing to the swampy character of the land, and it is now almost abandoned ; few vessels frequent the harbour, which is a very good one. We drove up to Dunville, a nourishing little town, where the river is dammed, for the purpose of supplying the Welland Canal, and where the water power has caused several factories to be erected. Here we took the train to Thorold, a village beautifully situated near the highest part of the Welland Canal, and whence there is a magnificent view of the low plateau between it and Lake Ontario. Here we separated ; one of my companions returned to Toronto, while the other kindly undertook to show me the Falls, as we purposed remaining Saturday and Sunday at Niagara. Neither the roar of the cataract nor the appearance of spray warned me of its presence, and, though upon the look-out, the first view I had of the Falls came upon me by surprise. The eye wanders from one fall to the other, doubtful whether it will be most attracted by the broad line of feathery spray of the American side, or by the blue of that mass of water going over the horse-shoe ; the latter prevails, for wonder has more effect upon the brain than admiration. The whole effect of wonder and astonishment is greatly enhanced by the narrow and precipitous gorge through which the water, after it has fallen, makes its escape. It is difficult to imagine that the only outlet for all this volume exists between you and the opposite bank ; yet such is not only the case, but there is a safe ferry, for small boats, but a short distance below the Falls.

The immense power of such a stream ought to undermine the adjoining banks, but the masses of rock along the shore have the effect of a rubble embankment, and the cliffs retain their perpendicular character, with only a pathway here and there to the bottom. The recession of the horse-shoe is calculated, from measurements extending over twenty years, to be at the rate of one foot per annum ; but it is impossible not to contemplate that, if the river once wears its way to a serious fault in the Laurentian dyke, the whole character of the Falls may be completely altered in the course of twenty-four hours. I do not wonder at its attraction, for no one can have seen it without an anxious desire to look at it again. Besides the Falls, the adjoining country is full of historical associations, and you can go from the scene of one battle-field to another. The suspension bridge is remarkable for its light appearance ; wire rope is used instead of chains, as with us ; the span is 1,045 feet, and its extreme capacity is estimated at 835 tons. After two days of great delight, we took our departure by rail to the town of Niagara, where we embarked on board the steam-boat to Toronto, passing between Forts Niagara and Missisauga, the former of which is upon the United States shore, and does not appear to be a modern work. On the 7th of July we again left for Collingwood, on our way to the harbour of Penetanguishene. We found, however, on our arrival, that the steamer we had engaged had that morning deposited a party of school-children midway between

Owen Sound and Collingwood ; and, as it was evident they could not be left in the woods all night, we were obliged to go out of our way to pick them up and restore them to their mothers ; they had evidently enjoyed themselves notwithstanding a little drizzle, and came on board laden with wild flowers and raspberries. So school feasts have made their way to the back-woods of Canada as well as to the rural districts of England ! Penetanguishene is one of the most convenient harbours upon the coast of Lake Huron, and was one of our dockyards in the last war. At present it has lost much of its importance, the railway having been carried to Collingwood instead of to it. We found a flourishing reformatory under an active superintendent, who was turning the services of the boys to good account, in clearing the land, making roads, and building jetties. The place appears admirably suited for this purpose, as the boys are out of the way of temptation, and can have more liberty given them, in consequence of the difficulty of getting away. On our way back to Toronto we stopped at Barrie, to inspect the old means of communication between Lakes Ontario and Huron. The goods were carted from Toronto to the head waters of the Holland River, on which they were embarked in flats, and carried across Lake Simcoe to Barrie, whence they were transported to an affluent of the Nottawasaga River, by which they reached Lake Huron. Though only five years had elapsed since this had been the usual route, we had some difficulty in getting a guide, but at length started off for a drive through the forest ; every here and there we came to a fresh clearing, and the crops, as well as the timber, showed that there is a great deal of good land in this neighbourhood. After losing our way, and having to drive back two miles, we reached the length our carriage could go, and, setting off on foot along a decayed corduroy road, we reached our destination after an uncomfortable tramp of three miles, the greater part of which was in swampy ground, where the mosquitoes were in legions. Since the construction of the railway, the lower ground here has been abandoned for more healthy localities in the undulating country adjoining. The cattle find their way into the cleared land from the neighbouring farms, and we found a good deal of hay cut and stacked ; but the habitations had all been removed.

On our return to our carriage, we got a hospitable invitation to tea, from the mother of a large family, in a shanty. She gave us capital bread and butter and raspberry jam, and tendered eggs and bacon ; but these we would not wait for. They had been there five years, and were getting on ; but it was a long way to send the crops to market. The orchard was planted and the garden fenced in, and, next year, she hoped, the house would be begun. Happy and contented with her lot, the children's schooling appeared to be her only trouble.

In the course of this journey we went over a considerable portion of the route of the contemplated ship canal, which is intended to connect Lake Huron with Lake Ontario. The principal engineering difficulty appears to be the supply of water for feeding, the upper lock. No doubt that could be overcome, in these days of steam-power, by pumps ; but it is questionable whether a work of such magnitude would pay, until the shores of the Georgian Bay become more thickly populated. The ores from Lake Superior require to be taken to the coal district on Lake Erie ; and, though this would be a direct route for the grain from Chicago to Oswego, the grain merchants, I am told, would prefer the grain being transferred, as it is at present, at Goderich and Port Colborne, where there are elevators which pump it out of the hold of the vessels into the railway cars, in the course of which process, it is in a measure ventilated and dried. The canal would, no doubt, admit of the rafts from the Georgian Bay being taken at once to Quebec for exportation, instead of being, as they are now, broken up at Collingwood and carried by rail to Toronto, and there re-formed for the transit to Quebec, by way of the St. Lawrence.

Having failed in our arrangements, on a former occasion, for visiting Pelee Island, we determined on hiring a small steamboat at Detroit. We left Toronto for Sarnia on Monday,

12th, and, after sleeping at that quiet little town, we drove about eleven miles along the banks of the St. Clair River, and through a portion of the Indian reserves. It is wonderful how slowly the Indians fall into the habits of civilization ; but it is to be hoped that a great advance may be made in the next generation. At present, their fences are in bad order, their village rude, and their huts anything but comfortable in appearance. The river banks are elevated not more than twenty feet above the water, and the general aspect of the country is level.

Sleeping at Detroit, we embarked on board our steamer, early in the morning ; and, after taking in wood at Amherstburgh, started for our destination, which appeared to our captain to be a matter of some concern. He had traded regularly, for the last three years, from Detroit to Sandusky ; and, as he told us, a Britisher had calculated for him that, in going to and fro, he had sailed the distance of twice round the globe. But this he looked upon as a voyage of discovery ; and, when I intimated to him that very likely we might have to anchor, he was alarmed, and suggested drifting about the lake all night. “ I have got an anchor and cable, sir, but I never use ’em ; I lay alongside a wharf always.” The owner of the vessel, a black man, was also on board, and the captain confided to us that we should have good “ fixings,” as he had been major-domo to President Harrison. We had a long talk about the war, which he summed up with, “ Well, sir, we must whip them some, and then turn them out of the Union.”

Point Pelee Island is low, with a good deal of swampy ground ; but there is a considerable quantity of valuable timber upon it. It is inhabited at present by eight families only ; but, as the adjoining island to the southward (Kelly’s Island), which is within the United States’ boundary-line, has a population of 400, and is famous for its vineyards, Point Pelee will also, probably, become settled. After steaming round the island, we went up to the caisson for the new lighthouse at Point Pelee. The site was one of great difficulty to overcome, being a shifting sand going off suddenly into deep water. The caisson, an octagon of forty feet, with a capacity of 350 tons, was put together at the Welland Canal Works, whence it was towed to its destination, and sunk upon the spot, by the admission of water ; the interior has been filled up with stones from Pelee Island ; and, after three years’ trial, it has been found so firm in its foundation, as to admit of the permanent lighthouse being erected on it. We found the schooner in attendance on the workpeople, at anchor under the point, and, the night being fine, her captain consented to our being lashed alongside, and ours was saved from “ letting go his anchor,” of which he had such a horror.

We put in the next morning into the harbour of Rondeau, where we found a carriage waiting for us, in which we drove through a very fine country, and along a capital road, to Chatham. This is a pleasant-looking little town, with a good many Indians settled around it ; we saw some very picturesque groups of them, men who had come on horseback to attend the market. We took the rail from Chatham to London ; the latter town is well built, with numerous shops, and the Tecumseh hotel is one of the best in Canada. The railway between London and Toronto passes through the best land in the upper province, and through some very picturesque spots. The town of Hamilton is beautifully situated in Burlington Bay, and is becoming a place of considerable importance, from its iron and other factories ; the census of 1861 giving it a population of 19,096. After a short sojourn at Kingston, we proceeded to Montreal, by way of the St. Lawrence. The thousand isles well merit all the encomiums bestowed upon them ; the scenery on both banks, the excitement of the running rapids, all combine to render this a most pleasurable excursion. Our labours concluded by a visit to Isle au Noir, on the River Richelieu, a post of great importance, formerly, as it guarded the approach to the province from Lake Champlain. The railways have, in a great measure, diverted this traffic into more direct channels, and the island is at present occupied as a juvenile reformatory. The Americans were busy completing a strong military work at Rouse’s

Point, which, when complete, will protect the floating bridge that carries the trains across the River Richelieu, at its junction with Lake Champlain, and maintains the communication by rail between Ogdensburgh and the Eastern seaboard.

While our own Government, satisfied with the excellent surveys (as far as they go) of the lakes, by Bayfield and Owen, have of late years confined their attention to the survey of the lower part of the St. Lawrence—a survey which has been most admirably executed—the Government of the United States have taken in hand an elaborate and most careful survey of their own shores. In the annual report for last year, I find that eighteen charts and plans have been published, and that the estimated expense for the ensuing year amounts to \$125,000. In addition to valuable meteorological and magnetical observations, together with a detailed report of the survey, the report contains some important diagrams of the comparative height of water in the different lakes, as well as an account of the means taken to fix the longitude of several positions with extreme accuracy.

By a return made to the Provincial Parliament, dated December, 1859, the gross amount of tonnage on the lakes is 390,000 tons, four-fifths of which is owned by the United States. In addition to the great passenger traffic, the grain trade from Lake Michigan, and the transport of copper and iron ore from Lake Superior, have called forth great mercantile activity, the centres of which may be deemed the cities of Detroit and Buffaloe. On Lake Erie, the cities of Toledo, Cleveland, and Erie, are places of great importance : the former from its direct communication with the far west, and Cleveland from its vicinity to the coal region. On Lake Ontario, Rochester and Oswego are the places whence Canadian timber, and grain from the westward, are shipped from the lakes to the Atlantic seaboard.

To conclude. In the course of my sojourn of fifty-eight days, I travelled with great convenience over 3,000 miles, and have great reason to be extremely grateful for much kindness and attention.

[1] Since writing the above, another vessel, the *North Briton*, has been lost.

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