

Doyle on Emigration 1832

Hints on Emigration to Upper Canada : Especially Addressed to the Middle and ...

Martin Doyle

1832

•

THE first edition of these Hints (comprising 5,000 copies,) having been disposed of by sale, I am induced to offer a second to the Public, with a few prefatory remarks, in reply to objections which have been urged by persons for whose opinions I entertain sentiments of sincere respect.

These objections are to the following purport :

1. That the Population of Ireland, compared with her extent and resources, is by no means excessive.
2. That disappointment and misery are often the portion of the Emigrant, on reaching our North American Colonies.
3. That the most valuable of our agriculturists are those who leave our shores—abstracting their capital, whatever it may be, from a country where it is so much required, and in which a profitable investment of it might be made on advantageous locations.
4. That the tendency to Emigration is so great as to require no stimulus.

To these assertions I shall endeavour to reply.

1. I must readily admit now, what I have more than once observed in addressing my country-men, that, compared with the extent and resources of Ireland, if *under an improved system of agriculture*, our population is not in any degree redundant, but until I perceive a nearer prospect of developing the resources of the country in such a manner as to insure remunerating and productive employment, until I see Cottage Husbandry prevailing every where under the superintendence and fostering care of beneficent and resident landlords,—until I see inducements to exertion held out to the labouring poor, in the increase of moderate comforts,—until I see on the parts of the landlords generally, some marked distinction made between the industrious and the idle, the provident and the wasteful, the honest man and the rogue, the peaceable and the turbulent,—until I cease to witness neglect, privation, and their necessary result, wretchedness, around me, I must assert, that, compared with the actual condition of this country, and the means available to adequate employment, the market of labour is overstocked, and the wages of that labour insufficient.

When the peasantry of any country are reduced to live on the least possible quantity of food, and that often of the worst description, and when I know that the wretchedness which is daily witnessed among our labouring classes is not likely to be remedied, I cannot but indulge the hope, that he who informs them of a country where industry, health, and frugality, are sure to preserve at least comfortable independence, and who at the same time warns them against the errors they might fall into in its pursuit, and points out the advantages to which they may attain by Emigration, may justly be considered as their benefactor.

2. As to the second objection, a very brief answer will suffice.

It is to prevent the disappointment and wretchedness complained of, which in many instances the Emigrant has encountered by being unable to reach Upper Canada, from want of the necessary funds, that I have especially written this tract. By going out at the instance of an unfeeling and selfish landlord, without a shilling in his pocket, beyond the mere expense of landing him, and being consequently unable to reach to Upper Canada, where a demand for profitable labour awaits him ; the Emigrant too often has been dependent on the charity afforded by the benevolent Societies formed for the relief of destitute Emigrants, at Quebec, New York, and Montreal. If he reads these hints, and has forty shillings in his pocket, on landing, he will know, if he be not idle, drunken, or infirm, (and where would a poor man find the means of living under such circumstances,) how to escape disappointment and wretchedness.

3. The third objection is a serious one.

If the great body of our Irish landed proprietors, (some of whom are all that philanthropy could desire) would alter their too frequent practice of setting to the highest bidder, without regard to character, and when colonizing their estates select those, who from education, orderly and industrious habits, and moral worth, would be creditable and trust-worthy tenants, if they would superintend their estates, as they ought to do, and give up the pursuit of mere selfish gratifications, to advance the general prosperity, if they would seek something more than the abstraction of money from their tenantry, if they would not evict them from their lands because they will not pay rack rents to those who greedily accept the offers of less solvent, less respectable, and less honest men—if our landlords will do all this, and encourage those excellent families which are now meditating their departure from our shores, neither the strong necessity nor the desire for Emigration will prevail among them ; they and their capital may be thus kept at home—how long will it be alas ! before such a change shall have a general effect ? But until the landlords, one and all, exert themselves, and until the political horizon assume a brighter aspect,—until the ever restless sea of *agitation* subside (if it may be God’s mercy to avert the storms which have been so industriously excited by the sinfulness of man) I cannot in my conscience say “ Do not go,” to the peaceable and industrious father of a family, anxious to leave the waters of national strife, and to trust himself to the less terrifying billows of the ocean, to be wafted on their bosom from the land of his forefathers. I cannot say, “ Do not go—wait for the chance of better times ; perhaps the glory of England is not about to set for ever, perhaps our Demagogues may cease to trouble us, to endanger our lives, our liberties, our means of living”—how could I conscientiously hold out hopes so fallacious, counsel so deceitful ?

4. The tendency to Emigration requires no stimulus—no—*but* it requires proper direction, and if I have been to blame, it has been in my anxious endeavour to supply it.

M. D.

•

Hints On Emigration To Upper Canada

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

Your old acquaintance MARTIN presents himself again to you in his original character of a sincere adviser, the more willingly as he knows that many of you have observed his former *Hints* with advantage to yourselves, but grievously aware also, that too, *too* many who have

not been able or disposed to follow them, are sunk more and more in wretchedness—sufferers under famine and disease—or instruments and victims of lawless depredation.

Many, however, to avoid these dreadful emergencies, have lately sought in emigration, a prudent remedy against the evils which hung over them, and multitudes of relatives and neighbours only await a favourable report to follow their example.

When I speak of this to you as a prudent remedy, you may be sure that I approve and recommend the measure. Do not, however, imagine that I want to get rid of my old friends ; crack-brained and improvident as you, my *Irish* ones, are, “ I will love you still” and will serve you to the best of my power, and that I am doing so, at this very moment that I write, you will hereafter acknowledge.

I do not want to strip the country of its population—the landlord’s of their tenantry—or the snug farmer of his comfortable subsistence, by urging any wild and doubtful speculation. I am for letting “ well enough alone,” or if it is to be bettered, let it be at *home* ; but I am very desirous to rescue from overwhelming distress, those who struggle without succeeding, paupers in every thing but in health and strength, in able bodies, and willing minds. A field is now open to such adventurers, and I would, from my heart, exhort them to try it.

It is not that I am tired of you, but that I wish you well ; it is not that I am affronted because many of my *countrymen* (in particular) have not minded my hints on wholesomeness and cleanliness, going on still with the old wig or stocking in the broken window, but it is that I would wish you where bodily strength will earn you bodily nourishment in abundance for yourselves and families, and where an industrious offspring may rise by degrees, in affluence and comfort, to the possession of *a bit of an estate* to be handed, down, with tenements, stock, &c. to a succeeding generation.

And though I would not advise the *prosperous* farmer or artisan, to relinquish his advantages and comforts at home, yet as those who contemplate the subject of emigration are probably the best judges of their own private views and circumstances, I shall try to suit to various classes the information which the following pages will contain, and which I have sought out for you, my humbler friends, with great industry, and now place before you, purely for the purpose of serving you, and of putting you in the right way, by guiding you to UPPER CANADA, by explaining to you its circumstances and advantages, and by guarding you against the blunder you might otherwise commit, by settling in the *States*, or in other parts of America.

With this sole object, I have prepared the following sheets for your guidance and information, assuring you, at the same time, whether at home or abroad, of the kindest good wishes and heartiest good will of your disinterested adviser,

MARTIN DOYLE.

Ballyorley, August, 1831.

•
The Canadas.

Under the name of Upper and Lower Canada is comprehended a vast extent of country, opening a wide and happy field of occupation for those inhabitants of the British Isles, to whom want of employment and contracted means render their own country unsatisfactory.

To persons thus circumstanced, emigration naturally occurs as a measure of relief—a measure hitherto embarrassed with cost and difficulty, uncertainty and delay, acting as obstacles to its adoption, but *now* assuming a more attractive form, and recommending itself to all the honest and industrious classes, especially to the labouring and unoccupied poor, who experience insurmountable difficulties at home, but by carrying with them moral principles and habits, may, in another country, lay the foundation of a thriving nation, and have reason to bless God that they have been driven, as it were, from long continued struggles and distress into the possession of such profitable sources of present Independence and future affluence.

This is a subject for the deep and anxious consideration of Great Britain, whose interest it is to provide consumers for her manufactures.—The poor at home cannot afford to become purchasers, but by locating themselves in the British Colonies abroad they soon acquire such capital as enables them to consume the various articles of export, and thus to contribute not only towards the increased employment of the manufacturers of England, but of the various classes of shipbuilders, provision merchants, sailors, &c. engaged in conveying manufactures to the Colonies. And as to Ireland, where, though purely agricultural, her population exceeds the power of employment, it is an obvious advantage to occupy the overplus of *her* people also, in those more distant tracts which invite the notice of the husbandman, and allure him by their fertility.

When I see so many unemployed and destitute persons with dependent families, hardy and industrious, willing to work, yet unable to procure employment, I cannot help thinking that it is a act of kindness to point out to them a place where a man's industry is sure of full remuneration, where toil is recompensed to a degree which circumstances render utterly unattainable in these countries, and where he may easily acquire capital and Independence. —I would not advise others to do, what under the same circumstances I would not most willingly do myself, and what I am not by any means sure that I shall not yet do, conceiving that the tempting project of emigration comes at this moment recommended by various inducements to more than the lower classes, holding out a fair promise and prospect of relief from embarrassment at home, political and pecuniary. I do not, indeed, want to get rid of you but I want you to have a happy home in another portion of the world, if you have it not here where the idle and distressed are always rendered the tools of the designing and the crafty.

To those who are favoured with steady employment at home, who possess allotments of land, however small, which furnish them with comfortable subsistence, I say, “ be contented—make no experiments—remain where you are—and trust that a kind Providence will bring order and peace out of the present confusion and discord which distract these realms.”

But to those differently circumstanced, Emigration is most desirable, and perhaps no country in the world is more critically suited than North America to the *Irish* and *Scotch* poor in particular ; the very place of all others where those who have not a shilling in their pockets, and who are accustomed to vicissitudes of climate and hard work, can live best ; where all those who have been bred to farm and handicraft work, if *industrious, healthy, and sober*, have a moral certainty of succeeding. All such persons after two years find themselves in a thriving condition, and are anxious to have their *old country* friends with them ; but mere adventurers—broken down tradesmen, and scheming shopkeepers, may just as well stay and starve quietly at home—such persons would not prosper any where.

Nor is North America suited to ladies and gentlemen of *very small* means, who are unused to do any thing for themselves ; such persons are in general too tenderly reared, too delicately brought up, to dispense with the services of domestics, whom they could not afford to pay in

a country where a good pair of hands is worth much, and who are unable or unwilling to bear the privations of the first two or three years of settlement in the woods ; though instances are not wanted of respectable families, with incomes varying from £50 to £200 a year, living most happily and prosperously, and *enjoying good society* there ; but these persons are generally the families of naval or military gentlemen accustomed to *rough it*, habituated to discipline and self controul, and possessed of adequate zeal and energy.

In comparing together the relative advantages and disadvantages which attend a settlement in North America, I am disposed, after a very grave consideration, to yield a decided preference to UPPER CANADA, and I shall give you my reasons. First, as to the United States :

So long a period has elapsed since these were colonized from the British Isles, that we have, in a great degree, lost the feeling that they are of a common stock with ourselves ; but in the Canadas we meet thousands of our countrymen located there, (comparatively within a few years) with all the feelings, habits, tastes, &c. of British subjects, living under the protection of British laws, and having all the privileges of commerce which are possessed by us. In short, there is a strong and intimate bond of union between the Parent Country and the Colonies ; but if ever again we should be so unfortunate as to be driven into wars with the States, the new settlers there, from the British dominions, would be placed in a most painful situation—obliged either to take arms against their relatives from these countries, or remaining neuter (an unlikely matter in time of war) to risk the ruin of their properties by the Americans, whom they would not assist, on the one side, and the British, who would confound them with the Americans, on the other. And he who is not a sworn subject of the States, cannot inherit property, and would be looked upon, if he did not take the oath of allegiance, with a very jealous eye—he would be considered, “ neither good fish nor good flesh.” Besides, I really believe that the Canadas are more healthy than any of the States. Even that of Ohio, on the north western boundary, is not so temperate and healthy as the parts of Canada adjoining. In many of the States of America *slavery* still continues ; what native of these free islands would endure the sight of it ? Then with respect to the British Settlements at Nova Scotia and New Brunswick—being near the Atlantic they are frequently enveloped in *fogs*—and are raw, damp settlements in consequence, during a great part of the year ; these fogs are prejudicial to health and oppressive to the animal spirits.

Well then, I have made up my mind that the Canadas are superior in climate and other circumstances to all other parts of North America ; it only remains for me to state the advantages which the *upper* province possesses over the *lower*.

In the lower one, the heat of summer and the cold of winter, is excessive ; fogs prevail there, especially towards the sea ; the soil is not so good ; and land is dearer, from the greater extent of cultivation—no trifling consideration to those whom want of property at home induces to seek it there. Mr. Ferguson (a most interesting writer on the agricultural state of Canada and peat of the United States) mentions that “ he had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with several British Emigrants, who advised him to look at the Upper Province, before he formed an opinion upon the eligibility [1] of a settlement.

The lower province is two or three degrees more northerly [2] in latitude, and therefore invariably colder in the winter—so much so, that employment then, in a great degree, ceases ; the severity of that season which freezes up the rivers, even the vast St. Lawrence, prohibits the transport of timber, puts a stop to trade, and throws out of work those whose pursuits are confined to it, unless with the serious danger of losing a nose or the extremities of the hands and feet from cold ; the agriculturist is frequently unable to work in the woods ; and its contiguity to the Atlantic renders it, like New England and New Brunswick, liable to vapours

which are productive of agues and other complaints ; its population also being, in a great degree, of French and other foreign origin, this province is not as likely to continue in firm political connexion (and consequent security and strength) with the British government as is the Upper Canada, of which the most desirable settlements (those in the Huron Territory) are 700 miles distant from Quebec, and of course still farther from the Western Ocean ; and so much is the climate ameliorated by the clearing of lands, and the cultivation of the soil, that the farmers, in some of the improved districts, are said to apprehend that there will not be a sufficiency of snow to permit the making of good winter roads for the carriage of their timber to the saw-mill, or to the rivers or lakes for exportation.

The summer in Upper Canada is hotter than ours, but brisk and pleasant from refreshing breezes ; the winter sharp but dry, bracing, and invigorating, and on the whole you would suppose it much more agreeable than our winter, in which we have so much *cold dampness*, which is more, unpleasant and trying to the constitution than a *greater degree of cold* prevailing in a *dry* frosty air. From the end of August to November the weather is delicious ; October is there the most delightful month in the year, after which commences what is termed the *Indian summer* of most agreeable temperature.

There are, however, in the other months sudden and decisive changes from heat to cold, and thunder showers in spring are not unfrequent ; but a defective corn crop, from deficiency of heat, or the prevalence of rain, is never heard of. In winter the cold is scarcely ever such as to prevent out of door labour.—Rain seldom falls in that season, and as there are not then the variations of weather experienced in England, colds, and the other disorders which arise from those changes, and especially from wetness, do not prevail there. A clear frosty air and bright sun continue during the winter, which sets in about Christmas.

Spring (or rather summer, for the one treads quickly upon the heels of the other) puts forth her freshness and her beauty often at an early part of April, yet sometimes exhibits a frosty tint even in May, or for an occasional night in the opening of June—just as with us in these temperate regions—but on the whole, the climate of Upper Canada is much less variable than ours, and has fewer unpleasant days in those seasons, when bad weather is peculiarly unwelcome and unguarded against.

In a report laid before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, in the year 1823, by an agent of the British Government, the following statement was made as to the climate of Upper Canada.—“ The climate of Upper Canada is considerably milder than that of the Lower Province, and the winter shorter in the same proportion. In both these respects it improves as you proceed westward, so much so, that although the frost generally commences in November at its eastern extremity, and continues in that neighbourhood till the middle of April, it rarely commences on the shores of Lake Erie before Christmas, and it usually disappears between the 25th of March and the 1st of April.”

“ On a comparison with the climate of Great Britain the heat in the summer months is somewhat greater, but never oppressive, as it is always accompanied with light breezes. There is less rain than in England, but it falls at more regular periods, generally in the spring and autumn. The winter cold, though it exceeds that of the British Isles, is the less sensibly felt, in consequence of its dryness, and seldom continues intense for more than three days together, owing to the constant fluctuation of the wind between the north-west and south-west points. It may be observed that the winter season is the most favorable to land carriage, as the roads then admit of sledging in all directions, which is a very expeditions mode of conveyance, and attended with but little draft ; so that one horse or ox can, in this manner, easily draw double what be can upon wheels. It is hardly necessary to state, that in a country

so overspread with timber there can never be a deficiency of fuel. As the forests disappear the climate improves.”

The farther you go westward the better the climate becomes. In the neighbourhood of Lake Ontario the winter is quite mild, for that Great Lake, from its extreme depth, never freezes, and in summer the air is cooled by the refreshing breezes which blow over its surface ; from the same causes a similar mildness of the seasons takes place in the vicinity of the other great lakes.

Taking it for granted that the circumstances which I have mentioned are sufficient to establish the fact that *Upper Canada* is your best destination, I shall class under their several heads, every matter which it is necessary for you to be familiar with, before you set off (as I believe many thousands of you will, in the next Spring) for that land of peace and plenty. Nor will it be out of place here, as a conclusion to these few general observations, to give the following short extract from a *New York* paper, which is an honorable and pleasing testimony from a rival district.

“ The people of Upper Canada are blessed with a fine healthy climate and fruitful soil. When the improvements in navigation between the waters of Erie and the St. Lawrence are completed, they will possess commercial advantages superior (having respect to their population) to any people under heaven. Their importations being chiefly from the mother country, are subjected only to a slight duty ; the support of the provincial government or such part of it as is derived from the pockets of the people, is not burthensome,” (the taxes are so trifling as not to deserve any notice) “ and the expense of the fortification and defence of the country comes exclusively from the Parent State.”

To this encomium, as true as it is liberal, may be added the striking fact, that farming produce in Upper Canada brings a price considerably better than in the States, where land is dearer and taxes higher, which is fully evinced in the late purchases of land within that province, especially in the Huron Territory, by the Americans who have left the States to avail themselves of this advantageous settlement.

It is to be hoped that they will not bring them, so as to be injurious to the principles of British settlers, that extreme spirit of democracy, which, either in a public or domestic point of view, cannot fail to be attended with unpleasant circumstances.

Settlers from this country, accustomed to subordination, must be disgusted at that terrible independence, which makes the son conceive himself beyond the control of parental authority ; and in all situations, impresses even those who have not arrived at years of discretion, and perhaps never may, with an overweening confidence in their own sense and judgment.

.

UPPER CANADA

Considered with reference to Extent—Facilities of Winter- Carriage—and Soil

The portion of Upper Canada divided into lots and available to settlers, extends from Lancaster on the north-east to Amherstburgh and the Michigan territory on the south-west, at the upper extremity of Lake Erie, a distance of 543 miles, its mean breadth being about 130 miles, divided first into districts, which are subdivided into counties, and again into townships of ten miles square, each containing about 64,000 English acres. This great tract

contains a surface of 45,000,000 acres, of which 18 millions are under rivers and lakes, of such a size as to awaken astonishment in the human mind.

The rivers and canals run in every direction, intersecting the country, so as to afford all the facilities of cheap and easy intercourse with the different portions of it, and with the sea, there being an uninterrupted conveyance by water between the western extremities and Quebec.

The names of the great lakes, (beginning at the western boundary,) are the Huron, (246 miles in length, and 220 in breadth,) which is connected by the river St. Clair, with the lake of the same name. This again is connected by the Detroit river with lake Erie, which runs a course of 270 miles—at the eastern end of this lake are the great falls of Niagara, which I must describe to you.

Four mighty lakes combine to supply this remarkable cataract—Lake Erie, more than 600 miles round—The Huron, 1000—The Michigan, not far inferior in size—and lake Superior, which is 1500 miles in circumference—unite their “multitude of waters,” and rush impetuously down this tremendous fall of 137 feet.

Some idea of the amazing force with which this mass of water is precipitated over the rocks, may be formed from the well known fact, that the noise is heard, under favorable circumstances, at the distance of 45 miles. The rapidity of the torrent in approaching the fall, and the violence with which it rolls and tumbles through the projecting cliffs, may also be in some degree estimated from the circumstance, that geese, ducks, and other water-fowl, if they do not quit the surface above, before they come near the precipice, have not then the power to rise upon the wing, but are hurried down and killed in the descent.

These are circumstances of terror, which I have *described*, but not *exaggerated*, to prepare my own countrymen for something more than the falls of Leixlip, or Powerscourt, Colooney, or Ballyshannon. The sublime and beautiful of the scenery, (and nor thing more sublime or beautiful exists,) I leave to your respective tastes for the *picturesque* ; and if you happen not to possess any, it will by no means interfere with the laudable objects of your emigration.

You may in this case view Niagara, not as an object of wonder or admiration, but as an impediment and interruption to your line of sailing, as a bar in your progress westwards, from lake Ontario to lake Erie—occasioning trouble, time, and expense, in carrying goods and passengers over land, from one vessel below the falls to another above them. But happily this obstacle has been surmounted. If you look upon the map prefixed to this little tract, you will see that the Welland canal forms a link of connexion between the lakes. Niagara is no longer to be viewed as an impediment—but as one of the grandest works of the Almighty ; well worth the trouble and difficulties of a voyage to America to behold, even if there were no other matter in view. Ontario, as you will also see by a reference to the map, flows to the sea, by the noble river St. Lawrence, which passing the great and thriving town of Montreal, on the boundaries of the two provinces, (though at present belonging to the lower one,) holds its majestic. course to Quebec, and after widening at length to the prodigious breadth of 90 miles, unites its waters with those of the vast Atlantic.

What a country will this yet become ! Its free navigation, from the remotest parts of the interior to the Ocean, commanding the export of the finest wheat the world produces ; timber of the best descriptions, and all the other produce which the industry of man can raise in this most fertile region.

The rise and fall of nations and of empires are under the control of infinite wisdom. If with the new settlers, religious and moral habits be introduced, it may please that Mighty Power, whose impartial judgment decides on ruin or prosperity, to use this secondary cause of Emigration, as the great instrument of rewarding individual merit, and raising up to a commanding eminence this once savage and benighted country, through the light of truth and the blessings of civilization. And it must naturally occur to the well-disposed Settler, that though his lot may perchance for *a short time* [3] be cast beyond the reach of *regular* religious instruction, yet that the good Christian has always a *Friend above*, to whose willing ear he may address himself ; nor will the anxious parent pass over without thankfulness, the blessing of comparative solitude, if it shall have removed the objects of his affection from demoralizing scenes of bad example, and placed them where the good result of religious exercise will not be defaced by “ evil communications,” and where a patriarchal life of faith and holiness, with industrious self-exertion, cannot fail, (under God’s blessing,) to produce prosperity and happiness.

But to proceed with my details ; there are various other lakes, which have not been mentioned—lake Simcoe, and many others on the northern side of lake Ontario, and the St. Lawrence, which will, at no very remote period, it is probable, be connected by canals with each other and with the Ocean. One great water-course is now almost completed from Kingston at the eastern extremity of Ontario, 133 miles in a northerly direction, consisting of a chain of lakes joined by canal work, which unites them with the Grand, or Ottawa river, so as to avoid the navigation of the St. Lawrence from thence to Montreal ; that portion of it being full of dangerous and troublesome rapids. The Ottawa meets the St. Lawrence a few miles above Montreal, from which place to the Ocean there is an uninterrupted sea navigation; this canal lengthens the distance from Montreal to Ontario very considerably ; but the saving in *time* and expense will be very great indeed—and should wars unhappily occur with the States, it secures a free intercourse between Quebec, through Montreal, to the Upper Province, which might otherwise be frequently interrupted by the Americans, who possess one side of the St. Lawrence. In time of war such a passage could not be thought of—without this canal you could not feel security—with it you have the certainty, at all times, and under all circumstances, of communication with Quebec, and consequently with your native country.

From Upper Canada, the colonists can send their timber and corn either to Montreal by the lakes, &c. (the course of which, I have already pointed out,) or by the Erie canal to New York ; having *two* great outlets for the productions of their lands, and for the return of purchased articles—clothes, furniture, implements, &c. &c. they can, according to the rates of freight, and comparative state of sales at Montreal, Quebec, or New York, select the most advantageous market

With regard to the soil.—From the authority before quoted, we have these observations :

“ Upper Canada is blessed with as productive soil as any in the world, and it is easily brought into cultivation. The nature of the soil may be invariably discovered by the description of timber it bears. Thus, on what is called hard timbered land, where the maple, beech, black birch, ash, cherry, lime, elm, oak, black walnut, butter-nut, hickory, plane, and tulip tree, &c. are found, the soil consists of a deep black loam. Where the fir and hemlock pine are inter-mixed in any considerable proportion with other trees, clay predominates ; but where they grow alone, which is generally on elevated situations, sand prevails. This also happens where the oak and chesnut are the only trees. These sandy soils, though naturally unfavourable to meadow and pasture, are found to produce the brightest and heaviest wheats, and can, with the assistance of a gypsum, which abounds in many parts of the province, be

made to bear the finest possible crops of clover and Indian corn ; and as a compensation for their inferiority of natural quality, fever and ague no not prevail in their neighbourhood. In moist seasons the clays furnish the greatest burthen of grass. Perhaps there does not exist in any quarter of the globe, a country of the extent of Upper Canada, containing so small a quantity of waste land, either of marsh or mountain, yet there is not any deficiency of water ; for, independently of the numerous rivers and streams which flow through the country on every side, good springs are universally found either on the surface or by digging for them.”

The country is generally level, and covered with timber. Every description of soil can be had, so that the settler has it in his power to choose the description which he likes best ; but unless he is an infallible judge of the qualities of land, I recommend his taking one who is perfectly so, along with him, when about to make his selection, nor should he be in haste to fix himself, he will find his account in *acting with caution, and examining well the different farms which will be offered to him before he makes his selection.* The surface is composed of a rich coat of vegetable mould, the deposit of decayed leaves, and wood, from unnumbered ages, which when tilled, yields several successive crops of great luxuriancy, without manure.

In many places are to be met, but not frequently upon the banks of the lakes and rivers, but at a distance of a few miles, as if to encourage the settler to plunge into the forest, extensive tracts of rich and heavy soil, and beyond these, rise in beautiful elevations, portions of land the most tempting in their situations.

This excellent soil is, however, very unfairly treated by being kept under an unceasing succession of corn crops without manure, and any land so treated, however naturally fertile, must be at length impoverished. There is less marshy or swampy land, it has been just now said, for its extent, in Upper Canada than in any other part of the world ; there *are*, however, *some* low and swampy grounds, and these, until the progress of population and improvement, shall make it worth while to drain them, are the only situations from which I warn you to keep clear, while high and dry land, prudently chosen, near the lakes or rivers, can be purchased *out and out*—in *fee*, as it is termed—for such a trifle as ten shillings an acre! !

Just fancy yourselves possessed of *real property* on such terms—no yearly tenancy—no terminable leases to breed interminable jealousies at the change of occupants, but pure fee simple—no rent to pay—*landed proprietors*—estated gentlemen ! ! ! after labouring here for a shilling, or ten pence, or eight pence, or sixpence a day, and receiving even this perhaps in the shape of a receipt for rack-rent ! ! What a happy change would this be, and how irresistible the temptation to make the experiment ! And only think of the advantage of working a rich, maiden soil that will yield abundantly, instead of ploughing or digging a worn out one at home, without manure to *mend* it, and which without abundance of it, will not yield a crop sufficient to pay its labour.

In trying the new country, and the fresh soil, mind to fix yourselves near water carriage, I myself should prefer the banks of Lake Ontario, but there are excellent quarters about Lake Huron, where the soil is said to be admirable ; in either of these districts, you can procure lots of land, of sand, loam, or clay—please yourselves—no compulsion to buy one lot if you like another better. The soil in the Huron Territory is a rich sandy loam—suited to the culture of Tobacco, of which much is grown there.

THE HURON TERRITORY,—is a tract of 1,100,000 acres, in the shape of a triangle, its base being about sixty miles in length, resting on Lake Huron, and having a direct navigable communication through Lakes Erie, and Ontario, with the Atlantic.

The chief Town in this district, called GODERICH, is at the confluence of the River Maitland, with Lake Huron, which promises, from its local advantages, to become one of the most important and flourishing settlements in the Province.

Several enterprising colonists, attracted by these advantages, have left their farms in the neighbourhood of York, to settle at Goderich, with the intention of erecting a brewery, distillery, brick-kilns, and a grist-mill ; a tavern and saw-mill have already been erected. The Harbour, the only one on the Canadian side of the Lake, is capable of containing vessels of the burthen of 200 tons ; and it has been established as a Port of Entry, which will insure to the inhabitants a great share of the trade with the Upper Countries, and their opposite neighbours in new settlements in the United States.

The scenery on the river Maitland has been described as more like English than any other in America. There is abundance of brick-earth and potters' clay in every direction round the town.

The establishments at Goderich have been formed principally to afford facilities, encouragement, and protection to Settlers, who may be disposed to purchase and improve the adjoining lands.

Roads are in progress, an important preliminary to civilization, which will connect the Huron Tract with Port Talbot and the various settlements and Towns on Lake Erie and the Niagara Frontier. Cattle and provisions can be obtained in abundance by this route, or by the still more easy water communication between Goderich and the old well-cultivated Settlements of Sandwich, Amherstburgh, and Detroit.

A road has also been completed, as before-mentioned, from Goderich, by Wilmot and Guelph, to the head of Lake Ontario and York ; and it is intended to improve and maintain all these communications, under the direct inspection of the officers of the Government, so as to make them in every respect equal to the best roads in the oldest settlements in the province.

With respect to the important considerations of climate and soil in the Huron Tract, there is every reason to believe them as the best in Upper Canada ; though the district is for the most part level, it is in some places considerably elevated above the Lakes. On the borders of the Detroit and Lake St Clair there are extensive Priaries, some of which are overflowed at certain seasons, and some years more than others, owing to the periodical rise of the great Lakes which are said to ebb and flow every seven years.

These Priaries, although not all fit for cultivation, produce great quantities of wild grass, of which those who live in their vicinity avail themselves to raise large herds of cattle, but with little expense and trouble.

Every species of grain is cultivated in the province in the greatest abundance, yielding with very ordinary tillage and without manure, from twenty to twenty-five bushels of wheat to the acre, and in some places, with but little more care, from forty to fifty bushels. It is particularly favorable to the growth of Indian corn or maize and tobacco, which latter is of the best quality, and bids fair to rival that of Virginia, and to become a staple. It is very productive, yielding, with proper care, 1,000lbs. and sometimes more, per acre. Its culture is particularly well adapted to persons possessing small pieces of land, and having large families of young children, who can attend it with more ease than grown persons, at certain stages of its growth. Hemp and hops grow spontaneously, and the former will probably, at some distant period, become an article of considerable export.

A Surveyor who has been employed to lay out the line of road through the heart of the tract, says, “ the quality of the soil through the whole thirty-three miles, is such, that I have not seen its equal in the province ; the soil is generally composed of a deep, rich, black loam, thinly timbered. For the purpose of the intended road, there is not one mile in the whole distance otherwise than favourable ; and there are four permanent streams, branches of main rivers.”

The fertility of this territory, the mildness of its climate, and the facility of purchasing property there, point it out as peculiarly eligible.

I shall conclude this division of the subject with the reports of some intelligent and most respectable persons, who not long ago visited the Huron Territory, and thus express themselves as to its soil and climate :

In regard to the Soil, the most unqualified praise is given by all the exploring party without exception. One of the gentlemen states, “ I have already adverted to the nature and fertility of the soil, and I think I may be justified in adding, that such is the general excellence of the land, that if ordinary care be taken to give each lot no more than its own share of any small swamp in its vicinity, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find 200 acres together in the whole territory which would make a bad farm. Although the land may be capable of raising any kind of produce usual in that country, yet some spots are more peculiarly advantageous for particular crops. For instance, the black ash swales (a kind of swamp) make the best ground for hemp, as, by the scourging effect of two or three crops of it, the ground will be made more fit for the raising of wheat, for which in the original state it is too strong. The rich meadows by the side of the rivers, more especially such as are annually overflowed, are ready, without further preparation, for tobacco, hemp, and flax. The lower meadows, and meadows adjoining to Beaver dams, which are abundant produce at this moment enormous quantities of natural hay and pasture ; and the rest of the land, for the production of potatoes, Indian corn, wheat, and other grain, is at least equal, if not superior, to any other land in the Canadas. Independent of the swamps, the timber on the land is very soon described. The sugar maple is the principle growth, and the size and height which it, as well as the other trees attain, sufficiently evince the strength and power of the soil ; next to this come the beech, elm, and basswood, in various proportions : in some instances the beech and elm predominate over the ‘ maple’ but this is rare. Near the streams the hemlock [4] is found, and interspersed through the whole is the cherry, butternut, the different species of oak, and the birch ;”

Another gentleman states, “ As far as I have explored the territory, and as far as I could learn from the different other explorings, I have to say, my impression is, that there is not a better tract of land, if there is any equal, of the same extent, in the Province of Upper Canada. It is abundantly watered with a variety of streams, which are not like the slow-moving, dull, stagnant ones, in some other parts of the Province, but are swift, and in some places rapid, which will tend greatly to the salubrity of the climate, as well as to the other invaluable benefits, when the land becomes settled, from their being suitable for hydraulic purposes. The soil is always judged of by the timber that grows upon it ; when that consists of maple, beech, bass- u wood, and cherry, the land is considered very good ; but if the maple and basswood, are the most prevailing, it is considered of superior quality.”

A third says, “ In passing through the country I have found the timber (naming that first of which there is the greatest quantity, and the rest in the same order,) to be maple, elm, beech, and basswood. There are others in less quantity, viz. hemlock, butternut, black ash, white ash, soft maple, white oak, hickory, and pine. The soil in general is a black loam, sometimes with

a proportion of sand, the subsoil, clay with a mixture of sand; there are very few stones, except in the beds of rivers and creeks, and that principally limestone. The banks along the shore of the Lake have rather a forbidden appearance when viewed from the water, being clothed with cedar and hemlock to their bases ; but as soon as you arrive at the summit of their slopes, the good land, clothed with the hard timber before mentioned, makes its appearance. In scaling the shore, we took opportunities of going into the interior, and in all cases found the land good.”

Mr. Ferguson, the latest visitor of all those who have published their observations, thus remarks :—“ I was much impressed with a favourable opinion of the great Huron Tract, from the fact that many steady Dutch settlers, in the possession of old productive farms near York, were at the period of my visit, disposing of their property and removing to Goderich, a change which the calculating Dutchman, would not have rashly adopted, without pretty reasonable prospects of bettering himself to a considerable amount. The Township of Goderich contains about 400 inhabitants already, and several Dutch families from the neighbourhood of York, have sold, or are endeavouring to sell, their cultivated and valuable farms, and have purchased lands from the Company, in the Huron Tract ; about 6000 acres have been sold to them in the neighbourhood of Goderich, within the last six months. In Guelph, a very valuable mill has lately been erected, and one in Goderich is now in progress.”

[1] See Quarterly Journal of Agriculture, No. 15.

[2] See Table of Temperature (from Col. Fouchette’s Work) in the Appendix.

[3] It is very lamentable that the funds of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts have been so much diminished by the withdrawal of Parliamentary funds. There is a deplorable want of the ministers of religion in many districts.

[4] The Hemlock is a species of pine, growing generally in moist or swampy situations, and on soil of inferior quality.

Hints on Emigration to Upper Canada : Especially Addressed to the Middle and ... (1832)

Author : Martin Doyle

Publisher : W. Curry, Jun. and Co.; [etc., etc.]

Year : 1832

Language : English

Digitizing sponsor : Google

Book from the collections of : New York Public Library

Collection : americana

Notes : Reproduction of original from Goldsmiths' Library, University of London.

Source : Internet Archive

<http://archive.org/details/hintsonemigrati00doylgoog>

Edited and uploaded to www.augty.org

March 5 2013