

Emigrant's Friend 1847

*Canada as it Is, Or, The Emigrant's Friend and Guide to Upper Canada*

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Introduction.

It appears to be the imperative duty, because the almost invariable practice of authors, in the days upon which we have fallen, to explain the reason of, or else apologize for, their intrusion upon public attention—not indeed because many of them are unwelcome guests or uncalled for instructors ; but simply because the “ gentle tap” and “ low bow” at the door of literary engagement is deemed a matter of indispensable etiquette ; to forego it would at least mar the usefulness of the writer.

In penning the following pages, the author has not been actuated by any desire for notoriety, nor by any disposition to cast suspicion upon former treatises on the same subject. His only regret is, that in the great-majority of works treating upon Canada the information is out of date, or in such an expensive form as to be beyond the reach of those for whose benefit they should be compiled. To remedy both evils, he has proposed to himself the condensation of facts rather than the exposition of theories, laying aside all moral and religious questions, not because he deems them unimportant, but as he considers them out of place.

The several statements contained in this work have been drawn more from personal observation than from the sources of information too frequently applied to, and which are at all times doubtful and generally deceptive. The author was a silent observer of men and things ; and, from the fact of his parish being bounded by the lake Ontario on the south, and extending for some miles through a richly cultivated country on the north, he had an opportunity of seeing the emigrant upon his arrival, following him to his lonely hut in the dark deep forest, watching over his daily improvements, and finally congratulating him upon his complete and increasing success ; and not only was the course of agricultural pursuits laid before his constant observation, but his residence, being in the vicinity of a village, afforded an opportunity of knowing something of the system upon which the business of the colony is conducted.

The fact of the author having passed by the Lower Province of Canada, without recommending it to the notice of the emigrant, demands explanation. He has no antipathy, either to the climate or inhabitants, of this section of the colony ; but from information gained some years since from good authorities, and confirmed by recent personal observations he feels fully persuaded that it is not the country suited to the vast majority of our settlers.

The writer has ventured upon the opinion that it is the duty of Government to promote emigration. The reason is obvious : our rulers are more than the “ guardians of our liberties” —they are the providers for our wants : the national eye turns to *them* under the pressure of distress, and the national cry must be heard by them when it embodies the deep-toned accents of suffering and sorrow.

Nor are we wanting in a living and speaking witness to the truth of the principle now propounded. The sister country is at this moment prostrated in the attitude of humility before the throne of England, and spreading at her feet the record of her fearful anguish. Who will say

that her prayer is not to be heard ? It is that of reason and right—she is eloquent, although her garb is that of wretchedness—and she is persuasive, for millions of her dying children cling to her while she pleads.

The remedies proposed have been various and liberal ; but, in the judgment of the writer, they have been wanting in one essential—in legislating for the present moment they have made no provision against a recurrence of the evil. He grants that the first step must be to save the dying ; but he conceives that a “ House of Recovery” is as essential as a “ Refuge for the Diseased.” Ireland may be raised from her low estate ; but her children, weakened as they must be by want, will require a new and more abundant clime, and to that country the pages of this volume point.

Canada is our own—her laws, language, trade, commerce, and landed possessions, are the property of our own people, and exist beneath the protection of our own Sovereign. Why not make it more like home, by its speedy and general colonization ?

The truth is, that the pressure upon the life-springs of impoverished Ireland threatens the existence of her teeming dependants, and it will be the wisdom of the Legislature to put forth its majestic hand and ease her of the ponderous burthen.

We have yet to learn that emigration has over failed in realizing its promised blessings ; and certainly, as far as British North America is concerned, the testimony of those who have promoted, and those who have submitted to its dictates, goes far to silence any objection. Millions of acres of the most fertile land in the known world are at the disposal of the State, and millions of our subjects crave bread from our bounty. Again we ask, why not send them forth to “ till and dress” the land which we have too long hoarded up with the hand of a miser, who prefers counting his time-worn gold to embarking in the re-productive pursuits going on around him ?

The author of the following pages has purposely avoided entering into the details of any plan of “ General Emigration” to Canada : he deems it sufficient to record the conviction of his judgment, that a system the most extensive would prove most beneficial to those for whom our sympathies and aid are alike enlisted.

In the passing glance which he has bestowed upon the inhabitants of the United States, it may appear to some of his readers that language has been employed by him embodying in it a spirit inconsistent with the maintenance of those friendly relations which, in the words of Royalty, “ we continue to hold with foreign powers.” All that can be said in reply is, that he has written more in pity than in anger, and with the hope that a class so nearly allied to ourselves may be led to shun the unenviable path which from boasting leads to insult. While the author would not court a critic’s gaze, he feels emboldened, from their truth, to emblazon the facts which he has recorded upon the out-spread banner of explicit declaration.

Should the rich man realize the picture of increasing gain described in the histories of other men’s fortunes—should the members of professions, important as they are learned, discover an easier pathway to fame and honor—should the hardy sons of toil, whose lot was suffering in the place of their nativity, enter upon the enjoyment of peace and plenty, the author’s object will have been attained, and his hopes consummated in the increasing happiness of his poverty-stricken fellow-countrymen.

Importance of well-authenticated and recent Information respecting the Country in which the Emigrant intends to settle—Various routes to British North America—The city of New York—The city of Quebec—River St. Lawrence—City of Montreal—The “ Rapids”—Scenery— Thousand Islands—Kingston in Upper Canada—Lake Ontario—Ports called at by the Royal Mail Steam Boats—Poor Man’s passage—Cautions—Provisions for Voyage—Emigrants arrival at Quebec—Cheapest way to Toronto.

FEW things are more natural, and none more necessary, upon the part of the emigrant, than a desire to understand correctly the peculiarities of the country to which his destiny points. Should he proceed in the dark, or be decoyed by false lights, it requires no extraordinary amount of human sagacity to predict his disappointment and the destruction of his hopes.

Upon leaving this country the author had no vivid or romantic conceptions of the colony of Canada ; nor had he the slightest prospect of acquiring—what too many falsely calculate upon—an instant and accumulating fortune. He mentions this fact, lest, that in painting its portraiture, he should be suspected of coloring too highly its advantages or shading too darkly its privations.

But a few months have elapsed since he returned from the scene which he purposes to describe, and he cannot but believe that it is quite as necessary for the emigrant to have a *recent* as a faithful directory. Canada resembles all its kindred portions of the globe—it is a changing and changeable country. Before the author embarked for its shores curiosity led him to examine the geographical descriptions of Canada, and to his astonishment he read of “ wild Indians,” “ wild beasts,” and “ wild forests,” so that he felt fully prepared to plunge into a literal wilderness : but judge of his astonishment when he found that the wild men of the woods had become docile as children, and, in many instances, useful and intelligent as their discoverers and tutors ; that the beasts of the forest had retired to unexplored regions, afraid to gaze upon the footsteps of civilization ; and that the Indian “ path” had been enlarged to a road wider than many in the mother country. The truth is, his investigations had been directed to the page of Canada’s earliest history, if not to the moment of her original discovery. A new country must present a succession of novel aspects, and it is from the daily development of those new features that we form its character. Never should it be forgotten that we have more to do with things as they are than with things as they were.

The author takes it for granted that the great inducement to seek a home in a foreign land is the prospect of improving our earthly circumstances, and providing for those who are dependent upon us. We say not that this is the only reason, for there are high and holy causes of a moral nature ; but, in the vast majority of cases, the matter may be reduced to this—its primary element : the poor man often looks at his careworn partner and ill-clad children, and having struggled in vain against the tide of adversity incident to home, at length resolves to cast himself upon the stream which will bear him to that distant land where he has been told poverty and privation are alike unknown. The man of means (comparative of course) hears, from afar, of fortunes made from capitals small and wealth amassed with rapidity and ease ; so that, tempted by the enchanting prospect, he embarks with eagerness for the scene of this desirable speculation ; whilst a third, youthful and talented, resolves upon following the fortunes of his profession in a country where there are fewer competitors for its honors or sharers of its emoluments ; but it is perfectly plain that one and all are actuated by the same laudable ambition to improve their circumstances.

As this guide is designed to treat of purely secular subjects its pages will be found to contain words of counsel to each of the classes glanced at.

There are two ordinary routes taken by emigrants to our North American possessions—the one *viâ* New York, Halifax, or Boston ; the other through the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, and thence (should the passenger’s taste or interest lead him to the West) direct to Toronto, which may be designated the capital of Upper Canada. In his own case the writer proceeded outward by New York, and homeward by way of Quebec ; so that he has gained a practical knowledge of both voyages. Those who wish for comfort, and who prefer the economy of time to that of money, he would recommend to visit New York or Boston. The former is a city truly worthy of notice—its splendid bay, its fairy scenery, and its majestic rivers, are all objects of interest, and tend, in no small degree ; to furnish an antidote to the unpleasantness of a passage, although sometimes short, at all times monotonous.

Nothing is wanting in the excellent trans-Atlantic steam vessels to secure the comfort and safety of passengers; and, although the regular “ Liners” or sailing packets possess far less speed, and consequently much greater uncertainty as to the period of their arrival, yet, as it regards their arrangement, nothing can be more complete. The fares as to money are much lower ; while the fare as to provision is fully as good as that on board of our Royal Mail Steamers. But, as it has been already stated, our finances must (if prudence be consulted) ever rule the route to be taken.

Many respectable families, however, prefer the more direct way, *viâ* Quebec ; and without doubt, as far as scenery is concerned, we are at a loss to say which is most to be admired. The banks of the noble St. Lawrence are richly wooded, and although the villages and clearings are neither as numerous nor as good as those on the Hudson yet they are not without interest ; whilst the cities of Quebec and Montreal have no competitors between New York and Toronto.

Quebec is perhaps one of our best fortified colonial possessions : nature and art have combined in rendering it impregnable ; its widespread ramparts and its crowning citadel guard every avenue of approach either by land or by water ; and, as it is the key to our upper possessions, it is at all times guarded with the utmost vigilance. The city itself has not much to boast of beyond its magnificent military works : the streets are exceedingly narrow and the houses equally irregular, whilst the public buildings are neither numerous nor respectable. The state of society, however, is good ; for the English and French population seem to have blended their good national qualities so intimately together, that, even among the meanest of the people, there appears an air of politeness and a show of friendship. The cathedral, both for situation and extent, is perhaps the best of the public buildings. The great commerce of the city is carried on in the miserable streets and lanes of what is called the “ Lower Town.” Of hotels there appears to be an unusual deficiency, both as to number and extent—Payne’s is said to be the best.

Montreal is situated much higher up the river, and possesses fewer natural but certainly more ornamental features than Quebec. It is surrounded by a rich and extensive country, and, as it is now the seat of Government, it can boast of more wealth, station, and talent amongst its inhabitants than any other city in the provinces. The Roman Catholics have built an enormously large place of worship in the Gothic style of architecture, but wanting in taste and elegance in its internal arrangements. Considering that nearly the whole of the landed property of the city is held by a corporation of the priesthood, it is remarkable that they have not yet completed the decorations of the interior. Several of the nunneries are extensive, and some open to the public. It would be unjust to pass over the excellent shipping arrangements : the quays and docks of Montreal are surpassed only by those of England.

The scenery between Montreal and Kingston is really beautiful, but unfortunately much of it is lost in ascending the river. The “Rapids” which you descend in the downward passage must be avoided by canals in going up ; and, as a consequence, by far the most exciting portion of the voyage is cut off. Many persons have been led to suppose that there is imminent peril incurred in dashing down those amazing currents, but this is a mistake : it is true that in some places the water runs at a speed of sixteen miles an hour, whilst that of the steamer is ten, giving twenty-six miles an hour as the rate at which you proceed : yet such is the perfection attained by practice, and the consummate skill of the river pilots, that an accident at a rapid is seldom heard of. Formerly the canal boats alone ventured to pursue the unchecked course of the river : but during the past summer the Royal Mail Steamers have “run all the rapids,” and, from their great success, the public mind appears to be at rest on the subject of risk or danger.

For some miles before you enter the excellent harbour of Kingston the vessel appears as if lost amidst the “Thousand Islands”—a name, no doubt, selected at random ; for, were they enumerated, the probability is that they would number two-fold more than their title leads you to suppose. The “Islands” are small, and few of them inhabited ; but the foliage of the trees planted upon them by the hand of nature is most luxuriant and beautiful. The channels through which you pass in navigating this portion of the river are so narrow that, in many instances, you could almost step from the vessel upon the shore.

Kingston as a city, although by no means extensive, is not destitute of interest to the stranger. The public buildings and houses are in general formed of a good description of limestone which abounds in the vicinity ; and, within the last year or two, the citizens have erected a very splendid cut stone edifice to serve as a town-hall and market-house. The withdrawal of the seat of Government has had a ruinous influence upon the value of property ; but there is no doubt that better days will dawn upon this, one of the most important ports on lake Ontario.

The Royal Mail Steam-packets, which ply daily between Kingston and Toronto (Sundays excepted), touch at several ports on the way up ; so that the traveller has an opportunity of seeing many of the most important places eastward from the capital of the province.

Cobourg, about midway between Kingston and Toronto, is perhaps one of the most rapidly improving towns on the route. Already it possesses a safe and commodious harbour, several handsome places of worship (the church in particular), and an attractive building in connexion with the Methodist body, called “Victoria College.”

There is one peculiar feature in American travelling, and we regard it as a matter alike of economy and comfort : you are free from the incessant demands of servants and hotel porters ; for it appears an understood thing that the domestics, who are paid so highly as those of Canada, should be quite above soliciting the paltry perquisites usually pertaining to their office in these countries.

It becomes necessary to devote a page or two to our more humble readers, who may wish information as to the plans to be pursued by them.

We cannot, in any case, recommend to those who may be straitened in their circumstances, the passage to New York ; for, although travelling in the United States is undoubtedly cheap, yet the distance is so great, and the changing from boat to boat or from carriage to carriage so frequent, that the expence becomes a matter of grave consideration. Many of the best of our British ships are constantly sailing from every port of note in the three kingdoms, either for

Quebec or Montreal. Some emigrants are induced to embark in the “ first ships,” expecting, as a consequence, that those which sail first, must arrive first ; but this is far from being the case. It is true that they may reach the St. Lawrence before many others which leave at a later period ; but the probability is that they may be detained by, or damaged in the ice—the risk is much greater than the probable advantage of an early arrival—and it is therefore recommended to passengers not to embark earlier than the beginning of April.

The matters demanding serious attention on the part of the passenger by our merchant ships are the soundness of the vessel, the seamanship and sobriety of the captain, and the kind and quantity of his sea-stock. For the two former, he must in a great measure depend upon the reputation of the owners—for the latter upon his own prudence. It is matter of notoriety that poor people are imposed upon by “ self-constituted agents”—a class of men who prowl about our docks and quays for the purpose of practising the grossest imposition upon the simple and unsuspecting, and they cannot be too earnestly advised to avoid all such officious individuals. The only safe method of proceeding is, *in all cases*, to wait upon the merchant or ship-broker, and, if possible, make arrangements with the principal of the establishment.

The provisions of the emigrant ought to consist of the usual necessities of life—the ship finds water and fuel. Not a few emigrants are foolish enough to take with them a supply of ardent spirits as a specific for sea-sickness or a remedy for some anticipated illness. This is quite unnecessary and often injurious—useless, because the captain is required by law to carry a well-stocked medicine chest ; injurious, because it tends to perpetuate practices which an emigrant to Canada above all others ought to lay aside. The best stock of provisions should consist in a sufficient quantity of salt beef and pork, ship biscuit, oaten meal, rice, tea, sugar, and a small portion of arrow-root or sago, in case of debility arising from sea-sickness. Potatoes used to be a perfect luxury upon the ocean ; but, unfortunately, they are now quite beyond the reach of those who formerly subsisted on them. It must therefore be remembered that it will be necessary to take a greater supply of other kinds of food, so that the emigrant may not be reduced to want.

Upon the arrival of the ship at Quebec, the Government and Custom-house officers will proceed to examine the vessel and the condition of the passengers ; and, should their report be favorable, there will be no obstacle in the way of the emigrant proceeding at once to Montreal. There are two of the finest of our North American steamers plying every evening between the cities of Montreal and Quebec ; so that the emigrant need not remain a single hour longer than he finds to be absolutely necessary at the place of arrival. There are many reasons for tendering this advice. Quebec, like all other sea-port towns, especially in foreign countries, abounds with the lowest of the low, who are aptly, although not elegantly, designated “ land-sharks ;” and to such demons in human form the loitering stranger is almost certain of becoming a prey : but, above and beyond this consideration, the emigrant should remember that his time is of as great importance as his money, and to delay is to sacrifice both. Whilst, however, dispatch is urged in the emigrant’s movements, it is right to remind him that the captain of the vessel in which he has sailed is bound to allow him to remain on board for forty-eight hours after the ship arrives. In order to secure both the comfort and safety of the passengers who disembark, in many instances, barges or small river steam boats are employed to land the passengers ; but this is invariably done at the captain’s expense.

From Montreal the emigrant may proceed to Kingston, and either go direct by the mail steamer or by the canal, which last is much cheaper, but far more tedious and uncomfortable. It becomes necessary to notice the difference of currency between that of England and Lower and Upper Canada ; for, without this needful knowledge, the stranger is sure to be a serious loser. A British penny will only pass for the same amount at which it is valued in the mother

country; but a British sixpence, or, as it is generally termed, a “York shilling,” will bring seven-pence halfpenny. Our shilling is called “a quarter of a dollar,” and its Canadian value is one shilling and three pence ; four English shillings therefore pass for one dollar, and a sovereign for about one pound four shillings and four pence halfpenny at a bank ; but at a shop, when it is tendered in payment of an account, it is generally taken for one pound five shillings. Whilst upon the subject of money, it may be added that a British half-crown will only produce three shillings ; whereas two shillings and six-pence in separate pieces, will be worth three shillings and three halfpence. Of course, in enumerating the changes in the currency of our coin, these observations are alone correct in reference to our own dominions. In the United States it is far otherwise, for there a British shilling is called “two shillings ;” and hence many an unfortunate emigrant has been grossly deceived by the idea, that, when wages in the Republic are quoted at from ten to twelve shillings per day, it means ten or twelve of those coins which he has ever known under the title of shillings—half of his anticipations can alone, in the very nature of things, be realized.

There is no difficulty or delay in proceeding direct from Kingston to Toronto, as there are several most excellent steamers, one of which sails from the former place every evening (Sunday excepted) ; and the charge for the passage is low, never exceeding eight shillings, and not unfrequently much cheaper.

In Toronto, as in Quebec, Montreal, and Kingston, by a wise and benevolent arrangement of the Government, agents are stationed, whose duty it is to afford the enquiring stranger the best information concerning the country ; and, if possible, to procure him employment should he stand in need of it. One of the objects contemplated in this notice of Canada is to point out to the various classes proceeding to the colony those localities where they are most likely to succeed in procuring immediate and remunerating employment ; and, in doing this, the author necessarily anticipates many of the instructions which will be given them by the officers of Government. Yet, as this is perhaps the most important branch of information to which his attention can be directed, he ventures upon it ; although under the conviction of its subsequent repetition by persons of far more influence than any private individual could be supposed to possess. Before, however, these details are entered upon, it must not be forgotten that some readers of this treatise may resolve upon the route by New York, and to such parties a few words may be addressed.

The city of New York abounds with hotels and boarding-houses, and both are conducted upon very different principles from those in the mother country. The charges are exceedingly moderate, not averaging more than from four to five shillings per diem. The “Astor House” stands unrivalled as to extent and splendour ; but the Howard Hotel, Broadway, although more circumscribed in its dimensions and moderate in its charges, is quite as comfortable in its arrangements. The uniform practice in the United States is for the inhabitants of hotels and boarding-houses to frequent the *table d'hote*, and that, too, for every meal. So great is the American fancy for public life that it is quite common to find whole families who have been born and brought up at hotels. A lady and gentleman recently married and possessing moderate means, instead of becoming housekeepers and enjoying the quiet retirement of social life, will take up their abode at some boarding-house or tavern and there remain for years, or for the remainder of their lives, without any place worthy the name of, or bearing the most faint resemblance to home. It may be worth noticing that servants in no case expect gratuities, and every respectable hotel-keeper will drive any one to the steam boat or stage-office free of charge.

The “Lions” of the city are by no means numerous, yet they are certainly worthy of notice. The visitor will find Trinity Church, the new Custom-house, and the Exchange, exceedingly chaste and modern buildings ; whilst, for extent of street-way, “Broadway” (which is certainly a contradiction of the term) is truly astonishing. The manners and habits of the American citizens cannot fail to impress the mind of a British subject most unfaourably, both as to the form of their government and the social condition of the people. It may be regarded as a national misfortune that, amongst all classes, the spirit of exaggeration and *repudiation* prevails to a fearful extent. Their boasting is at all times fulsome, and their opinion of England is alike insulting and unjust. This is cursorily mentioned more as a matter of regret than astonishment ; for light is not more opposed to darkness than the well-balanced power of Britain is to the light-headedness of her revolting and “prodigal son” in the far west. In truth, it is a matter of surprise that men of education and loyalty can so far forget their principles and violate their allegiance, as to give a preference to the wild ravings of popular clamour under the mask of perfect liberty to that sober and enduring system in which they have been cradled and trained.

When curiosity is exhausted in visiting the novelties of New York, the most comfortable plan of proceeding will be to go direct to Albany by one of the day boats ; but, before doing so a bargain ought to be made with a respectable “Forwarder,” who will send any quantity of luggage by canal to Toronto with little trouble and at a trifling expense. The reason for naming the day-boats upon the Hudson is that one may have an opportunity of seeing the surpassing beauties of that splendid river : the scenery has been pronounced by many impartial witnesses as quite equal to any one of our European waters—the Rhine not excepted : there is not a mile of the passage which does not present some feature of touching interest—in fact, one could spend an entire day in the midst of a perfect panorama of Nature’s most lovely charms and endless varieties. The steamers are magnificently fitted up : they are exceedingly large, and no expense has been spared to make them appear most inviting and comfortable. It is upon this river we believe that a floating theatre perpetually proceeds from village to village, along its shores, soliciting the patronage of the rustic inhabitants.

From Albany, which though a large is by no means a handsome city, the stranger proceeds by railway to Syracuse. It was in Albany that our eyes were opened as to the honesty of the worthy republicans. An exceedingly well-dressed man came on board the *Troy*, and knowing the author to be a stranger by his luggage, very politely asked whether he intended going by the cars or railroad—at tile same time intimating that he was the agent of the company, and that it was his duty to look after the passengers’ luggage and conduct them in the company’s omnibus to the terminus—all which he was to do *without charge*. Not suspecting anything bordering upon dishonesty in such a respectably-clad personage, the author thanked him, entrusted him with his boxes, &c, and took his place in the omnibus : the distance was short ; but, strange to say, when they arrived “the agent” was not forthcoming : he had vanished, and the driver very modestly demanded five shillings as his fare. It was in vain that the representations of the company’s servant were pleaded—the driver knew nothing of him and had no connexion with him—and there was not a moment to be lost, for the cars were about to start. It was very much against his will that the writer was obliged to submit to this twofold imposition, which, in the polite language of the country, is simply termed a “Yankee trick.”

From Syracuse the ordinary route is by canals to Oswego, a port of considerable note on lake Ontario. Here the visitor is pretty certain to find either a steamer direct to Toronto, or else to Lewiston or Queenston, either of which places are within a very few miles of the falls of Niagara ; and it is hardly possible to suppose a stranger being within an hour’s drive of this magnificent and overwhelming object without spending some time, be it ever so short, in contemplating its startling grandeur. There are two points at which the falls are seen to most



advantage—the one on the British side of the Niagara river—the other on its opposite banks, which form a portion of the American territory. Without prejudice it may be said that by far the most pleasing prospect of this “ world’s wonder” can be obtained from the British side of the river. From the Table Rock the whole body of water may be seen as it rushes with awful fury in one mighty volume over the impending precipice into the yawning chasm beneath. A very excellent view may also be obtained from the Clifton-house, which is a splendid hotel built upon the Table Rock. There are several ferry boats which are constantly crossing to the American side of the river ; and, should time permit, it is recommended to the traveller to visit the new and rapidly improving town which was formerly called Manchester, but within the last few months has been styled “ Niagara Falls.” There are guides and guide-books almost innumerable on both sides of the river, and to those who wish to “ go under the fall” one of the former is absolutely requisite. From Niagara one is certain to meet with either one or two steamers to Toronto every day ; and, as it is not more than five or six hours’ run across the lake, the visitor will in all probability enjoy the delightful calm of that vast expanse of water.

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Attracted by the love of gain, one is sure to meet with natives of every country of Europe ; and it is a pleasing feature, in the state of the more refined circles in Canada, that there is a cordial and sympathetic feeling displayed which tends to mitigate the otherwise intolerable loneliness incident to a foreign country. The charitable societies of St. George, St. Patrick, and St. Andrew, may be looked upon as having been mainly instrumental in producing unity of spirit and charity of purpose among the colonists.

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Rates of Wages—Mode of Payment—Important Facilities for acquiring Real Estate—The Class of Emigrants most required in Canada—Operations of the Canada Company.

It has always occurred to the author that there exists in Canada no fair relative proportion between the prices of provisions and the rates of wages ; and yet, the discrepancy is easily accounted for : the scattered and scarce number of the labouring population will, of itself, produce great and exorbitant wages where their services cannot be dispensed with : whilst the manner in which too many employers pay their domestics and farm-servants is another strong reason why high rates should be demanded on the one hand and be submitted to upon the other. The system generally pursued in the colony is for the farmer to open an account in one of the “ country stores,” and there give what are termed “ orders” upon the shopkeeper for the various amounts due to the servants, who, as a matter of necessity, are compelled to submit to the terms upon which such goods are offered to them as payment for their services. The proprietor who employs is under an obligation equally imperative to settle his account with the *obliging* merchant, and very often it happens that, finding himself unable to meet his debts, he suffers his property to pass into the books of one who, having acted the part of agent, now rejoices in the prospect of becoming possessor of the estate. But this, although the general mode of making payment, is not the only one : the credit system has entered so effectually into every species of traffic that it is no unusual occurrence that a master discharges a servant with a promissory note drawn for a period of six or nine months ! Now, whilst such practices are pursued, it is not to be wondered at if the poorer classes demand wages large enough to meet the inevitable loss resulting from the mode in which they are paid.

A good farm-servant readily meets with an engagement at from 2*l.* to 2*l.* 10*s.* per month,

besides his board, lodging, and washing ; whilst a daily labourer can at all times earn from 2s. 6d. to 3s. *per diem*. Female servants in cities and large towns receive 24s. to 30s. per month ; but, in the country their wages seldom exceed from 16s. to 18s. for the same period.

Mechanics' wages are exceedingly high in all parts of the province. A carpenter or joiner charges 6s. *per diem*, and all other trades follow about the same rate. Those who commence business on their own account in a new settlement generally realize a comparative independence in a few years, the exceptions being men of indolent or intemperate habits. This fact will appear more evident when it is remembered at what a low rate provisions are to be obtained, and what a constant demand a country so new as Canada must create for all kinds of handicraft. It is from the knowledge of such truths, and the evidence of innumerable cases which have come within the range of the author's observation, that he is confident in the correctness of the assertion that Canada is emphatically " the poor man's country." In this respect there are few places to equal it—certainly none to excel it.

Although a vast portion of the landed property of Canada has passed into the hands of successful speculators, so that there is not by any means the same facility for purchasing property now that the colony presented some twenty or thirty years since ; yet, viewing it in comparison with home, or indeed with any other portion of our British North American territory, there are opportunities of great importance still to be formed of acquiring permanent and improving possessions.

The question has not unfrequently been put to the author since his return to England—" What class of emigrants do you consider best suited to the present wants of Canada ?" He replied without hesitation—" *Agriculturists before all others.* " The reasons for entertaining this opinion are numerous, and will occur to the reader as conclusive. Canada presents an almost unlimited scope for agricultural pursuits : we have only to look upon her millions of acres of the choicest land untouched ; and, with a population not sufficient to dot its vast regions with the most faint symptoms of civilization, reason points to it as the most likely receptacle for the superabundant and constantly necessitous people of our own country. The author is clearly of opinion that, in the first instance, farm labourers should precede farm proprietors : " men of straw" should be sent out first, and men of capital should quickly follow them. At the present moment, unless the gentleman-farmer is prepared to take the lead in the working as well as the planning department of his property, it becomes little short of a moral certainty that he will either droop into despair or retire in disgust from the pursuit of an independence, purchased at the expense of every gentlemanly feeling, and sacrificed before the shrine of an intolerant spirit of democracy.

It will be remembered that, upon a previous page, it was stated that the seasons were rendered remarkable, not alone by the suddenness with which they entered, but by the shortness and uncertainty of their duration : as a further proof of the correctness of this statement it may be mentioned that, during harvest time, it is a common practice for the farmer to be obliged to " cut and carry"—*i.e.*, to cradle or mow his wheat, and, as fast as it falls, it is carried into the barn. This is done because the climate is so warm that the grain is cured during the operation of cutting ; nor can its owner be certain of a long continuance of suitable weather. To effect this requires a great many hands ; and, as all agriculturists are in similar circumstances, there is a perfect clamour for aid ; so that wages not only advance from fifty to seventy-five per cent., but employers are obliged to submit to the most galling insults and vexatious annoyances.

It is evident that there is a monopoly in the market of manual labour, and the first step to real and lasting improvement must be to pour in such large supplies as shall tend to keep this

essential commodity within the reach of those who cannot dispense with it. No doubt this is a discouraging feature in the present state of our transatlantic possessions ; yet, as it is unfortunately founded on fact, it ought to be generally known. One year's extensive emigration of the labouring classes would make an essential difference in favour of the employer, and it may be that the present awful distress at home will, by promoting this desirable object, go far to establish the balance of power in the hands of those who can really understand that " property has its rights as well as its duties."

Whilst the author has felt it his duty to place special stress upon the necessity for a large augmentation of the working portion of our Canadian community, he would not have the reader infer that he is insensible to the vast importance of men of education becoming immediate settlers in the colony. To the existence of those who are there at present may be attributed the irresistible barrier which has been set up to the wide-spreading desolation of anti-monarchical principles, as well as the actual working out of a code of local laws both mild and judicious. Should any unhappy circumstances ever occur to deprive the country of the services of those who may well be termed her best and highest ornaments, their removal would be the withdrawal of the leaven of loyalty, and the signal for a revolt more extensive and fearful than those who remain at a distance from the scene can imagine.

The emigration of agricultural operatives may not be placed first in the scale of importance ; but, under the existing state of affairs, they ought to remove first in the order of time. Few things would indicate more strongly the sound discretion of Parliament, and nothing would strengthen more effectually the hands of our colonial subjects, than the adoption of a general and well-organised system of extensive emigration—such emigration to be confined to good artizans and able-bodied labourers. The starving millions in the sister country could readily supply both classes. Want, they would not, in a country such as Canada ; and succeed they must, if the Government would only assist them during the infantile stages of their new career.

There are three methods of obtaining land in the Upper Province of Canada—first, by application at the Government Land Office ; secondly from the Upper Canada Company ; and thirdly, from private individuals or old settlers, who, strange to say, are always on the alert to " sell out," and ever willing to re-enter the forest and resume the toils and encounter the privations in the " back woods."

The Crown Lands are, what their title designates, held in right of the Government of the country. For the disposing of them, Land Commissioners have been appointed, not only at the seat of the executive in Montreal, but, for the greater convenience of Canada West, in the city of Toronto. In the same manner, the " Clergy Reserves" are offered for sale on reasonable terms to the buyer, although ruinous to the cause for which they were originally intended.

From all that can be gathered upon the subject, by far the most satisfactory mode of obtaining land is from the Canada Company. There are fewer forms to be gone through, and there is a strong disposition on the part of the highly respectable and talented commissioners to offer every accommodation and encouragement to the most humble applicant. The plan upon which this Company proceeds is as follows :—Let us suppose the case of an emigrant having capital enough to stock a farm of one hundred acres, forty of which are cleared. We can imagine him destitute of the means of making an immediate purchase ; but he calls at the Canada Company's Office, and there represents his case : if he can produce letters of character or references to persons of standing in the colony, it will, of course, be so much more in his favour ; but the author believes the Company will treat with perfect strangers.

The applicant is given a list of unoccupied farms in various parts of the province ; and, at the same time, all possible information as to the locality and nature of the land is tendered to him. The Company offer a certain block of wild land, or a farm of partially cleared land, for so much per acre ; and knowing that he is not prepared to make a full payment of the amount, the emigrant is told that the Company will give him a lease for ten years, and that the annual rent shall be little more than the interest (six per cent.) of the unpaid purchase money. Thus, should the farm be sold for ten shillings per acre, the whole amount of his liabilities would be, for one hundred acres, 50*l.* ; whilst the rent or interest would only come to 3*l.* per annum. Nor must it be forgotten that the tenant retains his right to purchase, and obtain his title deed, at any time before the expiration of his lease. It must occur to any person, of ordinary capacity, that such advantages are exactly suited to the man of small means, or, indeed, to a man without means, save a powerful hand and willing mind. The author cannot too strongly impress upon the attention of emigrants the value of this highly influential Company's offers. Upon the other hand, it is equally desirable that men of capital should avail themselves of the opportunities offered by the Company for safe and reproductive investments. There are but few townships in which it has not property to dispose of ; so that it is in a position to treat with purchasers to almost any amount. Some idea may be formed of the extent of its territory from the fact of eight hundred thousand acres of land being now offered for sale in one section of the country alone—that of the “ Huron tract.”

It may be deemed necessary by others, and it is felt requisite by the author, that he should reiterate what has been before stated—namely, that he is a disinterested witness, not only of the value of Canada in general, but of the Canada Company in particular. The writer is unknown to any of its officers, nor has he the slightest interest to serve either directly or indirectly by its prosperity. During his residence in Canada, he was a constant although silent observer, placed in the midst of an agricultural district ; and, from the unsought-for facts which came before him in his every-day intercourse with the people, he had many instances of the equitable manner in which the Company conducted all its affairs. In every case a ready ear was given to the applicant—great forbearance shown to the unfortunate—valuable advice tendered to the ignorant or inexperienced ; and, what is most important, the utmost dispatch was used in obtaining leases, deeds, and other legal settlements.

Far different has it been where Government officers had to be consulted. The comparative independence of subordinates—the obstacles thrown in the way of obtaining redress for wrongs inflicted, or correction of errors made—have not only wearied the patience but drained the purse of the poor emigrant.

Private individuals, either the occupiers or proprietors of land, are to be met with in every portion of the province anxious to “ sell out” their well or partially cleared farms, and no doubt bargains may be, and have been obtained by this mode of purchasing. Should a stranger think of such a speculation, he cannot be too cautious or particular in obtaining all the information within his reach, as to the age and character of the clearing. The writer once met with a gentleman who, whilst driving along the road, was agreeably struck with the appearance of a well-cleared, well-fenced, and really good-looking farm. The dwelling-house was both large and strongly built, and the whole property was offered for sale. At once a bargain was closed, and the consequence was that, when he became the occupier, he discovered that the farm had been so thoroughly “ run out” that it was impossible to get it to bear anything bordering upon a good crop. He endeavoured, both by extensive and expensive manuring, to bring it “ into heart,” but in vain ; for every shower of rain literally filtered the manure through its porous surface ; so that, as a last resource, he was obliged to cart clay from a considerable distance, and thus form a new strata , of soil upon the whole of his prop-

erty. The reader may imagine, for it would be difficult to describe, the serious consequence of such a disastrous step.

It would be impossible to give a correct idea of what a good farm may be obtained for, chiefly because so many circumstances (some of which have been already named), form elements in its real value ; but it should be observed that a farm of one hundred acres, good in quality, within four miles of a market, on a good road and having a frame house and barn, with a clearing of from fifty to sixty acres, ought to be purchased for from 3*l.* 10*s.* to 4*l.* per acre. It is far from being an advantage in making a purchase of a small quantity of land to have too much of it cleared. The emigrant must remember that he will have to depend for years to come upon the wood of his property for his firing ; and, therefore, a farm entirely cleared, or with more than two-thirds of it free from timber is not on any account desirable. Sixty acres of well cleared land will be ample both for pasture and crop, and each year's chopping will add to the arable portion of it with as much rapidity as his resources for cultivating it will warrant. The *data* for this estimate has been taken from one of the leading roads in the Home and Gore Districts, within twenty miles of Toronto : in the more remote or westerly sections of the province, farms may be purchased at a much lower rate ; but it must be remembered that the price of produce is proportionally smaller.

For some few years past the tide of emigration has evidently set in towards the Huron tract. The Canada Company state that “ the Huron district is known to be one of the most healthy and fertile tracts of land in Canada ; it has more than doubled its population within four years. The Huron tract, in the year 1842, contained 7,101 souls : in June last year (1846), the same district numbered 14,983 souls, according to the official returns.” Many of the authors parishioners, during the period of his incumbency, sold their old farms and removed to this locality ; and from some of them he received the most favourable accounts. They have found the country excellent as to the quality of its land, but execrable in the matter of roads. Time was when all Canada was in a similar if not worse condition. There are gentlemen now living in ease and affluence in Toronto who well remember when that city was little short of a miserable hamlet, and when the streets were so bad as to render its impossible for the pedestrian to pursue his course. But, now, the face of every thing is changed into order and respectability ; and those who then encountered both difficulties and privations are now permitted to enjoy the full sunshine of prosperity. It will be so—it must be so—with others—even with the most remote corners of the colony in the course of time ; and no doubt need be entertained but that many a poor man's heart will be gladdened in his declining years by beholding his children rise in the scale of comfort to a point far beyond their most sanguine expectation when in “ the old country.”

Canada as it Is, Or, The Emigrant's Friend and Guide to Upper Canada : Being ... (1847)

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