

Emigrant's Geography 1832

The emigrant's pocket companion

Robert Mudie

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1832

Geographical Sketch of British North America.

ALTHOUGH it is not necessary, and indeed not to be expected, that the emigrant should have a general knowledge of geography, yet it is absolutely indispensable that he should have, at least, some knowledge of the country in which he is to take up his abode ; and the British possessions in North America are so extensive, and so various in their climates and productions, and in the occupations of their inhabitants, that a general account becomes necessary, as a preface to the statistics of the particular districts.

Those possessions consist of the country on the north bank of the great river St. Lawrence, with a portion of that on the south, for an extent, from east to west, as explored in part at least, of more than 1200 miles on the parallel of latitude, and the western boundary is indefinite. The extreme breadth from north to south, is also nearly 800 miles, and the northern boundary is indefinite,—the country being British as far as it is habitable, or admits being-visited during the summer months.

The boundaries of this great extent of territory, even where they are definite, are very irregular, and greatly exceed the straight-lined dimensions. From the extreme east, there are about 800 miles of sea-boundary, westward on the south side, without reckoning the smaller bays and creeks. Westward of this, there are nearly 600 miles of a boundary along the land, which is not absolutely settled. At the extremity of that boundary, the great river St. Lawrence separates the British territory from the United States, extending south-westward for about 100 miles to Lake Ontario, Lake Ontario is 150 miles on the straight line to the mouth of the River Niagara ; but the shores of that lake make, at least, 250 miles of coast. The River Niagara to Lake Erie is about 25 miles ; and Lake Erie is 250 miles on the straight line. From the head of Lake Erie, through Lake St. Clair, to Lake Huron, is about 100 miles ; Lake Huron is, at least, 300 miles, and Lake Superior 400 miles. From the head of Lake Superior the boundary stretches north-westward to the Lake of the Woods ; and thence westward along the parallel of 49° . The words of the treaty say, that it is to be drawn to the Mississippi ; but the source of the Mississippi is *southward* of the Lake of the Woods. The north-west angle of the Lake of the Woods being in $49^{\circ} 20'$, the boundary stretches southward to the parallel of 49° ; then westward along that parallel to the highest ridge of the rocky mountains ; and thence on the parallel $42^{\circ} 50'$, to the Pacific Ocean. A portion of the north west is claimed by Russia as far south as to about the 51° of latitude, and the Russian portion may be considered as bounded eastward by the meridian of about 140° west of Greenwich, from Mount Elias to the shores of the Arctic Sea. In the present state of the country, however, those boundaries are not of much consequence ; though the fur trade from North-western America to China is a source of very considerable revenue to the Russians. Reckoning the boundary only as far as Lake Superior, there are, exclusive of bays, upwards of 2000 miles which are water, and generally speaking, navigable for vessels of large burden ; at least there are not above 200 or 300 miles out of the 2000, that are not deep water ; for the lakes have all the depth, and all the danger of seas.

On the east coast the extent of water boundary is also very great. From the extreme point of the island of Cape Breton westward, on the south side of the St. Lawrence to Quebec, where the sea navigation may be said to end, there are, exclusive of bays and creeks, at least 1000 miles of coast ; and 700 may be considered as approachable on the north side of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. That portion of the St. Lawrence from Quebec, south-westward, which lies wholly within the British territory, is, at least, 200 miles in length, which gives an additional 400 miles of navigable shore. So that, without taking islands, other navigable rivers besides the St. Lawrence, or irregularities of the coast into the account, it may be stated that the British provinces in North America have nearly 5000 miles susceptible of being approached by ships or boats of some description or other. Much of this water-communication too, lies in the interior of the country ; and it may be said, that the only portion that is exposed to hostility, is the 100 miles of the St. Lawrence below Lake Ontario ; and for commercial purposes that may be avoided by means of the Rideau Canal, from Kingston on Lake Ontario, to Hull on the Ottawa River.

It will be more convenient to divide the remainder of this chapter into sections.

Section I — PROVINCES.

The British territories in North America, at least that portion of them which is fit for being the permanent residence of inhabitants, consists of five provinces :—Newfoundland ; Nova Scotia ; New-Brunswick, including Prince Edward's Island ; and Lower and Upper Canada. The three provinces first mentioned, are not very well adapted for the residence of emigrants ; and in Lower Canada the English settler labours under a disadvantage, because the majority of the people are French.

Newfoundland.

Newfoundland is an island of an irregular triangular shape, lying between about $46\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ and $51\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$ north latitude, and between about $52\frac{1}{2}$ and $59\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ west longitude. Its greatest length is about 350 miles, in its greatest breadth nearly 300. It occupies the northern portion of the entrance to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence ; and it used to be valued chiefly on account of the fishing on the great banks to the southward of it. The great bank is nearly 700 miles in length from north to south ; the breadth also is considerable ; and the quantity of fish, more especially of cod, that resort to it during the fishing season, which lasts from April to October, is almost incredible. Exclusive of other nations, it is estimated that the British employ on the average annually, about 400 ships of nearly 100 tons each, and 2000 fishing shallops or busses of about 10 tons each, the whole manned by upwards of 20,000 individuals, a portion of whom, however, are landsmen. There are twelve men in each shallop ; and in good seasons these catch about 20,000 cod, which are of firm consistency, but seldom more than three feet in length. The value of the fish thus annually caught by British adventurers alone, is not much less than 5,000,000*l.*—a vast revenue to derive from the sea over one assemblage of banks.

There is no doubt, that those vast banks have been accumulated by the two currents in the sea, one from the St. Lawrence, and the other along the eastern shore of America, all the way from the Gulf of Mexico. The latter current, being by much the warmer of the two, forms the surface water ; and the difference of temperature is sometimes as much as from 15° to 20° of the common thermometer. Sweeping along as those currents do, there is no question that they collect, from a vast extent of sea, food for the great shoals of cod. The heat of the water is, however, attended with considerable inconvenience. When air passes over a moist surface,

warmer than itself, it becomes loaded with fog ; and that fog is dense in proportion to the difference of temperature between them. In few cases is there so great a difference between the temperature of the surface and that of the air, as when the wind blows from north-east toward Newfoundland ; and the consequence is, that the fogs are denser there, not only on the banks and the shores of the island, but in the adjoining places at some seasons, than in almost any other part of the world. Though by no means a desirable place to settle in, Newfoundland now contains probably about 80,000 inhabitants, which is more than three times the number it contained about forty years ago. Some spots are susceptible of cultivation, but in general the island consists of rocky eminences, interspersed with marshes, and forests of stunted and not very valuable timber. There are numbers of bears, wolves, foxes, and deer in the forests ; the rivers and lakes are plentifully supplied with salmon ; and beavers, otters, and other water quadrupeds are abundant. It does not appear that the well-known Newfoundland dog is a native of the island.

Nova Scotia.

The province of Nova Scotia occupies the extreme east of continental America, southward of the St. Lawrence ; and it is one of the most perfect examples of a peninsula any where to be met with. Its greatest length, which lies in the direction of north-east and south-west, is nearly 400 miles, and its breadth varies from 50 to more than 100. The south-east and south-west sides are washed by the Atlantic. The north-west side is bounded by the extensive Bay of Fundy, and its continuation, Chignecto Bay, then by about eleven miles of a neck of land to Bay Bute, which communicates with the Northumberland Strait, which has Prince Edward's Island on the north side. On the north-east it is separated from the island of Cape Breton by St. George's Bay and the Gulf of Canseau, so that, with the exception of the eleven miles alluded to, it is entirely bounded by sea. It has been proposed to cut a canal through this eleven miles, and thereby avoid the long and dangerous navigation round Cape Breton ; and an estimate under 70,000*l.* has been given, for one that would admit vessels drawing eight feet of water ; but it is doubtful if a due estimate of the different rise of the tides has been made. There are many creeks and inlets, several of which, especially that at Halifax the capital, form excellent, capacious, and safe harbours. In the Bay of Fundy and its continuations, the tides rise to a very great elevation,—more so than, perhaps, in any other part of the world, as the opening of the bay is right against the line of the current from the south.

Though not a mountainous country, there being no elevation exceeding six hundred feet, Nova Scotia is very much diversified by hill and dale ; and it is remarkably well supplied with water. The province altogether contains about nine millions of acres, of which two millions are described as good soil, three millions as moderate, two millions are bad, and the remainder is absolutely sterile and unfit for cultivation. About four millions of acres are already appropriated ; and as these are equal to all the good lands, and two-thirds of the middling sort, the remaining five millions hold out few temptations to settlers.

The winters in Nova Scotia are long and cold ; and the spring is remarkably short, so that the land is cultivated at considerable expense, as more labourers are wanted at that season than can be employed during the rest of the year. The climate is moist, and very foggy in the spring and autumn ; but it is said to be disagreeable rather than unhealthy. The wind, which is most pernicious, both to vegetation and health, is a cold drying wind ; and not one that is so much charged with moisture as to produce fogs. Both the people and the crops suffer far more from the winds in the United States, than they do in Nova Scotia. Vegetation is very rapid and vigorous in the latter ; the fields are richly green ; and the potato, though understood to be a

native of the tropical parts of America, thrives better in Nova Scotia than in any other part of the continent.

It was mentioned that Halifax has an excellent harbour,—indeed it is one of the best in America—accessible at all seasons, and capable of receiving more than a thousand vessels, which can anchor in perfect safety. The town corresponds. It contains about fifteen thousand inhabitants ; and in 1828 the exports, exclusive of coasting trade, amounted to nearly 250,000*l.* ; and the imports to upwards of 700,000*l.* Both ways, about 1100 vessels were employed, and upwards of 6600 men. Pictou, on the opposite coast of the same province, (Halifax is eastward on the Atlantic), has a commodious harbour, and though there is a bar across it, there are twenty-two feet on that at low water. There are many other commodious towns and harbours in Nova Scotia ; there is also an abundant supply of coal, iron-stone, and building and grit stones ; but from the circumstance that has been already stated, as well as from its almost insular situation, it is not the best possible country for emigrants ; and altogether its characters are commercial rather than agricultural—better adapted for speculating capitalists than for simple settlers.

New Brunswick.

The province of New Brunswick lies immediately to the west of Nova Scotia, from which it is separated by the Bay of Fundy and Chignecto, and Bay Verte on the St. Lawrence side ; and the northern part of the east boundary is formed by Northumberland Strait and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The Bay of Chaleur, and the River Ristigauche, which falls into that bay, form the separation from Lower Canada on the north ; and the western boundary, from the Bay of Passamaquaddy northward, is formed by the district of Maine in the United States.

New Brunswick is a large province, containing nearly 18,000,000 of acres, by computation ; but a small portion only of it is settled, and the rest consists of vast forests. Great quantities of timber have been cut down in those forests ; though the operation has, in general, been carried on in rather a slovenly manner, and double the quantity that has been used has been wasted. The winter in New Brunswick is long and severe, the thermometer being sometimes as much as 50° below freezing ; and in the summer it rises as high as 90°. It does not appear, however, that the climate is unhealthy. though it may, and indeed must, be more so than that of Nova Scotia. The rivers in the interior are generally frozen over in winter ; but the harbours that open into the Bay of Fundy are never wholly blocked up by the ice.

Section II. — THE CANADAS.

The provinces of Lower and Upper Canada may be described as occupying the whole of the lower valley of the St. Lawrence, and the northern half of the upper, and of the basin of the great lakes.

Lower Canada.

The lower province lies between 45° and 52° of north latitude, and 63° and 81° of west longitude,—thus having an extent from east to west of more than 800 miles ; and nearly 500 from north to south. The northern boundary is the district of East Maine, towards Hudson's Bay ; the eastern boundaries are Labrador and the Gulf of St. Lawrence ; the southern New Brunswick, and the United States ; the south-west Upper Canada, from which it is separated by the Ottawa River, and the north-west the Hudson's Bay territory.

The province is divided into three principal districts—Quebec, Montreal, and Three Rivers ; with the two minor ones of Gaspé and St. Francis. These districts are subdivided into forty counties, the names of which, with the number of holdings, will be most conveniently shown in a tabular form. It is to be borne in mind that the *seignories* and *fiefs* are the old French grants while the province belonged to that people, and they are held according to the ancient feudal law of France. The *townships*, on the other hand, are British grants, and held upon the tenure of common soccage.

In glancing over the list of counties, the proportion that the feudal tenures bear to the townships, affords a means of judging whether the people be chiefly French or British, a question of some importance to British emigrants intending to take up their abode in Lower Canada. Thus, for instance, in the Montreal district, while Richelieu is wholly French tenure, the country on the Ottawa is wholly British. The French grants are the most accessible, and, generally speaking, the best lands in the province. The whole surface of the French grants amounts to little short of 10,000,000 of acres, but more than the half of that immense surface is still waste, and much of it is not fit for cultivation. The best cultivated places are on the banks of the St. Lawrence, the islands in that river, and some of the tributaries that fall into it. The surveyed lands to be granted in townships amounts to nearly the same as the feudal lands ; but they lie more in the rear, and are in consequence neither so accessible nor so valuable. In the interior, the townships are about ten miles square ; and on the rivers they are nine miles along the banks and twelve miles backwards. One of these rectangular townships contains eleven concessions, and each range 28 lots of 200 acres each inclusive of roads. Of the 308 lots that are thus in a township, 88 are reserved for the crown and the clergy, and 220 are disposed of to settlers.

That portion of Lower Canada which lies on the north, or left-hand bank, of the St. Lawrence may be conveniently divided into three natural sections. First, the country from the confluence of the Ottawa with the St. Lawrence, including a small portion on the opposite side of the mouth of the Ottawa, to the confluence of the St. Maurice with the St. Lawrence at the town of Trois Rivieres. Secondly, from the last-mentioned river to the mouth of the Seguenay, about 120 miles north-eastward of Quebec ; and thirdly, from the Seguenay eastward along the estuary of the St. Lawrence to Labrador.

“ The front which this,” (the first section,) says M. Bouchette, “ presents on the Ottawa River, and on the St. Lawrence exceeds 450 miles ; the whole of which distance, saving portages or carrying-places in remote parts of the Ottawa, is navigable for canoes and boats ; upwards of 200 miles of it are navigable at long interstices, for steam-boats drawing from four to fifteen feet water, and a section of ninety miles, or the distance between Montreal and Three Rivers, is actually navigated by square-rigged vessels of various burdens, from 100 tons to 600.”

The settlers along the left or lower Canadian bank of the Ottawa are chiefly British ; and though much of the land there is in a state of wilderness, and some of it marshy and subject to floodings during the rains and melting of the snows, it is in many places moderately fertile, better adapted for grazing than the countries higher up ; and though the climate is rather cold and moist, it is not very unhealthy unless in the swamps where organic remains are in a state of putrefaction. It is estimated that more than 70,000 persons might be comfortably located in that district alone. As Three Rivers are approached, the land in the immediate vicinity of the St. Lawrence is more occupied by French settlers, and consequently the townships disposable to British emigrants are in the rear and not so accessible.

The bank of the St. Lawrence, for a considerable portion of this extent is rich and beautiful, and so is the island of Montreal, and some of the smaller isles ; but the inhabitants have been a little over-zealous in cutting down the timber.

The second section on the north—that from the St. Maurice to the Seguenay, has a sea, or river coast of about 190 miles, at the middle of which the city of Quebec is situated. Above Quebec, the seigniories are settled to a considerable distance back, with the exception of Champlain and Cap la Magdalene, immediately to the eastward of the St. Maurice, which are sandy, barren, and hardly worth cultivating. In other places, the soil toward the river is moderately good ; and it is *said* to improve in the interior. Eastward of Quebec, the general surface of the country is more elevated ; and the valleys of the rivers that flow into the estuary of the St. Lawrence afford some fine scenery. The population of this section amounts to about 70,000. The interior of this section has been but recently explored by the British, and the settlements do not extend many miles to the northward of Quebec. It is full of streams and small lakes.

Of the third section, from the Seguenay eastward to Anee au Sablon, on the confines of Labrador, little is known except the coast, which extends along the estuary and gulf of the St. Lawrence for between 600 and 700 miles. Wolves and bears are the chief inhabitants. The hills are supposed to contain mines ; but the climate is far from inviting, and there is nothing to induce emigrants to settle in that part of the country. Rugged cliffs, not lofty enough for being grand, interspersed with forests or clumps of stunted pines and spruces that appear bent and twisted by the fury of the storms, are among the most characteristic features of that inhospitable section of northern Canada.

On the south side of the St. Lawrence there are also three convenient natural sections of the country. First, westward of the Chaudière, which falls into the St. Lawrence a little above Quebec ; secondly, the country from the Chaudière to the western frontier of the Gaspé district ; and thirdly, that district itself.

The section to the west of the Chaudière is a very interesting portion of the province. Its form is nearly triangular, having the American states of New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York, on the south, along the parallel of 45°, the St. Lawrence on the north-west, and the remainder of southern Canada on the east. The general position of the surface is a gradual slope from the high lands on the American frontier to the St. Lawrence ; but various insulated hills prevent its character from being tame, and also supply it with water. The shores of the St. Lawrence are granted in seigniories, to a considerable distance from the river, so that the townships are in the vicinity of the United States, with which there is a water communication along Lake Champlain to the Hudson River at New York. Many parts of the section are rich land ; but the British part of the population labour under some disadvantages ; they want good roads, and they have people speaking a different language between them and the St. Lawrence. In some parts, too, there are extensive marshes and very close forests. The second section, or that between the right bank of the Chaudière and the confines of Gaspé, is less valuable ; and if the boundary claimed by the United States—that which includes, on their side, all the northern feeders of the upper part of the river St. John—is to be the ultimate one, it will be much smaller. That boundary cuts off more than a million and a half of acres. The hills of this part of Canada, approach within sixty miles of the St. Lawrence ; but the population does not extend so far, being confined to a tract of about nine miles in breadth along the St. Lawrence and the right bank of the Chaudière, The greater part of the interior is an absolute wilderness, and has not been even surveyed.

The third section on the south side of the estuary is the territory of Gaspé. There are some patches of good land on the coasts ; but the interior is a thick forest, destitute of roads.

Such are the principal localities in Lower Canada; and perhaps the safest conclusion that can be drawn from the very short notice that has been taken of them is, that the country on the Ottawa is probably the most eligible part of the province for British emigrants, who resort to the country for the purpose of cultivating the soil, and supporting themselves and their families on the produce.

Upper Canada.

Upper Canada was separated from the lower province in 1791, chiefly on purpose that there might be one active colony in which the law of property might be the same as in England. The boundaries of the province, where they are in the meantime of much importance, are very definite : the centre of the St. Lawrence, of the great lakes, and of their connecting narrows and streams, from the boundary between and the United States, till the distance westward into the wilderness becomes so great, that a few miles one way or the other, are not, in the meantime, much worth disputing about. With the exception of a small corner toward the St. Lawrence, which, having been granted in seigniorage, it was desirable to include in the lower province ; the Ottawa forms an equally definite boundary on the north-east, and the other boundaries are in the wilderness. That toward the north may however be considered as being definite, being the water-shed between the sources of the streams that flow toward the lakes or the St. Lawrence, and those flow toward Hudson's Bay. The whole extent of surface in Upper Canada exceeds 21,000,000 of acres.

Each township is estimated as containing about 61,600 acres, which gives a total of more than 17,000,000. Of these about 7,000,000 are already granted, four of 500,000 are reserved, and there are 5,500,000 still to grant.

There are three natural divisions of Upper Canada, formed by two ridges of hills, or at least elevations. The first ridge forms the south-western boundary of what may be called the valley of the Ottawa ; and the second ridge separates the streams that flow northward into Lake Simcoe and Lake Huron, from those that flow southward into Lake Ontario.

The eastern division, as marked by these ridges, comprises the Eastern district, and the districts of Ottawa, Johnstown, Midland, and Bathurst.

Situated between two great rivers, and being nowhere very elevated, that part of the province is fertile ; but it abounds in marshes and swamps. In the eastern part the summit level is much nearer the St. Lawrence than the Ottawa. Beginning at the frontier of Lower Canada, the eastern and Johnstown districts skirt the bank of the St. Lawrence ; and the Ottawa, Bathurst, and Midland districts that of the Ottawa, the last however extending as far south as Lake Ontario, and along the shore of that lake to the river Trent on the borders of Newcastle. It is probable that the most salubrious part of this division may be in the Midland district, higher up the Ottawa than the junction of the Madawaska, as there are hills there ; but the climate must be more severe than toward Lake Ontario.

The centre division contains the Newcastle and the Home districts, occupying about 120 miles on the north shore of Lake Ontario. The Newcastle district extends indefinitely toward the forests on the upper part of the Ottawa ; and the Home district extends toward the shores of the Georgian Bay of Lake Huron. Lake Simcoe, which discharges its waters into the said bay through the river Severn, would be a large lake in any other country than Canada. It is at

least fifty miles long, and thirty at its greatest breadth. The interior of that part of the country has not been very carefully explored, but the probability is that it abounds in small lakes and swamps.

The remaining, or third division, to the westward of the second ridge, contains the Gore, Niagara, London, and Western districts. It is of an irregular triangular form, having the Home district, Lake Ontario, and the river Niagara on the east, Lake Erie on the south, and Lake St. Clair, the Narrows, and Lake Huron on the west. With the exception of the elevated ridge (which after all is not more than 590 feet in elevation), there are no mountains in it ; and though it contains several rivers, water does not abound so much in it, as in most other parts of Upper Canada.

Such are the principal divisions of the Canadas ; they are just hinted at so far as that the reader may understand and apply the few general remarks in the next chapter.

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Natural Characters of British America.

To the labouring or agricultural emigrant, who resorts to a new country in order to derive from its natural capabilities and resources, when called forth by his labour, that pure reward, comfort, and prospect of bettering the condition of himself and his family, which had been denied to him by the artificial and highly improved state of the country which he left or intends to leave, this is a subject of far more importance than mere situation. Health is the foundation of every thing, and therefore the very first question to which a satisfactory answer should be sought is, “ Is the country to which he purposes to go healthy ?” That is a far more important question to the man who is to emigrate than to the man who is to stay at home. At home, there is help of some sort at hand : there is a friend to look in, or there is, humiliating though it be, the parish workhouse. But in the Canadian forest, the nearest friend may be twenty miles off, and there is not even a workhouse. To be sure there is the certainty of food, and there is labour in the open air, and cheerful labour, because the man has all the good of it himself ; and these are far from the worst preventives of disease. It is a fact, that disease very seldom attacks a man when he is warm working, if his heart go with the work, and he do not over-exert himself and be obliged to stop.

After the healthiness, perhaps the very next questions in importance, are these that relate to fire and water. “ Is fuel plentiful and accessible ? Is water pure, and the supply constant ?” They who live in some of the bleak gravelly districts, or over the dull clayey sand, where there is nothing upon, or under the earth that will burn, no not so much as a black heath-turf the thickness of a pancake, can estimate the blessing of a ready fire, for art or for warmth ; and they who live upon the tough clays, where, in the summer heats, the surface of the ground rings like an anvil, and the small remnant of water in the clay-pit is green with mud, and alive with the larvae of insects, can tell how delightful it would be to have a little fountain bubbling in crystal from the rock, or a gallant river racing by at the garden’s end.

What the earth will return to reward the cultivation, is another important inquiry ; and connected with it there are the characters of the seasons, and the times and manner of their changes. These have reference not only to what is to be grown upon the land, but also to the kind of habitations and clothing, and the period of the year at which it is most profitable for the settlers to begin their operations.

The lengths of the different seasons, and the rapidity and extent of their several changes, are also matters of very great importance. If the change be gradual, as it is in the southerly and low-lying parts of England, field-work of some kind or other may be carried on throughout the whole year ; but if the summer and winter be comparatively long, and the spring and autumn short, agricultural labour will be more hurried, and require more hands during those seasons, while there will be leisure in the other parts of the year. It may be considered, that winter and summer are longer, in proportion, in new countries than in old ones having the same latitude ; and thus the hands which in such countries are required additional in the fields in spring and in autumn, are useful during the summer and winter in procuring fuel, repairing buildings, and making and mending the necessary implements. If the fuel is turf, the summer is the season for winning it ; but if wood, winter is decidedly the time, as wood grubbed in the inactive state, is better fuel than when grubbed in growth. This holds not only of those trees that shed their leaves in winter, but also of the pines and other evergreens, which contain a much greater quantity of water in the summer season, and thus have much more of the heat which is produced by combustion, wasted in converting that water into steam.

If the winter be severe, whether there be or be not snow permanently on the ground during the keen frosts, is an important consideration to the cultivator. When open frosts prevail, crops sown in autumn stand the winter upon very few soils, and even the perennial grasses are seriously injured. In such weather too, turnips and other bulbous and tuberous roots suffer, more especially if there be sunshine during the days. If a covering of snow lies upon the ground, those evils are in a great measure obviated, as that snow not only preserves the crops that may be in the ground, but also prevents the soil itself from being chilled by the immediate contact of the cold air. It is true that if the snow lies to a considerable depth, there is an end of all grazing for domestic animals during the period of its continuance ; but if the snow melts rapidly, which it generally does if it lies as long as the month of April, it is almost immediately followed by very rich and succulent herbage. When snow melts thus rapidly, if the beds of the rivers are not all the deeper, and their currents the more rapid, there are apt to be spring floods, which render it inconvenient to have winter crops on the rich bottoms near the rivers ; but the loss thereby sustained is to a considerable extent made up by the deposition of new soil left by the floods.

Another important inquiry for the settler is, what are the direct natural products that the country is to yield ? What timber is there for domestic purposes or for fuel ? What fruits, seeds, or roots, are eatable ? What animals may be procured by the gun or otherwise, and what is the value of their flesh, their skin, their fur, or their feathers ? What do the rivers yield in respect of fish ? and how, when necessity requires, may the said rivers and their tributary streams be employed for water-carriage and for water-power ? These, and a variety of other questions connected with the nature of the country, are necessary to be considered, with respect to the individual emigrant's own comfort in his locality ; and previous altogether to any consideration connected with society and its arts, and the consequent dependance of the several members of the community upon each other. To solve all those questions in detail, is more than the compass of any one volume, or the life of any one man could embrace ; and as the different ones vary in importance, with the views of individuals as well as with the characters of places, a selection of the details of a few would be of very little use. A few general sketches, however, may be of some service ; and a person of ordinary intelligence can fill up the details for himself.

Section I. — GENERAL ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY.

Leaving out of the consideration the islands, and Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, as far as the Bay of Chaleurs, British America may be considered as occupying the whole of the

lower part of the valley of the St. Lawrence, and the northern portion of the upper part of that valley and the plains of the great lakes. That portion of the country which lies on the south of the St. Lawrence has its general slope toward the north ; and that which lies on the north has its general slope toward the south ; but as the upper country (which may be seen in the map) is very much broken into peninsulas by the lakes, and as the river Ottawa is of great length and magnitude, the particular slopes of correspondingly large portions must be toward these.

Some parts of Canada are hilly ; but there are scarcely any that have a decidedly mountainous character ; and those that approach to that character, are remote from the St. Lawrence, or still unsettled.

On the northern side of the St. Lawrence a ridge of heights, which may be considered as a continuation of those of Labrador, extends westward close by the estuary, and forms rugged banks as far as Cape Tourment, about thirty-five miles below Quebec. From that point it follows the course of the St. Lawrence westward for about 300 miles, leaving a plain of from fifteen to thirty miles in breadth. That tract of country is sheltered from the north, well watered, level, fertile, and beautiful ; and it forms great part of the old French grants in Lower Canada. When the junction of the Ottawa is approached, those mountains or hills, turn to the north-west, and approach the bank of the Ottawa at about 100 miles from its junction with the St. Lawrence. Thence the ridge proceeds northward toward the heights that separate the northern part of Canada from the Hudson's Bay Company's territory.

About 200 miles inland from the last-mentioned ridge, there is another and, generally speaking, a more elevated one, which divides the sources of the tributaries of the St. Lawrence from those of the Hudson's Bay rivers. The extensive back-country between those two ridges is not, properly speaking, a valley, but rather a table-land of irregular surface, and most of the rivers that descend from the Canada side of it have falls and rapids. It contains no settlers ; but is one extensive forest, interspersed with rocks, barren summits, and marshes, and frequented only by a few hordes of wandering Indians, and by the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company, who resort thither in summer to purchase skins of the Indians. The characters and the capabilities of that part of the country are very little known.

On the south side of the St. Lawrence, an elevated ridge commences about 100 miles below Quebec, and proceeds in a south-westerly direction, being about thirty miles distant from the river when opposite to the city. Thence it turns southerly along the eastern bank of the Chaudière, toward the sources of that river.

Beyond this ridge, and about fifty miles inland of it, there is another and loftier elevation, to which the name of the Highlands, or Land's Height, is given, because it divides the waters that flow to the estuary of the St. Lawrence from those that flow to the Ristigauche and the St. John. This last ridge may be traced from Cape Rosiere, the eastmost point of Gaspé to the sources of the Connecticut River, about latitude 45° and longitude 71° , which is an extent of about 400 miles. It meets the former ridge on the upper part of the Chaudière ; and the country between them, like the hilly part of the north, is but little known. The shores of the St. Lawrence and banks of the Chaudière are for some miles fertile and thickly settled. As, from the sources of the Connecticut River, the Canadian boundary extends westward on the parallel of 45° to Regis on the St. Lawrence, the summit level, which is, however, no great elevation, passes southward into the territory of the United States ; and the whole of Canada between the parallel of 45° and the St. Lawrence is a gentle slope, diversified, however, by occasional elevations. Many parts of it are fertile, and the climate is very good.

In Upper Canada there is hardly any marking of the country by mountain ridges. The height to the northward of Lake Ontario is very trifling ; and the limestone ridge, and the Queenston heights, which may be traced westward along the southern shore of Lake Ontario ; the cutting of which by the water, forms the great gulf below the Fall of Niagara, the remaining breast of which occasions the fall itself, and which may be traced into the State of New York, is the only portion of the country between Lake Erie and the Georgian Bay of Lake Huron, that can be considered as at all hilly. There are dry lands and moist lands, infertile prairies and rich bottoms, in various parts of the district ; but the prairies are downs and not hills, and they owe their dryness and infertility more to the porous nature of the subsoil than to their elevation.

Glancing back at what has been stated, the following are the general features of the Canadas : in Lower Canada, the back country in the north is hilly desert ; and so is that in the south as far as the river Chaudière. Both those districts abound in forests of large trees in the bottoms, and stunted ones on the hills ; but these in general stand where they are inaccessible, and therefore useless. As there are no inducements to the agriculturist in either of these districts, the emigrant may omit them in his consideration of the Canadas. The country on the north side of the St. Lawrence, eastward of Quebec, and on the banks of the estuary, is hilly and picturesque ; but the patches of land fit for profitable cultivation are comparatively few. On the south side of the river, the patches of good land are more abundant ; but they are detached from each other, and there is a great want of roads. The valley of the St. Lawrence, as far as Lower Canada extends, is fertile and well watered ; but the most valuable parts of it, namely, those immediately adjoining the river and its navigable branches, are chiefly occupied in seigniories by French Canadians.

The valley of the Ottawa is not so wide as that of the St. Lawrence, and it is more irregular and broken by hills ; but it in consequence affords finer situations for rural buildings, and admits of more varied culture. The lower parts of it flood more, during the melting of the snows, than those of the St. Lawrence.

From the junction of the Ottawa to Kingston, at the bottom of Lake Ontario, the country on the St. Lawrence is very flat, only a few feet above the level of the water in the river. The back country there is full of swamps ; and as the upper part of the Ottawa is approached, there are hills. With few exceptions, the whole of Upper Canada may be regarded as an alluvial deposit ; gravel and sand in the dry places, and clay, of various degrees of consistency, in the others.

The emigrant's pocket companion : containing, what emigration is, who should be emigrants, where emigrants should go ; a description of British North America, especially the Canadas ; and full instructions to intending emigrants (1832)

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