

Home In The West

*Canada In 1849*

*Pictures of Canadian Life or*

*The Emigrant Churchman.*

*By a Pioneer of The Wilderness*

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I

Reasons for leaving—Choice of a vessel—Incidents of departure—Fellow passengers—  
Divine Service at sea—Iceberg.

FROM a very early age the New World had been a favourite subject of my fancies and day-dreams. Its primæval forests, its boundless prairies, its exciting scenes of Indian prowess and adventure were all unspeakably delightful to my youthful imagination. Every work that told of travels undertaken and perils encountered in the wilderness, I used eagerly to devour as I could gain access to it. And, moreover, as visions of worldly advantage, so natural to the ardent aspiring spirit, would crowd in, I was ever and anon figuring to myself the notion of what an admirable thing it would be to obtain a thousand acres or so of land for a shilling or little more an acre ; and by gradually improving the property, or by staying at home and leaving it to increase in value for a term of years, to form the nucleus of a splendid estate on which to build a succession of aerial castles *ad libitum*. I am ashamed to say that the thought of the high and holy mission which every “ Emigrant Churchman,” whether lay or clerical, was called upon to fulfil when casting in his lot with the pioneers of the wilderness, was little comparatively present to my mind. I hope that through mercy I have since thought better of the manner in which emigration ought to be viewed by every Christian, and especially by every member of the Anglican branch of the Church Catholic on leaving the land of his fathers to seek a home in the West. But as I have said, my thoughts ran chiefly then on property to be acquired, and adventures to be enjoyed by one who was intensely fond of sights and scenes of foreign travel, and to whom it had happened, in the course of Providence, at a very early age to visit some of the more remote dependencies of the British Empire.

I had often said that there were three objects of earth, or rather of earth and water, that I most ardently longed to see. They were the Pyramids, an ice-berg, and the Falls of Niagara. Not very long ago I thought myself more likely to have seen the first of these than either of the latter. Having some hope then of an appointment in India, in which, however, I was afterwards disappointed, I was endeavouring to arrange for a visit to those strange bequests of “ forty centuries” in the course of the overland journey, and even if possible to have extended my plan of travel so as to have included the Holy Land. In course of Providence, however, I was destined to see the two latter ; and neither by the massive congelation or the glorious cataract, was imagination disappointed. But of these in their place.

In the spring of 1846, I finally decided on seeking the shores of the Western World. A succession of losses, troubles, crosses, and disappointments had been crowned by the last hope then failing of the best appointment which I ever had reason to expect in England ; and I accordingly determined on no longer delaying a project which I had often before secretly

contemplated. It was not, however, until after midsummer of the same year that I was enabled so far to complete arrangements as to property, &c., as to be able to leave.

I sailed in the latter end of July from the London Docks in a first-class ship, bound for Quebec and Montreal, which carried no steerage passengers, with the exception of one remarkably well-conducted person, who was allowed to go as a favour. It so happened that I had fallen on very best and fastest vessel in the trade. In fact, we passed every thing on the passage out, except one very beautiful craft which seemed as nearly as possible to be a match for us. The passage-money was 20*l.* sterling, which included the charge for wine and spirits, and an excellent table, to Montreal. The captain was one of the most experienced and noted in the line, it being, I think, his fortieth or forty-second trip ; and the chief-mate, a very agreeable and highly-qualified young man, who had been himself formerly in command of a vessel of his own.

I preferred joining the ship at the Docks, partly from economical reasons, though she was to take in some of her passengers at Gravesend, and one or two in the Downs. I had previously got that part of my luggage on board which, not being wanted at sea, was to go into the hold,—an arrangement which I should recommend all intending emigrants carefully to attend to, as saving a world of trouble, risk, and anxiety. But I had been so detained to the last moment by the packing of a box of books (having given all the time I could well previously spare to visit dear friends in the North of England and the Highlands of Scotland), that the vessel was just emerging from the last water-gate on to the broad river, when I came alongside. In fact, my things had to be fairly tossed on board and caught by the brawny hands of the Jacks as the ship was warped out ; but cleverly caught they were ; and I had just time to pay the cabman, leap into the main rigging, and swing myself on to the deck by a back-stay, as the ship cleared the Dock.

At Gravesend we have to receive on board a retired, officer, with a large family, who was going out. to live upon some property, which he already possessed in Lower Canada (I think), and these, who had engaged the whole of the after-cabin, with a medical man and his wife, seeking a “ location ” in Canada, a lady going out to join relatives already settled, a young man in search of a situation, and a small complement of young subalterns on their way to join their regiments, made up our party.

We had a fair run to the Downs, under the charge of our pilot, when we took on board the captain and a young medico,—fired three guns by way of a parting salute and signal to some of the owners, and were fairly embarked on our voyage under the care of a merciful Providence, with every promise of a fine and agreeable passage.

There was little or nothing to diversify the common occurrences of a voyage across that part of the Atlantic. The ladies, when well enough, (and we had comparatively little seasickness on board,) read, worked, and conversed ; whilst the gentlemen smoked, wrote, and paraded the decks. according to their inclinations. The breakfast hour was 8 o'clock, when a comfortable table was set, stored with all the usual good things—tea, coffee, eggs, hams, corned beef, &c. We lunched at 12, when bread and cheese, ship's biscuit, bottled ale, porter, and potted calf's head, were the order of the day. Dinner was served at 4, tea at 6, and a light refreshment of biscuit and grog for those so disposed, at 8.

The weather was exceedingly warm during part of the month of August, and I used to make it a practice as often as I could, to go before breakfast on the forecastle, and have sundry buckets of salt water dashed over me, using a good rough towel after the ablution. I

continued the practice with decided advantage, until after our arrival in the St. Lawrence, when some of the mornings were very chill, and even the hardy seamen declared I should take my death of cold, though I derived benefit instead, thank God, from the operation.

The comfort of such a process is ineffable, after the closeness and heat of the berth during the night ; and I should recommend every man who valued health and cleanliness to try it. The time of scrubbing decks is the best, as the water is generally pumped up into a large open cask, forward, for the purpose, and any one with common expertness can dip a few buckets from thence and toss them over himself, or, if the ship be rolling much, some of the honest tars are generally ready to lend a helping hand ; and at an early hour the decks are pretty sure to be entirely clear of females. I should be inclined to recommend this practice even to good swimmers, in preference to taking the chance, as some do, of going overboard in a calm. The best swimmer has been known to be appalled at the thought of the measureless depths beneath, and to go down like a stone. A sail, however, is sometimes sunk five feet or so below water, extended from between the fore and main yard-arms, which affords a wonderful protection even from sharks and other monsters of the deep, though these are not so much to be dreaded in the latitudes traversed by vessels on the North American passage as on that by the Cape.

I can remember a case which occurred to some gentlemen on board a vessel which I knew very well, on her passage from one of our south-eastern dependencies, which, but for the great mercy of Providence, might have proved of a very tragical nature. The perfect stillness and intense heat of a day in the tropics had tempted some of the gentlemen to bathe, and they had obtained the jolly-boat of the captain, and rowed some distance from the ship for the purpose. By some inadvertence, however, the plug in the bottom of the boat had either been left behind or lost, and being very leaky, moreover, in her seams, from the heat of the weather, she soon filled up to her thwarts, whilst they were amusing themselves in the water. As they were all excellent swimmers, the accident appeared of no consequence for the moment, and their situation being observed from the vessel, another boat was soon sent to their assistance. Scarcely, however, had the last man got safe into her, when an enormous shark came up alongside, which had perhaps been pursuing them for some time from the unknown recesses of the deep. One minute later, and some horrible catastrophe would probably have given a terrific termination to their amusement.

The evenings were generally our time for social converse ; and our worthy captain, when not occupied on deck, had many anecdotes of former passages with which to enliven us. I remember one which may serve to exhibit the strange freaks in which some people are in the habit of indulging in matters of emigration. A gentleman of fortune, perhaps with five thousand a year, had taken a fancy, from some romantic notions which he had imbibed of life in the wilderness, to emigrate with his whole family to Canada. As he had not the slightest occasion to leave his own country for the purpose of bettering his circumstances, the proposed measure was exceedingly distasteful to the young ladies especially ; but papa must be obeyed. and everything in connexion with the expedition was prepared on the most expensive scale. Besides his having engaged, if I remember right, the whole of the state cabins, so that there should be no other passengers, his extra freight, for all imaginable necessaries and non-necessaries, alone amounted to 200*l.*; and amidst the tears and regrets of all but the old gentleman himself, the ship was fairly off upon her voyage, and somewhere near the Isle of Wight, when he comes suddenly to the captain in great trepidation, requesting him to put the ship back or land them somewhere at all risks, for that one of his daughters had taken to expectorating blood, and he was morally certain she could not outlive the voyage. The captain of course represented that, by breaking bulk, returning unnecessarily, &c., *i.e.* not compelled by stress of weather or want of repairs, he should compromise himself with owners and

underwriters, which was not to be thought of ; but as the old gentleman was determined, he offered to signal a pilot-boat or any other vessel that could put them ashore, and landed them accordingly, bag and baggage, with the exception of the 200*l.* worth of freight, which he was obliged to take on to Montreal, and either dispose of there or bring back again, at the owner's pleasure. " But," added the shrewd captain, " I believe there was nothing more in the spitting of blood than the young lady's pricking her gums with a needle, because she wanted to get back to her sweetheart." Though there can be but one opinion as to the deception, if practised, it certainly was successful in diverting the old gentleman from what was, in his circumstances, a wild-goose scheme.

We were favoured, on the whole, with very fine weather ; though I remember getting some credit one night, when we had two reefs in the topsails, by prognosticating a third in before morning ; and as the event happened to turn out so, I plumed myself on my weather wisdom not a little. The Sundays, in particular, were extremely beautiful ; and I am thankful to say that we were able to have two services on every one during the passage. The morning service was held on deck ; the ladies and gentlemen passengers arranging themselves around on the usual seats, and on camp-stools brought up for the purpose, and the crew assembling within hearing on the main-deck, just below the break of the quarter-deck. The evening service was held at 7 o'clock, in the cabin, and almost necessarily, therefore, included only the cabin passengers. The order and attention which reigned, on the whole, were truly gratifying to witness ; and the only thing in which we failed was in managing a psalm or hymn. We tried it, in fact, under great promises of support ; but the ladies, courage unfortunately failed them, and the person who undertook to lead had it all to himself. This was the more to be regretted, as several on board could sing very well. But does not the same thing obtain too often, unhappily, in services on shore, where multitudes of the young and the fair and gifted, well qualified to charm a whole assembly with their warblings at a worldly evening party, are too refined, or too bashful, or too much afraid of the weak, not to say sinful vulgarity, of what is called " quizzing," to lift up the same voices in the holy and legitimate occupation of singing the praises of their God and Saviour ?

To clergymen or pious laymen who are able and disposed to perform divine service on a voyage, the author may be allowed to suggest that the right way of getting such an acceptable duty, gone into comfortably and well, is carefully to consult the captain first as to his permission, which no decent commander now-a-days would think of refusing, and many would be most thankful to accord ; and, secondly, as to hours : then, knowing the hours, to keep to them most rigidly, particularly in concluding. A service at sea ought generally to be over several minutes before meridian, in order to give time for the officers for preparing their sextants or quadrants, for taking the necessary observations as to the ship's position, striking the bell, calling the watch, heaving the log, and other necessary operations of nautical routine. It would be also desirable to enlist some of the most intelligent and well-disposed of the passengers—getting them to undertake to make the responses, &c. The seamen may be led to take an interest, by personal converse with them at other times, and where there are many steerage passengers an additional service may frequently be performed in their quarters for the benefit of the sick and others unable, perhaps, to come on deck for the first. Where proper arrangements are made beforehand, and the cordial assent and co-operation of the captain and officers secured, a landsman will be astonished to find with how few interruptions the service may be conducted at sea, beyond occasional ones, from the weather, as even when there is a head-wind to contend with, a well-disposed commander, can generally manage the necessary going about so as not to interfere with the worship. A supply of good wholesome tracts, to be lent amongst the crew and such passengers as may choose to avail themselves of the benefit of them, would be also a great desideratum. It would be literally,

indeed, a “ casting of bread upon the waters,” and who can presume to estimate the result, especially where a prayerful spirit accompanied the good work. The wonders of saving grace exhibited on board a convict ship, owing to the efforts under Providence of Dr. Browning, R.N., the pious surgeon in charge of those unfortunates (an account of which was published some years ago), may well fill us with admiring gratitude to God for the wonders of his grace, and encourage every one who values the souls of his fellow-men, as far as in his power to go and do likewise.

When we reached the banks of Newfoundland, we fondly promised ourselves some cod-fishing, as it is generally the custom to heave-to for that purpose, unless a very rapid run be made over them, or the weather be otherwise too rough, but in our case we were disappointed, as it was not calm enough, while on soundings, for any hope of success. Our loss in this respect was, however, more than compensated, to my notions, at least, by the cry, one fine morning, early, of “ an iceberg broad on the larboard bow.” I think it was a little before we made the banks, and we had got unusually far to the northward, in consequence of baffling winds,—as it is well known that the prevailing tendency of the winds in that part of the Atlantic is, to blow from the westward, so much so that sailors are used to say that its always down-hill homeward-bound. I think we were on the larboard tack when we first got sight of the berg. [1] It appeared at a distance of nine or ten miles on the horizon, a beautiful “ twy-forked hill” of crystalline, its dazzling peaks irradiated by the early morning beams. We very much feared at the time that a fog would close in and shut it from our view. Towards the latter part of the day, however, the haze cleared, and by about three or four o’clock, P.M., we had beat up to it, and were close under its lee in the starboard tack and only from a quarter of a mile to half a mile distant from it, the sea beating against it on the windward side and eddying into a little bay, formed between its lofty and precipitous crags, and a lower and more extended part undulating into two or three distinct ranges of elongated hillocks or hammocks, which seemed to have been a portion of field ice attached to the loftier part. The whole might have been from 300 to 500 feet at the base by about 250 of extreme elevation, and on one side of the more abrupt portion, near the summit, was a singularly shaped mass, which required scarce any effort of imagination to form into a gigantic white bear, crawling down the side of it. There was something extremely majestic and solemn in its aspect, as the chill wind swept from it, and the deep dark green wave rolled and foamed beneath and around. The thought of striking against such a mass in the darkness and tempest, and being suddenly sent by the shock to the depths beneath, seemed enough to curdle the very life-blood in our veins, and afforded a vivid idea of the perils undergone by the Polar voyagers and whalers. Whilst we gazed upon it, we encountered a most lovely and agreeable surprise. The sky cleared brightly-blue over head, and the magnificent mass immediately took the tint from the heavens, assuming the softest cerulean hue that the imagination could conceive.

The exquisite apparent smoothness of it was also another feature for which I was not at all prepared. I had prefigured to myself a large, rough, white mass ; but the alabaster polish of the general surface, and the tender hue which was shed over it, to which the finest ultramarine must fail of doing justice, presented an effect at once delightful and unexpected. Gradually, as evening advanced, and we drew away from it on our watery pathway, the paler tints resumed their sway, the mists and shadows closed around it, and we left it to its silent march—the cold, grey, stern wanderer of the ocean—alone with Omnipotence amidst the waste of waters. Persons accustomed to high northern latitudes may smile at me, perhaps, for saying so much about meeting with a single iceberg ; but this one interested even our veteran commander, who had seen, as he told us, no less than ninety-six in one day, on his spring passage out, when he encountered a very unusual number, but said that we were singularly fortunate in having fallen in with this, anxious, as some of us were to meet with one, as this

was the only one he had seen in an autumnal passage in the course of forty-two voyages across the Atlantic. A lady on board having kindly lent me her box of colours, I attempted a sketch of it, assisted by her hints ; and succeeded in completing one or two, which were thought to convey tolerable resemblances, but greatly scandalizing thereby the worthy captain, in consequence of my having introduced a boat pulling towards the mass for effect, and in order to convey some idea of the distance and proportion. It was of no use to argue with him that the boat *might* have been there, or to explain why it was thus put into the view. The sturdy old mariner stuck to his text :—“ as there was no boat in the water, there had no business to be one in the sketch ;” and we found it impossible to pacify him on this point. I might of course have inserted the ship herself, as he wished ; but in a hasty drawing, like this, with more than one copy earnestly besought by the ladies, and with very inferior paper, I'm afraid it was too much trouble ; neither had I much hope of doing justice to her, though, on another occasion, I did try my hand at her after a fashion.

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## II

Anticosti provision stations—Pilot-boat—Fog—Land birds—Death of the captives—White porpoises—Kamouraska—Crowded settlements—Romish Churches—Aquatic procession in honour of the Virgin—Arrival at Quebec.

A PASSAGE of some weeks brought us at length, in the good providence of God, in sight of the shores of the New World ; the first point which we made being the island of Anticosti, in the gulf of the St. Lawrence. This strip of land, almost in itself a little territory, is about 130 miles in length to 30 in breadth, and lies pretty nearly in the direct track of vessels bound for Quebec. It might be an interesting object were it settled ; but it presents for the most part the aspect of a gloomy and fearful wilderness—an unbroken continuity of swamp and forest, replete with wild and fearful traditions of old wrecks and hunger-perished mariners. The government, however, have very properly of late years erected lighthouses and a number of provision stations along the shore, readily accessible, and furnished with shelter, and barrelled beef, pork, pease, and biscuit for a large party, with directions from one station to the other, and instructions how to proceed in case of shipwreck. Some of these stations are inhabited, and I believe that for a time there resided near one of them a retired officer with his family, who lived nominally “ monarch of all he surveyed,” (though the island is a see-priory) —a sort of Robinson Crusoe life in the wilderness,—and attempted some clearing, but eventually got tired of the solitude, and returned to the main land.

There are some very interesting narratives on record of the utility of these provision stations in saving shipwrecked parties, who otherwise, humanly speaking, must have perished.

When we neared its shores, however, we were mercifully relieved from all terrors of shipwreck, having a lovely afternoon, and light though somewhat unfavourable breeze. Hauling our land-tacks on board, we ran as close in with the island as prudence would admit, intending a long stretch on the other tack. It was near here that we took in our pilot, an extremely sober and well-conducted Canadian Frenchman. His boat, which was just not too big to admit of its being hoisted up to our larboard quarter-davits, was a fine stout craft, not very unlike our Deal boats in England ; having foremast, main and jigger mast, only rigged with spritsails instead of lugs, the craft being fitted, moreover, with a tiny hurricane house amid-ships, into which it was astonishing that anything but a monkey could creep, but

which afforded a snug sleeping place and retreat after one had succeeded in coiling himself in. These pilot craft looked excellent seaworthy boats, capable, from their breadth of beam, and consequent stiffness and buoyancy, of contending against a vast amount of wind and sea ; and on that stormy and dangerous coast, early in spring and late in the fall, it may be readily conceived that their good qualities are often tasked to the utmost.

The approach to the St. Lawrence is rendered frequently uncomfortable and difficult by the prevalence of numerous fogs. We were overtaken by one of these shortly after taking our pilot on board ; and he insisted on “ bringing up,” [2] greatly to the annoyance of the captain, who prided himself on beating everything, and whose ship had been for I know not how many years, the first of the season in spring. No doubt his experience rendered him as good a pilot for the river as any that he could take ; and I entertain scarcely a doubt but what, from his thorough knowledge of the position and bearings of every part of our course, he would have taken us through by compass, &c., in perfect safety, though it was all around us, to use a nautical expression, “ as thick as a hedge ;” yet I could not but secretly approve of the prudence of our pilot, in avoiding all risk, though at some sacrifice of time. In fact, almost all the other vessels, of which there were now several in company, followed our example ; and right strange and ghostly they looked, as one and another emerged from the fog on its slightly lifting.

When we made sail again, after a detention of some hours, we might have almost imagined them, as they dreamily and silently glided by, emerging for a few moments into partial view, and anon disappearing in the haze, to have been the spirits of wrecked vessels paying a mournful visit to the scene of their destruction, though this image will be even more forcibly conveyed to the mind, if one happens, as has occurred to the author, to pass a floating light after nightfall, and other vessels come stealing into view, at one time catching the spectral gleam upon their sails, and anon lost in the surrounding obscure. During the prevalence of the fog, a number of pretty little land birds, resembling finches and martins, which had lost their way, came and settled on different parts of the rigging ; and, in addition to the more diminutive visitors, a large hawk came and rested for a long time on the starboard yard-arm of the mizen-topsail. As the poor fellow came in distress to claim our protection and hospitality, I am happy to say that none of our sportsmen had the heart to fire at him, though his predatory habits would have rendered him otherwise fair game. Several, however, of the smaller birds were caught to make pets for some of our younger fellow-passengers ; but they invariably died before they had been kept in cages twenty-four hours, however tenderly treated, as indeed the captain said they would. I was much amused at the tender care of one amiable young lady, who made the neatest imaginable little shroud for one of her feathered favourites when it died, and sorrowfully handed it over to one of the young officers to consign to a watery grave.

The white porpoises, peculiar, I believe, to the estuary of St. Lawrence, are very amusing to a new comer, as they gambol along in great numbers, looking at a little distance like pieces of ice or curling wreaths of foam tossing and rolling in the tide. Whilst entertaining ourselves with these, we passed Kamouraska, on the southern shore of the St. Lawrence, here considerably wider, I should think, than the Thames at Southend. For some reason or other, this place is esteemed one of the coldest in Lower Canada ; I know it was very chilly when we passed it early in September, though we afterwards had some extremely hot weather. In the greatest heats of summer coolness may be enjoyed here, which makes it a favourite place for the health and pleasure hunters to visit from Quebec (distant 96 miles); and elsewhere. This is the last place at which the water continues perfectly sea-salt, though it is brackish to 75 miles higher up, or within 21 of Quebec ; the tide, however, at the latter city rises from 17 to 24 feet, the greatest depth of the water being 28 fathoms. All above this spot the clearings were

abundant, and the dwellings numerous ; in fact, I must beg entirely to protest against the accuracy of the sentiments put forth by some writers on Canada, who speak of the chilling effect upon the feelings of emigrants produced by the sight of the continuous line of deep unbroken forest, on approaching the shores of their future transatlantic home.

From what I have read, and, indeed, naturally anticipated in a new country, I had been quite prepared for such an appearance (which, of course, is often *really* presented as one travels further West) ; but my astonishment was only exceeded by my gratification, at finding the country, as we sailed upwards towards Quebec, so thickly settled, that it was more like sailing up a continuous street of houses, with only intervening strips of field and garden, than anything which I had ever before witnessed.

It may surprise the English reader when I distinctly state, that for many miles below Quebec the habitations are much more numerous, and the inclosures more frequent, than on any part of the Thames between Woolwich and Gravesend. The reason of this was explained to me. It consisted in the necessity of mutual association for safety on the part of the first settlers. Instead of spreading themselves over the country, where, as scattered, they might have been taken at disadvantage by hostile tribes of Indians or other invading forces, and destroyed in detail, they very wisely fixed their locations on long deep strips of land, stretching a good way back into the country, to afford room for their farms, but with such narrowness of frontage, that every dwelling was within easy hail of its neighbour on either side. This arrangement, now that all danger has ceased, is found,, however, to be inconvenient, from the distance back to which people have to go in order to work their farms.

In addition to this crowding of habitations in the clearings, one would ever and anon come to a pretty Frenchified-looking hamlet, with its Roman Catholic parish church, the spire and roof frequently covered with tin (a common sheathing for roofs and steeples in Canada), or shingles, [3] painted red, or left the natural colour of the wood. I noticed one church on the left bank of the river, with no less than three steeples attached to it. By far the greater part also of these are consecrated to the service of the Church of Rome, which may be considered as almost the established religion of Lower Canada, or Canada East, [4] as it is frequently called now ; the Romish Church, at the conquest of the country by the British, having been guaranteed all her property and the full exercise of her religion.

Here and there, however, a modest Protestant-Catholic House of God greets the eye, but I am sorry to say that in this part of Canada they are comparatively few and far between. The idolatrous mummeries of the Romish Church are here frequently to be seen in full operation. It is only the other day that there appeared an account in the Canadian papers of an aquatic procession in honour of a famous image of the Virgin, which was carried in state down the river from Montreal in a steamer, accompanied by several other vessels, and attended by a numerous band of ecclesiastics, to be placed in a conspicuous position on the shore of the river as an object for the adoration and votive oblations of all “ good Catholics.”

The regular station for vessels containing emigrants to bring up is at Grosse Isle, about 30 miles below Quebec, where they have to remain, and, if necessary, ride quarantine till released by the regular officers.

Having no emigrants of the poorer class on board, we were fortunately exempt from this regulation, and after bringing up under the frowning heights of Cape Diamond, and being visited by an officer to whom the proper report of health, &c. was given, we were at liberty to land at the far- famed city of Quebec, the Gibraltar of the West.

A word to the reader—Objects of the work—Appearance of Quebec—The two conflagrations—Unfortunate Church organ—Romish Cathedral—Dear fruits—Anglican Cathedral—The Lord Bishop—His great urbanity—Society in Quebec—Falls of Montmorenci—Ice-mountain at the Falls—Winter amusement—Sleigh slides down the Mountain—Amusing incidents—Hotel Charges—Boarding-house Charges—Charges at that recommended by the Bishop—High rents in Quebec—Living comparatively dear there.

I BY no means intend to detain the reader with elaborate descriptions of the history or localities of the places, whether in the British Provinces or States which I visited, or of which I may offer notices from the best information which I could obtain. My great leading object is, I hope, to promote the interest of Church and State, by giving such a plain and studiedly accurate exhibition of facts connected with emigration to the British provinces in North America, together with a few notices of the part of the States usually travelled by British travellers on their way to the West, besides such descriptions of the scenery, localities, inhabitants, and general facilities of the country, as may tend to assist any fellow Churchmen, whether lay or clerical, and whatever their station in life, in deciding as to whether they should settle in these regions of the West ; and in so doing I shall endeavour, as far as in me lies, to fill up points of observation which I have felt to be desiderata to myself, and which some of them perhaps may have been overlooked or less noted by other writers. I therefore purpose first giving a general sketch of such places as I visited myself, or could obtain accurate information of, not following the order of a regular tour, but contented to exhibit the country in a succession of loose sketches as I may find most convenient to myself and advantageous to those for whose benefit I am chiefly writing. I wish, moreover, to introduce as plain and particular directions as I can possibly give, conformed to the wants of the various classes for whose benefit I am principally throwing off these sheets, with as many hints as I can think of towards their making a good start, and securing, as far as human arrangement will admit, a hopeful and comfortable settlement in the proposed land of their adoption.

I am not going to make out Canada, or Nova Scotia, or New Brunswick, to be either El Dorados or absolute paradises *in esse*, whatever they may be *in posse* ; nor do I intend to throw a mere halo of illusive description over the romantic scenery of the lake and the wilderness, but simply to show, as I shall succeed in showing, that the British provinces in Northern America, particularly that portion of them included in the appellation of Upper or Western Canada, afford, in point of cheapness of living, salubrity of climate, facilities for education of families—in fact, a capacity of provision for all the ordinary necessities of life. They offer, too, great possible facilities of enjoying the means of grace, advantages, and openings, which, take them all in all, and assuming on the part of those whose attention may be turned to them, frugal and industrious habits, and a sober, orderly, pious conversation, prospects for a happy, peaceful, and useful life on a moderate competency, greater by far, taking things all together, than any other portion of our colonial dependencies with which I am acquainted by observation or description. I want to see the Church flourish more and more in Canada, and, therefore, I want Churchmen to come out—sound, loyal-hearted, spiritually-minded Churchmen, to be the supports and pillars of this interesting country, and a standing bulwark, by the grace of God, against all the encroachments and devices of the combined phalanx of Radicalism, Socialism, and all the other isms under whose evil banners disloyalty, disaffection, hollow-heartedness, luke-warmness, infidelity, and dishonest self-seeking of

every shape and name, are virtually working combination with direct treachery to the Crown, and secret hankering after the illusory benefits of Republican annexation to undermine the best interests of the country.

It is a pretty generally allowed fact that it was not so much the infliction of oppressive duties, as the want of a sufficient body of clergy to fan the languishing flame of loyalty, and give a right direction to manners and morals, that led to the revolt of the United States ; and should Canada be lost to the British crown, I have no hesitation in saying (with all kindly consideration for the well-affected without our pale,) that it will be chiefly for the want within our borders of the moral weight and influence of an efficient body of clergy, backed by a proportionate number of laymen, firmly attached to the apostolic discipline of our pure and reformed branch of the body Catholic ; since, wherever the Church is strong, there is the sure abode of loyalty, religion, and good order—wherever the contrary state of things prevail, there is the natural tendency to confusion and every evil work. I hope, then, having these objects at heart, to succeed in honestly proving to my dear fellow members of the Church of England that they may live well and happily, serving their generation usefully, in Canada, and that upon an amount of means far below what those, especially with families, could expect to enjoy the same comforts upon in the old country.

The city of Quebec has been so often described that I need not trouble the reader with any lengthy notice of it. It is built partly at the foot, and partly on the rise and summit, of the bold promontory composing Cape Diamond and the heights of Abraham, the streets leading from the lower to the upper town, being some of them almost precipitous. It has a quaint and antique air not at all consistent with the idea of one's being in a young country. The fortifications which crown the heights have, as might be expected, a bold and majestic appearance. The town has wonderfully recovered from the effects of the two-fold tremendous conflagrations which some years ago devastated the lower part of it, and threatened destruction to the whole city. The first originated in a large tannery ; the second fire was supposed to have broken out in consequence of the thoughtlessness of a maid-servant, who threw some ashes out of a stove amongst some dry stable litter. It was said to have been prophesied a month before it took place ; some go the length of asserting that the prophecy extended even to the day and hour ; certain it is, that while the people watched in fearful alarm, the blaze burst forth with irresistible fury within a few moments of 12 P.M. on the night anticipated. One of the English churches in, I think, the Faubourg St. Antoine was particularly unfortunate as to its organ ; when the church was burnt down in the first great fire the organ unfortunately was consumed. The parishioners, however, with a zeal that did them honour, notwithstanding the tremendous losses which they had sustained in the ruin of their dwellings, soon managed to rebuild their church, and subscribed for and ordered another organ from England ; but it being sent out at the stormy season of the year, the vessel was lost, and the organ with her. Unfortunately, no insurance had been effected, and the congregation, notwithstanding their spirited and self-denying effort, are still without that pleasing adjunct to divine worship, their first organ having perished by fire, and the second by water. The precipitous nature of the ground on which the town is built, with the fortifications, render it rather a laborious task to walk much about it, as one is frequently stopped by walls in seeking to pass from one part of the city to the other ; and in the snow and ice of winter, the abrupt ascents and descents must be frequently impassable, except by the use of cramps, which I believe are regularly worn by the inhabitants.

On one occasion I stepped into the Romish cathedral ; it is extremely rich with gilding and tinsel inside, and the walls are hung with numerous pictures of saints, but all, or nearly all appeared to me to be below the standard of ordinary sign-painting in England. I was agreeably surprised here by the refusal of an attendant of the cathedral to receive any fee for showing me

over it. I offered him a quarter of a dollar, which he, however, politely declined. It was the first, indeed the only time that I had seen money refused at a Roman Catholic place of worship.

It is difficult, I believe, for a stranger to obtain access to the convents ; but a priest, whom I made free to accost, on my making myself known to him as a stranger passing through, and desirous of seeing anything of interest in Quebec, very politely offered to take my name and get me an order from the Roman Catholic bishop and leave it for me at Payne's hotel the following day, but as our ship sailed on her way to Montreal, I had no opportunity of availing myself of his kindness. I found time, however, in company with some ladies, to visit Her Majesty's ship "Vindictive," 50, then lying in the river, and we experienced a very polite reception from the officers, who showed us, with the greatest attention, over this noble vessel. I noticed in her particularly, as afterwards in the "Ohio" at Boston, United States, the well-known effect of symmetry in diminishing the apparent size of an object. Though somewhat accustomed to measure vessels by the eye, I mistook her at a little distance for a vessel of greatly inferior force.

We found fruit excessively dear at Quebec, a few apples and pears, which I bought to take to the ladies, were charged enormously high. I think they demanded 4*d.* each for the pears, and 2*d.* or so for the apples ; it would seem that they must have taken advantage of a new comer, as in Canada West fine apples may readily be procured at 6*d.* a bushel : one would hardly, however, have expected to be taken advantage of in a respectable looking confectioner's shop. Things however, seemed very dear in Quebec—dearer by far than at any other part of Canada that I have visited ; with the exception of dray-hire, which is reasonable enough, the charges for conveying luggage to most parts of the town being for quarter dollar (15*d.*) to 1*s.* 6*d.* I should not think on the whole that an emigrant would gain much, if at all, on the score of cheapness, by taking up his residence in Quebec.

The Anglican cathedral here is a very plain building, of no external pretensions beyond that of an ordinary parish church in England. The bishop's residence is in the enclosure surrounding it, and about the size of a very ordinary rectory-house at home. The bishop was absent on a tour of visitation I believe on my first visit to Quebec, but on another occasion I had the honour of waiting upon and dining with his lordship, who combines a dignified aspect with the extremest amiability and Christian kindness and benevolence of character. Highly favoured indeed is Canada in her episcopal superintendence. Of the Bishop of Toronto, entirely different in personal appearance and mode of address from his brother prelate at Quebec, yet equally kind, equally noble-minded, equally the uncompromising guardian of the Church's interest—equally given to hospitality, alike foremost in every good word and work, I shall, however, have occasion hereafter to speak.

Dr. Mountain was consecrated for Montreal as, I believe, suffragan bishop, during the lifetime of his venerated father the Bishop of Quebec, and now governs the united diocese, making the latter city his ordinary place of residence.

Though Upper Canada possesses some advantage over Canada East, both in a more equable temperature, a generally richer soil, and in being the residence of fewer Roman Catholics, in fact in being more of an English country altogether, for in most parts of the Lower Province you might readily imagine yourself in France ; yet, to a clergyman, who for any reason might choose a residence in Lower Canada, or who was directly sent out thither by the society, I can only say that it would be impossible for himself to be under a kinder or more paternal diocesan. As far too as mere worldly considerations may come in, it may not be irrelevant to mention that the society in and about Quebec, is generally considered to be

extremely good ; and that there is no lack of healthy out-door recreation, especially during winter, to relieve the mind and cheer the jaded spirits. One of the most popular of these is a trip to the celebrated falls of Montmorencia, whither picnics in summer, and sleigh drives over the ice of the St. Lawrence in winter, are the order of the day. This of course is only mentioned by the way, as those laymen who come out to labour for a provision for themselves and their families, and those clergymen, who come fervid with the love of perishing souls, and acknowledging it as their meat and their drink to do their master's work below, will be actuated by very different resolves from those of mere amusement-seeking.

The splendour, however, of the icy conglomerations about the falls of Montmorencia in winter, must, of itself, be worth travelling a long way to see. The spray from the cataract freezing as it falls, soon forms a mountain or pyramid of ice in front of it, from 90 to 126 feet high ; and after having driven thither in a sleigh, the fun is to mount up steps cut in the ice with pickaxes and tomahawks to the summit of the pyramid, seat one's self in a sled provided by the persons who eke out a living by it, and shoot down the side of the mountain with a rapidity which, when the ice is smooth on the river, usually sends you a wonderful distance over the broad bosom of the river, from whence you return to renew the game *ad libitum*. Considering the amazing velocity of the descent, and the steepness of the sides of the ice-mountain, it is wonderful how few accidents occur. All that is required is, a good start and a firm hold. Generally speaking only one person sets off in the small sleds in use for the purpose, but sometimes a loving couple will start off together, the gentleman firmly holding the lady. The softer sex, however, seldom venture from the very top, which is considered a great feat, from the enormous velocity attained, and greater consequent risk. The ladies, therefore, generally content themselves with a descent from about half way up. Some amazonian belles have, however, we believe, ventured the whole height. When a large number of sleds are started in this manner in a string, and they rush to the bottom in a living cataract like so many flying Mercuries, the scene becomes animated in the extreme ; and when, as will sometimes happen, a slight misdirection at setting off, or want of nerve, or loss of balance on the part of its occupant, causes the leading sled to upset, and the others of course to rush against and upset over it, or shoot off in a new direction ; the whole, however, generally rolling over and over and bundling down in a heterogeneous mass till they land in a heap at the bottom; the effect becomes ludicrous in the extreme—the ice rings again with merry peals of laughter, and even stern winter himself might be imagined to indulge in a grim smile.

The owners of sleighs on these occasions vie with one another in gayness of caparison and richness of fur robes and general equipments. The officers of the garrison turn out, some of them tandems, some of them four-in-hand, and on “ high runners,” which though rather break-neck affairs as far as the risk of an upset is involved, are preferred by some on account of the loftier seat, and greater command over the horses. The French carriages, on the contrary, are as near the surface of the snow or ice as possible, where, on a low seat, the legs stretched out, and the back comfortably supported, wrapped in their furs, the occupants sit in snug security.

The jingling of the sleigh-bells which are attached to at least one horse of every vehicle, has a most pleasing and exhilarating effect in the sharp bracing wintry air : an effect felt by the animals as well as their drivers, as horses invariably travel with greater spirit to the tune of their merry jingling ; and they are almost necessary, moreover, to warn foot passengers and others in front of one of the rapid advance of these vehicles, as they shoot silently over the still snow-track, or make at the most a sharp and not unpleasant chirping if the track be well hardened ; indeed it is a fine of *5l.* not to use them.

In winter, of course, if the season be a good one, all conveyance by wheels ceases, runners are the order of the day, and fuel, provisions, and all manner of farm produce are then brought with ease into the cities on sleds, and horse-teams, through roads which, as regards some of the back settlements, under holes and swamps, would render impracticable for heavy loads at another season.

Lodgings and house rent are very high in Quebec. The bishop generally recommends as a private boarding-house, to persons of moderate means, especially the clergy, Mrs. Lane's in St. Ursula Street. The terms here are, if I remember right, no less than 5 dollars (25s. currency) a-week, certainly not less than four. I think at Payne's hotel they are 2 dollars a-day, which is high for Canada. One may, however, get inferior accommodation in the lower town, at the taverns, for perhaps 3 to 4 dollars a-week, but a clergyman would not, of course, like to take up his abode there. Mrs. Lane's house stands her in rent about 80*l.* currency a-year and is an abode of very moderate pretensions indeed—such as could not rent higher than 30*l.* to 40*l.* a year in the environs of London, and 15*l.* to 25*l.* in the neighbourhood of any of the great towns of Scotland. Mrs. Lane and her daughters are extremely communicative and obliging, and though a better table is kept at Toronto for instance, in boarding houses at 3 dollars a week, the probability is that the greater expenses of house rent, &c. in Quebec, render it impossible for the worthy lady referred to, to entertain her visitors at a lower rate ; and then, there is always the satisfaction, from the respectability of the bishop's recommendation, of knowing that one is in a house where there is no liability to be imposed upon, either in minor charges or information. They are also decided church people as might be expected.

[1] Perhaps I ought to mention for the benefit of non-nautical readers, that the terms “larboard” and “starboard” mean left and right respectively as you stand looking towards the head of the ship or the direction of her course. The term “port” is used, however, instead of “larboard” in steering, to avoid perilous mistakes from similarity of sound. To be on the larboard tack, means to be so sailing with regard to the wind, as that the larboard is the upper or weather side, or that next the wind, and *vice versa*.

[2] Anchoring.

[3] Thin slips of cedar nailed on roofs instead of slates.

[4] Canada is now divided into east and west instead of upper and lower, since the latter nomenclature gave people an idea that Canada West was further north.

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