

From: Mrs. [Anna] Jameson, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*. 3 vols. (London, England: Saunders and Otley, 1838).

### [Winter, Niagara, and Niagara Falls]

January 14.

It should seem that this wintry season, which appears to me so dismal, is for the Canadians the season of festivity, and if I were not sick and a stranger—if I had friends near me, I should really enjoy it. Now is the time for visiting, for sleighing excursions, for all intercourse of business and friendship, for balls in town, and dances in farm-houses, and courtships and marriages, and prayer-meetings and assignations of all sorts. In summer, the heat and the mosquitoes render travelling disagreeable at best; in spring the roads are absolutely impassable; in autumn there is too much agricultural occupation; but in winter the forests are pervious; the roads present a smooth surface of dazzling snow; the settlers in the woods drive into the towns, supply themselves with stores and clothing, and fresh meat,—the latter a luxury which they can seldom obtain in the summer. I stood at my window to-day watching the sleighs as they glided past. They are of all shapes and sizes. A few of the carriage-sleighs are well appointed and handsome. The market-sleighs are often two or three boards nailed together in the form of a wooden box upon runners; some straw and a buffalo skin or blanket serve for the seat; barrels of flour and baskets of eggs fill up the empty space. Others are like cars, and others, called *cutters*, are mounted on high runners, like sleigh phaetons; these are sported by the young men and officers of the garrison, and require no inconsiderable skill in driving; however, as I am assured, they are overturned in the snow not above once in a quarter of an hour, and no harm and much mirth ensues; but the wood sleighs are my delight: a large platform of boards is raised upon runners, with a few upright poles held together at top by a rope, the logs of oak, pine, and maple, are then heaped up to the height of six or seven feet. On the summit lie a couple of deer frozen stiff, their huge antlers projecting in a most picturesque fashion, and on these again, a man is seated with a blanket round him, his furred cap drawn down upon his ears, and his scarlet woollen comforter forming a fine bit of color. He guides with a pole his two patient oxen, the clouds of vapour curling from their nostrils in the keen frosty air—the whole machine, in short, as wildly picturesque as the grape wagons in Italy, though, to be sure, the associations are somewhat different.

January 26

The town of Niagara presents the same torpid appearance which seems to prevail every where at this season; it is situated at the mouth of the river Niagara, and is a place of much business and resort when the navigation is open. The lake does not freeze here, owing to the depth of its majestic waters; neither does the river, from the velocity of its current; yet both are blocked up by the huge fragments of ice which are brought down from Lake Erie, and which, uniting and accumulating at the mouth of the river, form a field of ice extending far into the lake. How beautiful it looked to-day, broken into vast longitudinal flakes of alternate white and azure, and sparkling in the sunshine!

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The land all round Niagara is particularly fine and fertile, it has been longer cleared and cultivated than in other parts of the province. The country, they say, is most beautiful in summer. The opposite shore, about a quarter of a mile off, is the State of New York. The Americans have a fort on their side, and we also have a fort on ours. What the amount of *their* garrison may be I know not, but our force consists of three privates and a corporal, with adequate arms and ammunition, *i.e.* rusty firelocks and damaged guns. The fortress itself I mistook for a dilapidated brewery. This is charming—it *looks* like peace and security, at all events.

January 29

Well! I have seen these cataracts of Niagara, which have thundered in my mind's ear ever since I can remember—which have been my "childhood's thought, my youth's desire," since first my imagination was awakened to wonder and to wish. I have beheld them, and shall I whisper it to you!—but, O tell it not among the Philistines—I wish I had not! I wish they were still a thing unbeheld—a thing to be imagined, hoped, and anticipated—something to live for:—the reality has displaced from my mind an illusion far more magnificent than itself—I have no words for my utter disappointment: yet I have not the presumption to suppose that all I have heard and read of Niagara is false or exaggerated—that every expression of astonishment, enthusiasm, rapture, is affectation or hyperbole. No! it must be my own fault. Terni, and some of the Swiss cataracts leaping from their mountains, have affected me a thousand times more than all the

immensity of Niagara. O I could beat myself! and now there is no help—the first moment, the first impression is over—is lost; though I should live a thousand years, long as Niagara itself shall roll, I can never see it again for the first time. Something is gone that cannot be restored. What has come over my soul and senses?—I am no longer Anna—I am metamorphosed—I am translated—I am an ass's head, a clod, a wooden spoon, a fat weed growing on Lethe's bank, a stock, a stone, a petrification—for have I not seen Niagara, the wonder of wonders; and felt—no words can tell *what* disappointment!

But, to take things in order: we set off for the Falls yesterday morning, with the intention of spending the day there, sleeping, and returning the next day to Niagara. The distance is fourteen miles, by a road winding along the banks of the Niagara river, and over the Queenston heights; and beautiful must this land be in summer, since even now it is beautiful. The flower garden, the trim shrubbery, the lawn, the meadow with its hedgerows, when frozen up and wrapt in snow, always give me the idea of something not only desolate but dead: Nature is the ghost of herself, and trails a spectral pall; I always feel a kind of pity—a touch of melancholy—when at this season I have wandered among withered shrubs and buried flower-beds; but here, in the wilderness, where Nature is wholly independent of art, she does not die, nor yet mourn; she lies down to rest on the bosom of Winter, and the aged one folds her in his robe of ermine and jewels, and rocks her with his hurricanes, and hushes her to sleep. How still it was! how calm, how vast the glittering white waste and the dark purple forests! The sun shone out, and the sky was without a cloud; yet we saw few people, and for many miles the hissing of our sleigh, as we flew along upon our dazzling path, and the tinkling of the sleigh-bells, were the only sounds we heard. When we were within four or five miles of the Falls, I stopped the sleigh from time to time to listen for the roar of the cataracts, but the state of the atmosphere was not favorable for the transmission of sound, and the silence was unbroken.

Such was the deep, monotonous tranquility which prevailed on every side—so exquisitely pure and vestal-like the robe in which all nature lay slumbering around us, I could scarce believe that this whole frontier district is not only remarkable for the prevalence of vice; but of dark and desparate crime.

Mr. A., who is a magistrate, pointed out to me a lonely house by the way-side, where, on a dark stormy night in the preceding winter, he had

surprised and arrested a gang of forgers and coiners; it was a fearful description. For some time my impatience had been thus beguiled—impatience and suspense much like those of a child at a theatre before the curtain rises. My imagination had been so impressed by the vast height of the Falls, that I was constantly looking in an upward direction, when, as we came to the brow of a hill, my companion suddenly checked the horses, and exclaimed, “The Falls!”

I was not, for an instant, aware of their presence; we were yet at a distance, looking *down* upon them; and I saw at once glance a flat extensive plain; the sun having withdrawn its beams for the moment, there was neither light, nor shade, nor color. In the midst were seen the two great cataracts, but merely as a feature in the wide landscape. The sound was by no means overpowering, and the clouds of spray, which Fanny Butler called so beautifully the “everlasting incense of the waters,” now condensed ere they rose by the excessive cold, fell round the base of the cataracts in fleecy folds, just concealing that furious embrace of the water above and the waters below. All the associations which in imagination I had gather round the scene, its appalling terrors, its soul-subduing beauty, power and height, and velocity and immensity, were all diminished in effect, or wholly lost.

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### [Toronto, and Toronto Society]

Toronto, February 7.

Mr. B. gave me a seat in his sleigh, and after a rapid and very pleasant journey, during which I gained a good deal of information, we reached Toronto yesterday morning.

The road was the same as before, with one deviation however—it was found expedient to cross Burlington Bay on the ice, about seven miles over, the lake beneath being twenty, and five-and-twenty fathoms in depth. It was ten o'clock at night, and the only light was that reflected from the snow. The beaten track, from which it is not safe to deviate, was very narrow, and a man, in the worst, if not the last stage of intoxication, noisy and brutally reckless, was driving before us in a sleigh. All this, with the novelty of the situation, the tremendous cracking of the ice at every instant, gave me a sense of apprehension just sufficient to be exciting, rather than

very unpleasant, though I will confess to a feeling of relief when we were once more on the solid earth.

It is a remarkable fact, with which you are probably acquainted, that when one growth of timber is cleared from the land, another of quite a different species springs up spontaneously in its place. Thus, the oak or the beech succeeds to the pine, and the pine to the oak or maple. This is not accounted for, at least I have found no one yet who can give me a reason for it. We passed by a forest lately consumed by fire, and I asked why, in clearing the woods, they did not leave groups of the finest trees, or even single trees, to embellish the country? But it seems that this is impossible—for the trees thus left standing, when deprived of the shelter and society to which they have been accustomed, uniformly perish—which, for mine own poor part, I thought very natural.

A Canadian settler *hates* a tree, regards it as his natural enemy, as something to be destroyed, eradicated, annihilated by all and any means. The idea of useful or ornamental is seldom associated here even with the most magnificent timber trees, such as among the Druids had been consecrated, and among the Greeks would have sheltered oracles and votive temples. The beautiful faith which assigned to every tree of the forest its guardian nymph, to every leafy grove its tutelary divinity, would find no votaries here. Alas! for the Dryads and Hamadryads of Canada!

There are two principal methods of killing trees in this country, besides the quick, unfailing destruction of the axe; the first by setting fire to them, which sometimes leaves the root uninjured to rot gradually and unseen, or be grubbed up at leisure, or, more generally, there remains a visible fragment of a charred and blackened stump, deformed and painful to look upon: the other method is slower, but even more effectual; a deep gash is cut through the bark into the stem, quite round the bole of the tree. This prevents the circulation of the vital juices, and by degrees the tree droops and dies. This is technically called *ringing* timber. Is not this like the two ways in which a woman's heart may be killed in this world of ours—by passion and by sorrow? But better far the swift fiery death than this “ringing,” as they call it!

February 17

“There is no *society* in Toronto,” is what I hear repeated all around me—even by those who compose the only society we have. “But,” you will say, “what could be expected in a remote town, which forty years ago

only began to exist?" I really do not know what I expected, but I will tell you what I did *not* expect. I did not expect to find here in this new capital of a new country, with the boundless forest within half a mile of us on almost every side—concentrated as it were the worst evils of our old and most artificial social system at home, with none of its *agrémens*, and none of its advantages. Toronto is like a fourth- or fifth-rate provincial town with the pretensions of a capital city. We have here a petty colonial oligarchy, a self-constituted aristocracy, based upon nothing real, nor even upon any thing imaginary; and we have all the mutual jealousy and fear, and petty gossip, and mutual meddling and mean rivalry, which are common in a small society of which the members are well known to each other, a society composed, like all societies, of many heterogeneous particles; but as these circulate within very confined limits, there is no getting out of the way of what one most dislikes: we must necessarily hear, see, and passively endure much that annoys and disgusts any one accustomed to the independence of a large and liberal society, or the ease of continental life. It is curious enough to see how quickly a new fashion, or a new folly, is imported from the old country, and with what difficulty and delay a new idea finds its way into the heads of the people, or a new book into their hands. Yet, in the midst of all this, I cannot but see that good spirits and corrective principles are at work; that progress is making: though the march of intellect be not here in double quick time, as in Europe, it does not absolutely stand stock-still.

There reigns here a hateful factious spirit in political matters, but for the present no public or patriotic feeling, no recognition of general or generous principles of policy; as yet I have met with none of these. Canada is a colony, not a *country*; it is not yet identified with the dearest affections and associations, remembrances, and hopes of its inhabitants: it is to them an adopted, not a real mother. Their love, their pride, are not for poor Canada, but for high and happy England; but a few more generations must change all this.

We have here Tories, Whigs, and Radicals, so called; but these words do not signify exactly what mean by the same designations at home.

You must recollect that the first settlers in Upper Canada were those who were obliged to fly from the United States during the revolutionary war, in consequence of their attachment to the British government, and the soldiers and non-commissioned officers who had fought during the war. These were recompensed for their losses, suffering, and services, by grants

of land in Upper Canada. Thus the very first elements out of which our social system was framed, were repugnance and contempt for the new institutions of the United States, and a dislike to the people of that country—a very natural result of foregoing causes; and thus it has happened that the slightest tinge of democratic, or even liberal principles in politics, was for a long time a sufficient impeachment of the loyalty, a stain upon the personal character, of those who held them. The Tories have therefore been hitherto the influential party; in their hands we find the government patronage, the principal offices, the sales and grants of land, for a long series of years.

Another party, professing the same boundless loyalty to the mother country, and the same dislike for the principles and institutions of their Yankee neighbours, may be called the Whigs of Upper Canada; these look with jealousy and scorn on the power and prejudices of the Tory families, and insist on the necessity of many reforms in the colonial government. Many of these are young men of talent, and professional men, who find themselves shut out from what they regard as their fair proportion of social consideration and influence, such as, in a small society like this, their superior education and character ought to command for them.

Another set are the Radicals, whom I generally hear mentioned as “those scoundrels,” or “those rascals,” or with some epithet expressive of the utmost contempt and disgust. They are those who wish to see this country erected into a republic, like the United States. A few among them are men of talent and education, but at present they are neither influential nor formidable.

There is among all parties a general tone of complaint and discontent—a mutual distrust—a langour and supineness—the causes of which I cannot as yet understand. Even those who are enthusiastically British in heart and feeling, who sincerely believe that it is the true interest of the colony to remain under the control of the mother country, are as discontented as the rest: they bitterly denounce the ignorance of the colonial officials at home, with regard to the true interests of the country: they ascribe the want of capital for improvement on a large scale to no mistrust in the resources of the country, but to a want of confidence in the measures of the government, and the security of property.

In order to understand something of the feelings which prevail here, you must bear in mind the distinction between the two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. The project of uniting them once more into one legis-

lature, with a central metropolis, is most violently opposed by those whose personal interests and convenience would suffer materially by a change in the seat of government. I have heard some persons go so far as to declare, that if the union of the two provinces were to be established by law, it were sufficient to absolve a man from his allegiance. On the other hand, the measure has powerful advocates in both provinces.\* It seems, on looking over the map of this vast and magnificent country, and reading its whole history, that the political division into five provinces† each with its independent governor and legislature, its separate correspondence with the Colonial-office, its local laws, and local taxation, must certainly add to the amount of colonial patronage, and perhaps render more secure the subjection of the whole to the British crown; but may it not also have perpetuated local distinctions and jealousies—kept alive divided interests, narrowed the resources, and prevented the improvement of the country on a large and general scale?

But I had better stop here, ere I get beyond my depth. I am not one of those who opine sagely, that women have nothing to do with politics. On the contrary; but I do seriously think, that no one, be it man or woman, ought to talk, much less write, on what they do not understand. Not but that I have my own ideas on these matters, though we were never able to make out, either to my own satisfaction or to yours, whether I am a Whig, or Tory, or Radical. In politics I acknowledge but two parties—those who hope and those who fear. In morals, but two parties—those who lie and those who speak truth: and all the world I divide into those who love, and those who hate. This comprehensive arrangement saves me a great deal of trouble, and answers all my own purposes to admiration.

Toronto is, as a residence, worse and better than other small communities—*worse* in so much as it is remote from all the best advantages of a high state of civilization, while it is infected by all its evils, all its follies; and *better*, because, besides being a small place, it is a *young* place; and in spite of this affectation of looking back, instead of looking up, it must advance—it may become the thinking head and beating heart of a nation,

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\* A very clever paper on this subject was published in the *Quebec Mercury*, Sept. 14th, 1837.

† Viz. Upper Canada, Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward's Island.

great, wise, and happy; who knows? And there are moments when, considered under this point of view, it assumes an interest even to me; but at present it is in a false position, like that of a youth aping maturity; or rather like that of the little boy in Hogarth's picture, dressed in a long-flapped laced waistcoat, ruffles, and cocked-hat, crying for bread and butter. With the interminable forests within half a mile of us—the haunt of the red man, the wolf, the bear—with an absolute want of the means of the most ordinary mental and moral development, we have here conventionalism in its most oppressive and ridiculous forms. If I should say, that at present the people here want cultivation, want polish, and the means of acquiring either, *that* is natural—is intelligible—and it were unreasonable to expect it could be otherwise; but if I say they want honesty, *you* would understand me, *they* would not; they would imagine that I accused them of false weights and cheating at cards. So far they are certainly “indifferent honest” after a fashion, but never did I hear so little truth, nor find so little mutual benevolence. And why is it so?—because in this place, as in other small provincial towns, they live under the principle of fear—they are afraid of each other, afraid to be themselves; and where there is much fear, there is little love, and less truth.

I was reading this morning\* of Maria d'Escobar, a Spanish lady, who first brought a few grains of wheat into the city of Lima. For three years she distributed the produce, giving twenty grains to one man, thirty grains to another, and so on—*hence all the corn in Peru*.

Is there no one who will bring a few grains of truth to Toronto?

### [Women in Canada and Journey to London

After several pleasant and interesting visits to the neighbouring settlers I took leave of my hospitable friends at Blandford with deep and real regret; and, in the best and only vehicle which could be procured—videlicet, a baker's cart—set out for London, the chief town of the district; the distance being about thirty miles—a long days' journey; the cost seven dollars.

The man who drove me proved a very intelligent and civilized person. He had come out to Canada in the capacity of a gentleman's servant; he now owned some land—I forget how many acres—and was besides baker-

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\* In the Life of Sir James Mackintosh.

general for a large neighbourhood, rarely receiving money in pay, but wheat and other farm produce. He had served as constable of the district for two years, and gave me some interesting accounts of his thief-taking expeditions through the wild forests in the deep winter nights. He considered himself, on the whole, a prosperous man. He said he should be quite happy here, were it not for his wife, who fretted and pined continually after her "home."

"But," said I, "surely wherever you are, is her *home*, and she ought to be happy where she sees you getting on better, and enjoying more of comfort and independence than you could have hoped to obtain in the old country."

"Well, yes," said he, hesitatingly; "and I can't say but that my wife is a good woman. I've no particular fault to find with her; and it's very natural she should mope, for she has no friend or acquaintance, you see, and she doesn't take to the people, and the ways here; and at home she had her mother and her sister to talk to; they lived with us, you see. Then, I'm out all day long, looking after my business, and she feels quite lonely like, and she's a-crying when I come back—and I'm sure I don't know what to do!"

The case of this poor fellow with his discontented wife is no unfrequent occurrence in Canada. I never met with *one* woman recently settled here, who considered herself happy in her new home and country: I *heard* of one, and doubtless there are others, but they are exceptions to the general rule. Those born here, or brought here early by their parents and relations, seemed to me very happy, and many of them had adopted a sort of pride in their new country which I liked much. There was always a great desire to visit England, and some little airs of self-complacency and superiority in those who had been there, though for a few months only; but all, without single exception, returned with pleasure, unable to forego the early habitual influences of the native land.

I like patriotism and nationality in women. Among the German women both these feelings give a strong tincture to the character; and, seldom disunited, they blend with peculiar grace in our sex: but with a great statesman they should stand well distinguished. Nationality is not always patriotism, and patriotism is not, necessarily, nationality. The English are more patriotic than national; the Americans generally more national than patriotic; the Germans both national and patriotic.

I have observed that really accomplished women, accustomed to what is called the best society, have more resources here, and manage better,

than some women who have no pretensions of any kind, and whose claims to social distinction could not have been great any where, but whom I found lamenting over themselves as if they had been so many exiled princesses.

Can you imagine the position of a fretful, frivolous woman, strong neither in mind nor frame, abandoned to her own resources in the wilds of Upper Canada? I do not believe you *can* imagine any thing so pitiable, so ridiculous, and, to borrow the Canadian word, "so shiftless."

My new friend and kind hostess was a being of quite a different stamp; and though I believe she was far from thinking that she had found in Canada a terrestrial paradise, and the want of servants and the difficulty of educating her family as she wished, were subjects of great annoyance to her, yet these and other evils she had met with a cheerful spirit. Here, amid these forest wilds, she had recently given birth to a lovely baby, the tenth, or indeed I believe the twelfth of a flock of manly boys and blooming girls. Her eldest daughter meantime, a fair and elegant girl, was acquiring, at the age of fifteen, qualities and habits which might well make ample amends for the possessing of mere accomplishments. She acted as a manager-in-chief, and glided about in her household avocations with a serene and quiet grace which was quite charming.

The road, after leaving Woodstock, pursued the course of the winding Thames. We passed by the house of Colonel Light, in a situation of superlative natural beauty on a rising-ground above the river. A lawn, tolerably cleared, sloped down to the margin, while the opposite shore rose clothed in varied woods which had been managed with great taste, and a feeling for the picturesque not common here; but the Colonel being himself an accomplished artist accounts for this. We also passed Beechville, a small, but beautiful village, round which the soil is reckoned very fine and fertile; a number of most respectable settlers have recently bought land and erected houses here. The next place we came to was Oxford, or rather, Ingersol, where we stopped to dine and rest previous to plunging into an extensive forest, called the Pine Woods.

Oxford is a little village, presenting the usual saw-mill, grocery-store and tavern, with a dozen shanties congregated on the bank of the stream, which is here rapid and confined by high banks. Two back-woodsmen were in deep consultation over a wagon which had broken down in the midst of that very forest road we were about to traverse, and which they described as most execrable—in some parts even dangerous. As it was

necessary to gird up my strength for the undertaking, I laid in a good dinner, consisting of slices of dried venison, broiled; hot cakes of Indian corn, eggs, butter, and a bowl of milk. Of this good fare I partook in company with the two back-woodsmen, who appeared to me perfect specimens of their class—tall and strong, and bronzed and brawny, and shaggy and unshaven—very much like two bears set on their hind legs; rude but not uncivil, and spare of speech, as men who had lived long at a distance from their kind. They were too busy, however, and so was I, to feel or express any mutual curiosity; time was valuable, appetite urgent—so we discussed our venison-steaks in silence, and after dinner I proceeded.

The forest land through which I had lately passed, was principally covered with *hard timber*, as oak, walnut, elm, basswood. We were now in a forest of pines, rising tall and dark, and monotonous on either side. The road worse certainly “than fancy ever feigned or fear conceived,” put my neck in perpetual jeopardy. The driver had often to dismount, and partly fill up some tremendous hole with boughs before we could pass—or drag or lift the wagon over trunks of trees—or we sometimes sank into abysses, from which it is a wonder to me that we *ever* emerged. A natural question was—why did you not get out and walk?—Yes indeed! I only wish it had been possible. Immediately on the border of the road so called, was the wild, tangled, untrodden thicket, as impervious to the foot as the road was impassable, rich with vegetation, variegated verdure, and flowers of loveliest dye, but the haunt of the rattlesnake, and all manner of creeping and living things not pleasant to encounter, or even to think of.

The mosquitos, too, began to be troublesome; but not being yet in full force, I contrived to defend myself pretty well, by waving a green branch before me whenever my two hands were not employed in forcible endeavors to keep my seat. These seven miles of pine forest we traversed in three hours and a half; and then succeeded some miles of open flat country called the oak plains, and so called because covered with thickets and groups of oak, dispersed with a park-like and beautiful effect; and still flowers, flowers every where. The soil appeared sandy, and not so rich as in other parts.\*

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\* It is not the most open land which is most desirable for a settler. “The land,” says Dr. Dunlop in his admirable little book, “is rich and lasting, just in proportion to the size and quantity of the timber which it bears, and therefore the more trouble he is put to in clearing his land, the better will it repay him the labor he has expended on it.”

The road was comparatively good, and as we approached London, clearing new settlements appeared on every side.

The sun had set amid a tumultuous mass of lurid threatening clouds, and a tempest was brooding in the air, when I reached the town, and found very tolerable accommodations in the principal inn. I was so terribly bruised and beaten with fatigue, that to move was impossible, and even to speak, too great an effort. I cast my weary aching limbs upon the bed, and requested of the very civil and obliging young lady who attended to bring me some books and newspapers. She brought me thereupon an old compendium of geography, published at Philadelphia forty years ago, and three newspapers. Two of these, the London Gazette and the Freeman's Journal, are printed and published within the district; the third, the New-York Albion, I have already mentioned to you as having been my delight and consolation at Toronto. This paper, an extensive double folio, is compiled for the use of the British settlers in the United States, and also in Canada, where it is widely circulated. It contains all the interesting public news in extracts from the leading English journals, with tales, essays, reviews, &c., from the periodicals. Think, now, if I had not reason to bless newspapers and civilization! Imagine me alone in the very centre of this vast wild country, a storm raging without, as if heaven and earth had come in collision--lodged and cared for, reclining on a neat comfortable bed, and reading by the light of one tallow candle (for there was a scarcity either of candles or of candle sticks), Sergeant Talfourd's speech in the Commons for the alteration of the law of copyright, given at full length, and if I had been worse than "kilt entirely," his noble eulogy of Wordsworth responded to by the cheers of the whole house, would have brought me to life; so did it make my very heart glow with approving sympathy.

July 5.

The next morning the weather continued very lowering and stormy. I wrote out my little journal for you carefully thus far, and then I received several visitors, who hearing of my arrival, had come with kind offers of hospitality and attention, such as are most grateful to a solitary stranger. I had also much conversation relative to the place and people, and the settlements around, and then I took a long walk about the town, of which I here give you the results.

When Governor Simcoe was planning the foundation of a capital for the whole province, he fixed at first upon the present site of London, struck by its many and obvious advantages. Its central position, in the midst of

these great lakes, being at an equal distance from Huron, Erie, and Ontario, in the finest and most fertile district of the whole province, on the bank of a beautiful stream, and at a safe distance from the frontier, all pointed it out as the most eligible site for a metropolis; but there was the want of land and water communication—a want which still remains the only drawback to its rising prosperity. A canal or rail-road, running from Toronto and Hamilton to London, then branching off on the right to the harbor of Goderich on Lake Huron, and on the left to Sandwich on Lake Erie, were a glorious thing!—the one thing needful to make this fine country the granary and storehouse of the west; for here all grain, all fruits which flourish in the south of Europe, might be cultivated with success—the finest wheat and rice, and hemp and flax, and tobacco. Yet, in spite of this want, soon, I trust, to be supplied, the town of London has sprung up and become within ten years a place of great importance. In size and population it exceeds every town I have yet visited, except Toronto and Hamilton. The first house was erected in 1827; it now contains more than two hundred frame or brick houses; and there are many more building. The population may be about thirteen hundred people. The jail and court-house, comprised in one large stately edifice, seemed the glory of the townspeople. As for the style of architecture, I may not attempt to name or describe it; but a gentleman informed me, in rather equivocal phrase, that it was “*somewhat gothic*.” There are five places of worship, for the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Roman Catholics, and Baptists. The church is handsome. There are also three or four schools, and seven taverns. The Thames is very beautiful here, and navigable for boats and barges. I saw to-day a large timber raft floating down the stream, containing many thousand feet of timber. On the whole, I have nowhere seen such evident signs of progress and prosperity.

The population consists principally of artisans—as blacksmiths, carpenters, builders, all flourishing. There is, I fear, a good deal of drunkenness and profligacy; for though the people have work and wealth, they have neither education nor amusements.\* Besides the seven taverns, there is a number of little grocery-stores, which are, in fact, drinking-houses. And though a law exists, which forbids the sale of spiritous liquors in small quantities by any but licensed publicans, they easily contrive to elude the law; as thus:—a customer enters the shop, and asks for two or three penny-worth of nuts, or cakes, and he receives a few nuts, and a large glass of whiskey. The whiskey, you observe, is given, not sold, and no one can swear to the

contrary. In the same manner the severe law against selling intoxicating liquors to the poor Indians is continually eluded or violated, and there is no redress for the injured, no punishment to reach the guilty. It appears to me that the government should be more careful in the choice of the district magistrates. While I was in London, a person who had acted in this capacity was carried from the pavement dead drunk.

Here, as every where else, I find the women of the better class lamenting over the want of all society, except of the lowest grade in manners and morals. For those who have recently emigrated, and are settled more in the interior, there is absolutely no social intercourse whatever; it is quite out of the question. They seem to me perishing of ennui, or from the want of sympathy which they cannot obtain, and, what is worse, which they cannot feel; for being in general unfitted for out-door occupations, unable to comprehend or enter into the interests around them, and all their earliest prejudices and ideas of the fitness of things continually outraged in a manner exceedingly unpleasant, they may be said to live in a perpetual state of inward passive discord and fretful endurance—

“All too timid and reserved  
 For onset, for resistance too inert—  
 Too weak for suffering, and for hope too tame.”

A gentleman, well known to me by name, who was not a resident in London, but passing through it on his way from a far western settlement up by Lake Huron, was one of my morning visitors. He had been settled in the Bush for five years, had a beautiful farm, well cleared, well stocked. He

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\* Hear Dr. Channing, the wise and the good: —“People,” he says, “should be guarded against temptation to unlawful pleasures by furnishing the means of innocent ones. In every community, there must be pleasures, relaxations, and means of agreeable excitement; and if innocent are not furnished, resort will be had to criminal. Man was made to enjoy as well as to labor; and the state of society should be adapted to this principle of human nature.” “Men drink to excess very often to shake off depression, or to satisfy the restless thirst for agreeable excitement, and these motives are excluded in a cheerful community.”

When I was in Upper Canada, I found no means whatever of social amusement for any class, except that which the tavern afforded; taverns consequently abounded everywhere.

was pleased with his prospects, his existence, his occupations: all he wanted was a wife, and on this subject he poured forth a most eloquent appeal.

“Where,” said he, “shall I find such a wife as I could, with a safe conscience, bring into these wilds, to share a settler’s fate, a settler’s home? You, who know your own sex so well, point me out such a one, or tell me at least where to seek her. I am perishing and deteriorating, head and heart, for want of a companion—a wife, in short. I am becoming as rude and coarse as my own laborers, and as hard as my own axe. If I wait five years longer, no woman will be able to endure such a fellow as I shall be be that time—no woman, I mean, whom I could marry—for in this lies my utter unreasonableness; habituated to seek in woman those graces and refinements which I have always associated with her ideal, I must have them here in the forest, or dispense with all female society whatever. With some one to sympathize with me—to talk to—to embellish the home I return to at night—such a life as I now lead, with all the cares and frivolities of a too artificial society cast behind us, security and plenty all around us, and nothing but hope before us, a life of ‘cheerful yesterdays and confident to-morrows’—were it not delicious? I want for myself nothing more, nothing better; but—perhaps it is a weakness, an inconsistency!—I could not love a woman who was inferior to all my preconceived notions of feminine elegance and refinement—inferior to my own mother and sisters. You know I was in England two years ago;—well, I had a vision of a beautiful creature, with the figure of a sylph and the head of a sibyl, beinding over her harp, and singing ‘*A te, O cara;*’ and when I am logging in the woods with my men, I catch myself meditating on that vision, and humming *A te, O cara*, which somehow or other runs strangely in my head. Now, what is to be done? Without coxcombry may I not say, that I need not entirely despair of winning the affections of an amiable, elegant woman, and might even persuade her to confront, for my sake, worse than all this? For what will your sex do and dare for the sake of us men creatures, savages that we are? But even for that reason shall I take advantage of such sentiments? You know what this life is—this isolated life in the Bush—and so do I; but by what words could I make it comprehensible to a fine lady? Certainly I might draw such a picture of it as should delight by its novelty and romance, and deceive even while it does not deviate from the truth. A cottage in the wild woods—solitude and love—the world forgetting, by the world forgot—the deer come skipping by—the red Indian brings game,

and lays it at her feet—how pretty and how romantic! And for the first few months, perhaps the first year, all goes well; but how goes it the next, and the next? I have observed with regard to the women who come out, that they do well enough the first year, and some even the second; but the third is generally fatal: and the worst with you women—or the best shall I not say?—is, that you cannot, and do not, forget domestic ties left behind. We men go out upon our land, or to the chase, and the women, poor souls, sit, and sew, and *think*. You have seen Mrs. A. and Mrs. B., who came out here, as I well remember, full of health and bloom—what are they now? premature old women, sickly, care-worn, without nerve or cheerfulness:—and as for C—, who brought his wife to his place by Lake Simcoe only three years ago, I hear the poor fellow must sell all off, or see his wife perish before his eyes. Would you have me risk the alternative? Or perhaps you will say, marry one of the women of the country—one of the daughters of *the Bush*. No, I cannot; I must have something different. I may not have been particularly fortunate, but the women I have seen are in general coarse and narrow minded, with no education whatever, or with an education which apes all I most dislike, and omits all I could admire in the fashionable education of the old country. What could I do with such women? In the former I might find an upper servant, but no companion—in the other, neither companionship nor help!”

To this discontented and fastidious gentleman I ventured to recommend two or three very amiable girls I had known at Toronto and Niagara; and I told him, too, that among the beautiful and spirited girls of New England, he might also find what would answer his purpose. But with regard to Englishwomen of that grade in station and education, and personal attraction, which would content him, I could not well speak; not because I know of none who united grace of person and lively talents with capabilities of strong affection, ay, and sufficient energy of character to meet trials and endure privations; but in women, as now educated, there is self-dependence, a cherished physical delicacy, a weakness of temperament, deemed, —and falsely deemed, in deference to the pride of man, essential to feminine grace and refinement, —altogether unfitting them for a life which were otherwise delightful: —the active out-of-door life in which she must share and sympathize, and the in-door occupations which in England are considered servile; for a woman who cannot perform for herself and others all household offices, has no business here. But when I hear some men declare that they cannot endure to see women eat, and others speak of bril-

liant health and strength in young girls as being rude and vulgar, with various notions of the same kind too grossly absurd and perverted even for ridicule, I cannot wonder at any nonsensical affectations I meet within my own sex; nor do otherwise than pity the mistakes and deficiencies of those who are sagely brought up with the one end and aim—to get married. As you always used to say, “Let there be a demand for a better article, and a better article will be supplied.”



Thomas Young, “A General View of the City of Toronto” (1835).