

NOTES ON THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE BLUE MOUNTAIN, CO. OF LEEDS, ONTARIO

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Travellers by the Grand Trunk Railway from Montreal to Toronto have possibly noticed the rocky and broken nature of the country they pass through between Brockville and Kingston. This is especially the case in the townships of Escott and Lansdowne and in these townships it is that the subject of the present paper "The Blue Mountain" is situated. The rocky tract referred to is most pronounced in the vicinity of Charleston Lake; it extends thence in a south-westerly direction, and continuing along the River St. Lawrence, helps to form the inimitable scenery of the Thousand Islands. In past years this country was densely timbered with pine and other forest trees, and until the lumberman's axe made its onslaught on these, was, we are told, a veritable wilderness, through which the bear, the wolf and the deer roamed at will. To-day the greater part of the large timber is cut away, and in the more level places the land is cleared and cultivated, yielding some of the finest crops in this part of Ontario. In other parts, where the rocky nature of the soil forbids cultivation, a second growth has sprung up, consisting of pine, hemlock, birch, oak and poplar. Here and there patches of the old woodland remain, where the maple, the elm, the beech, and an occasional oak and hickory flourish in all their pristine vigour. But the pine are mostly gone. Besides the curiously shaped conical hill known as the Blue Mountain some six miles north of the Railway and which according to the Government Survey rises to a height of 360 feet above Charleston Lake, there are several other rocky eminences to the South, towards the river St. Lawrence, reaching an altitude of from two to three hundred feet. The whole of this country is to-day curiously diversified with woods, rocks, swamps and in places excellent farms. But it is the rocky tract known as the Blue Mountain that I am going to speak of. Almost every one now is familiar with the "Thousand Isles;" the portion that remains a wilderness extends for about ten miles on the easterly side of Charleston Lake, and varies from three to four miles in width. To lovers of nature it is a most interesting tract of country. Within these limits there is no cultivation. The larger