

Guelph, Upper Canada, Feb. 26, 1831.

DEAR JOHN,

I RECEIVED the letter, jointly wrote by my brother Adam and you, and you can hardly imagine the joy we felt to hear from our dearest old friends in the land of our forefathers, that you were in health, and able to handle the awl and the shuttle; but I fear you will have enough to do to make your hard earnings support the cravings of nature. When we sit down to our meals, I think how happy I would be to share them with my dear friends in Scotland. After arriving at the head of Lake Ontario, which we reached in July, I took a house for a month, and leaving the family, set out to see a little of the country, in company with two fellow emigrants; and after traversing between 500 and 600 miles, through fourteen townships, we gave the preference to the Company's lands at Guelph, being good, well watered, and a healthful country, although it is a dollar higher in price than many other townships; so returning to the lake, we struck our camps, and came direct to Guelph on the first of August. It is twenty-six miles north-west from the Lake Ontario; I immediately went through the lands of the block, and selected a lot of 100 acres; they are all laid off in 100 acre-lots, but you can purchase as many of these as you please, and have five years to pay it in; it is three dollars per acre, you pay a fifth, that is 15% when you enter on your lot, and a fifth yearly for the other four years. A dollar here is 5s., a British shilling 1s. 2d., and a sovereign varies from 24s. to 23s. 4d. A lot of 100 acres is laid off a quarter of a mile in breadth, by five-eighths long, and a road laid along the head, and down betwixt every second lot twelve yards wide; you have your measurement exclusive of the roads.

I was desirous to have some wheat sown in the fall, as it would yield us bread of our own growth for next year; and it does not answer here to sow wheat in the spring, so I engaged a young man who came over in the ship with us from Edinburgh, for two months, and commencing immediately, we succeeded, with my boy's help, in cutting, clearing, and getting sown in wheat, four acres, which looks excellent; the product in wheat here, I understand, varies according to circumstances, from twenty to forty bushels per acre. I next set to work with the lad, and got up a house twenty-nine feet long by twenty-one wide, with a cellar below, twenty by eighteen, and six and a half deep; our houses are all of wood; the manner of building is: you have your blocks cut and prepared, and drawn to the place by oxen, (you get a man with a pair of oxen for drawing your wood together, for 7s. 6d. per day;) then you go round to the settlers in your neighbourhood, letting them know the day you wish your house raised, inviting as many as will manage it in a day, when they assemble and help you up with the logs; I had twenty at mine; you then finish the rest yourself, or pay tradesmen to do it, but that comes very expensive, wages being so high: a joiner and mason has 8s. and 10s. a day, a labourer from 3s. to a dollar, and victuals, and they by no means work too eagerly. I did all my house myself, put on the roof, and built the chimney, indeed every thing till I came to lay the floors, when I had to engage a joiner a week to plane and plough the deals; I paid him for the week ten dollars, with victuals. The houses in other respects are done much like those in Scotland, only in place of slates we have them shingled with wood, which when painted looks exactly like slating, and will last twenty years. I have two good apartments and an excellent loft up stairs, with three large win-