

THE Cities and Towns of Canada

ILLUSTRATED.

XI.

ON THE UPPER OTTAWA.

PEMBROKE—AN AGREEABLE SURPRISE—THE MIRAMICHI FIRE—A TERRIBLE VISITATION—PEMBROKE FOUNDED BY SURVIVORS—THE LATE PETER WHITE—MICHAEL HENNESSEY, THE RIVER PIKATE—PEMBROKE PAST AND PRESENT—A PARADISE FOR PAINTERS.

Crossing from Quebec into Ontario by means of the bridge spanning the Ottawa river at Portage du Fort, a pleasant drive of about seven miles brought me to Healey's Station, on the Canada Central Railway, distant about twenty-eight miles from Pembroke. The evening express from Ottawa, punctual to a minute, soon hove in sight, and by the time I had begun to get used to the novel sensation of riding in a railway car—I had been out of the land of cars, and in the land of waggons, boats, and cribs of timber for a month or two—by the time I had got comfortably seated and had satisfied the youth who peddles figs and light literature that I was not in want of any of his wares, the train drew up at the Pembroke station, and the number of individuals shouting the names of rival hotels convinced me that Pembroke was a considerable place.

I should, perhaps, explain that Pembroke is situated on the south shore of Lake Allumette—an opening of the Ottawa River—in the South Riding of Renfrew, of which County it is the County town. It is the most northern town in Ontario, ninety-six miles from Ottawa, and the present terminus of the Canada Central Railway.

I have a liking for arriving in a strange place at night for the sake of enjoying the surprise in the morning. One generally forms an idea of a place one has never seen, and generally finds that the picture conjured up is not at all like the real thing. I had heard a good deal in praise of Pembroke on my way thither, and, among other special attractions, the size, style, and general excellence of the newly-opened hotel, known as "The Metropolitan," formed topics for the display of much eloquence. I had my own ideas upon the subject, but though I discounted all I heard, I still entertained very high expectations regarding this far-away town in the north. I am proud to be able to record that my expectations were far exceeded in every particular. The first surprise was the "Metropolitan," which is, indeed, in all respects, a very superior establishment. The guest gets a very good idea of the house directly he enters the doors. The office is large, lofty, tastefully fitted up, light and cheerful, and these are the characteristics of the hotel throughout. From top to bottom, all is first-class. Dining-hall, drawing-room, parlours and bedrooms all reveal the same good taste and careful attention to details—an air of comfort pervades the house, and everything is so nicely arranged and managed that one feels quite "at home." The drawing-room is a magnificent apartment, handsomely furnished; the bedrooms are simply splendid—all are large, well furnished and command a pleasant outlook. For families, or persons of luxurious habits, there are rooms *en suite*. There is a bath-room upon each floor. Commercial gentlemen have the choice of a range of excellent sample-rooms. The hotel is situated in the best part of the town, near the railway-station, and from its elevated position commands magnificent views of the lake, which is Pembroke's great charm. In front are the beautiful grounds of the Supple estate, a portion of which, including a fine croquet lawn, has been secured for the use of guests. Occasionally promenade concerts are given by one of the bands of the town, the grounds then being prettily illuminated. I should add that the rates at the Metropolitan are very reasonable. The proprietors, Messrs. C. B. Jones and A. B. Macdonald, are gentlemen who thoroughly understand their business, and such as would make any house popular. The hotel has enjoyed a very fair run of business this season, and now that the News is making the beauties of the Upper Ottawa widely known, the prospects are that it will command a large share of public patronage, especially pleasure travel, in the near future.

After the hotel, the next surprise was to find so many fine residences round about. I question if any place of the size on the continent can boast such a number of handsome and well-appointed houses. Red brick is the prevailing material used in building. The gardens are generally large and tastefully laid out; indeed it was pleasing to notice a fondness for floriculture among all classes. It is remarkable how much a few bright blossoms improve the humblest dwelling. In my rambles I often am reminded of this. You will see two cottages built exactly alike, side by side, but in one case there will be a little flower-bed in front of the door; the earth banked around the house will be sodded, and home-made hanging baskets, mossy, and made graceful with delicate creepers, will be swinging at the windows; probably there will be a bird-cage somewhere, with a sweet-voiced canary to supply the music, which is so closely allied to flowers. The next cottage will be entirely destitute of even an attempt at adornment

—there will perhaps be a muddy puddle in place of the flower-bed; around the house there will be heaps of foul-smelling refuse; if you look to the windows for the hanging-baskets you will most likely see, instead, broken panes filled up with dirty rags. Of course, the exteriors of these two houses proclaim the nature of the interiors. Yet, if the matter were inquired into, it would often be found that the man with the pretty cottage earned less wages than the man who inhabited the dirty place. It is not a matter of money; it is a question of taste; the one has a taste for the beautiful, the other, probably, has a taste for whiskey.

HOW THE TOWN IS LAID OUT.

Pembroke may be said to be built upon three terraces, which run parallel with the lake. The lake shore in front of the town is flat, and, as usual, marred by dilapidated sheds and the poorest kind of houses. The street on the next level is the main business thoroughfare, and, from the "Metropolitan" eastward, it is on this that most of the best residences are to be found. On the level above are the schools, the Roman Catholic church, the convent, and the best of the West-End residences. About a mile south, the Muskrat and Indian rivers unite and flow into the Ottawa through the centre of the town. The two ordinarily form but a small stream, though in the freshest time the volume pouring over the Pembroke dam is said to make quite a respectable waterfall. The town site is mainly sand over clay. On the highest level there is a good quarry, but the stone is principally used in building foundations. The County Buildings are built of a beautiful free-stone, procured from a small island, known as Morrison's, situated at the foot of the lake. It is said there is plenty more stone, but that it would not pay to quarry it, on account of the strata running almost perpendicularly. It is a stone of a beautiful cream colour, with a sprinkling of grit in it. It is in no way affected by the weather, but always looks as if fresh from the mason's hands.

SETTLEMENT AND GROWTH.

In the early part of October, 1825, a terrible conflagration took place in the woods about Miramichi, New Brunswick, at that time the scene of the bulk of the lumber trade of Canada. The district was well settled for one hundred miles, bordering the river, and lumber shanties and depots were thickly scattered through the bush. Pine, spruce, hemlock and fir, of first-class quality, were plentiful, and the demand was brisk. Everybody was making money, and, according to an eye-witness, few thought of anything else. The last of September and beginning of October, of the year in question, was marked as an exceedingly dry period. At nine o'clock on the night of the 6th October, news came to Miramichi that a fire was raging in the bush. People looked out and saw a lurid glare in the murky sky, but they thought little of the circumstance—there had been fires before, and they had been extinguished before doing a great deal of damage. So they expected this would be. But it soon attained alarming dimensions; the wind rose till it became a tornado, and, to add to the horrors of the scene, a thunder storm of the most terrific character set in. The flashes of lightning dimmed the forest blaze, as if laughing to scorn mere earthly fire; the thunder was, if possible, even more frightful, causing the wretched people to think that the earth was splitting asunder. The boldest blasphemers quaked; men who had not prayed since they knelt at their mothers' knee then threw themselves to the ground and called upon the Almighty to save them. Particularly noticeable was an American atheist, named Bryant, who proclaimed in fear and dread to a terrified crowd that

THE LAST DAY HAD SURELY ARRIVED,

and such was the general belief. The flames spread with frightful rapidity, being carried onward in great wreathing masses of resinous smoke, which burst and set fire to the bush far ahead of the main conflagration. The woods were as a vast bon-fire, made ready for the torch. As an instance of the rapidity with which the flames advanced, it is related that a lumberman drove his team into the forest to alarm his comrades who were in camp. He found them in the shanty playing cards, unconscious of the swiftly-approaching danger. They disregarded his warning, and he had barely time to reach the river before the avalanche of fire was upon them—both men and horses perishing in the flames. At last the fire reached the Miramichi river, at this point about three-quarters of a mile wide, and began to devour the shipping. Despite the best efforts of the crews, a large number of vessels were destroyed. Newcastle—the county town of Northumberland—and Douglastown were burned to the ground, but the fire was checked by the river, though not before about six thousand square miles of the finest timber lands of the Province were devastated. Three hundred human beings were known to have perished, but there were numbers of strangers in the shanties of whom no count could be made. The destruction of farm stock and animal life generally was enormous. The dreadful visitation only lasted about twelve hours, but it was most complete. The heart was taken out of the settlement, and there arose among the survivors a desire to leave a place which they firmly believed had been scourged by the Almighty on account of the wickedness prevailing. So a general exodus began. The destruction of the timber caused the attention of lumberers to

be turned in other directions, and the trade which Miramichi had enjoyed was transferred to Quebec. A little batch of Miramichi people pushed up the Ottawa, and settled near the present site of the town of Pembroke. They christened the place after their old home of sad memory, and for some time there was a Miramichi on the Upper Ottawa. Meanwhile,

MR. PETER WHITE,

lately deceased, had for several years been lumbering in this section, and in 1828 he became a resident. With him and sundry Miramichi men rests the honour of having laid the foundation of the present town of Pembroke. A few particulars respecting his life may prove interesting, for he was widely known. Mr. White was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, Dec. 31st, 1794, and early manifested a strong liking for the excitement and dash of a seafaring life. His parents not being favourable to his views, he took "French leave" at the age of fourteen, and was next heard of on board a man-of-war—one of the fleet commanded by Sir James Yeo—fighting the Americans on Lake Ontario. It is mentioned as an interesting coincidence, that on the same vessel was the late Bishop Richardson, who subsequently became head of the Methodist Episcopal Church in this country. Young White served his country well, and did not leave the service until the close of the "unnatural war." Then he took to lumbering, as before stated, and for forty years engaged in this staple industry. Some details connected with the bringing of his family up from Hull, when he had determined to settle on the shores of Lake Allumette, give an idea of what life was in those early days. The trip had to be made in a canoe, and occupied fourteen days. It is now made in something over four hours. When the little party arrived at the Mountain Rapid—a short distance above Portage du Fort—they were benighted, and the weather was bad. They found a shanty, occupied by a notorious character named Martin Hennessey, who, with a gang of kindred spirits, lived a wild, lawless life.

HALF PIRATES, HALF SHANTY-MEN.

There was no "administration of justice" in those parts then—might was right. Hennessey and his gang used to rob right and left and beat any who raised the slightest objection. They were credited with having caused the death of more than one victim. Such were the men whom Mr. White and his young wife encountered on a dark and stormy night in the midst of one of the wildest scenes on the Upper Ottawa. What did the bandit chief? Rob the men and ill-treat the woman? No. It has been said that there is no ruffian bereft entirely of humane promptings. So it proved in Hennessey's case. Directly he learned of the arrival of the travellers he ordered his men to clean up the shanty and make it as comfortable as possible, after which it was placed entirely at the disposal of Mr. and Mrs. White, Hennessey and his gang camping outside.

There were those who prophesied that Hennessey was destined for the hangman, but the prediction was not verified. One day, Hennessey and an American quack doctor, named Whitney, quarrelled about a degraded woman, with whom the former cohabited. The meeting was in Hennessey's hotel, on Allumette Island, opposite Pembroke, and eventuated in a challenge to fight on the shore. Hennessey went out first, and directly he got over the threshold, Whitney struck him down with an ironwood poker, and showered blows till life was extinct. Whitney gave himself up, and pleaded that if he had not killed Hennessey, Hennessey would have killed him. The Court not only held the plea well founded, but commended the act, remarking that it was not often given a man to rid a community of such a ruffian as Hennessey.

But let me tell of pleasanter things. After Mr. White had located, he began to look about for those elements which are essential to the well-being of society. He was the means of bringing the first minister and the first schoolmaster to the settlement, and was the instigator and helper of many other good works, being for some years a member of the Township Council. He joined the militia twenty years ago, and latterly held the rank of Lieut.-Colonel of the North Renfrew Division. Of ten children, four survive him, his second son and namesake representing North Renfrew in the House of Commons. Mr. White died on the 6th August last, aged 84. The funeral drew together a large concourse, mourners coming from all parts of the country, and comprising many who, side by side with Mr. White, watched the little village of Miramichi develop into the town of Pembroke.

"WHEN THE DEVIL WAS SICK," ETC.

Of those who saw the great fire, there are but two now living in Pembroke, Mr. Andrew Irving, Registrar—to whom I am indebted for many interesting notes—and Mr. Michael McNeil, Sheriff's Officer. In a letter just to hand, Mr. Irving, referring to the atheist Bryant, before mentioned, says: "I met the old sinner often after that, but although he never forgot the fire, he soon forgot the religious impressions the fear of it produced. All the religious denominations kept the 7th October as a day of fasting and humiliation for many a year. Perhaps some of them (likely the Presbyterians) keep it yet."

LAND-MARKS.

In 1840 the first grist mill was erected by Mr. Alexander Moffat, who emigrated to Canada

from Addington, Scotland, in 1824, and settled at New Edinburgh, subsequently removing to Pembroke. He also erected a woollen mill. The same year the first saw mill was erected by the late Samuel and James McKay. The first store was opened by Mr. E. Bourke, now County Treasurer, in what is now called Lower Town, an eastern suburb of Pembroke. This was christened Campbelltown in 1846, in compliment to a popular hotel-keeper, named D. Campbell Dunlop. The christening took place on Mayday, and the village schoolmaster, John Burray, composed the following lines, which were sealed in a bottle and deposited beneath a flag-staff erected as a May-pole:

"The name of this town—
By Victoria's Crown—
Was given by D. C. Dunlop;
When Time is unveiled,
The bottle unsealed,
You will think upon Campbell Dunlop."

The late Mr. John Egan, famous for his mammoth lumbering operations, was a clerk in Bourke's store. Mr. Powell, now Governor of Carlton County Jail, was also one of the earliest store-keepers, and his brother, now Sheriff Powell, served him as clerk. The late John Supple bought the McKay saw-mill in 1844, and became one of the leading residents of Pembroke. Mr. Supple represented the County of Renfrew in the Parliament of Canada, and in 1854 defeated Mr. Alex. Morris, ex-Governor of Manitoba. After the division of the county, in 1867, Mr. Supple represented the North Riding in the Local Legislature.

THE ORANGE AND THE GREEN.

In 1851-2 Pembroke had a taste of "religious" troubles. A report went round that the Orangemen intended to destroy the R. C. Church on the 12th July, and a strong body of defenders surrounded the edifice on that day, armed with all manner of weapons. No general encounter took place, but a few Orangemen, whose way home took them past the church, were roughly used. On the 26th August following, the Orangemen had a procession and speeches at the Presbyterian church. Between that time and the following July, both parties were preparing for a jolly row on the "immortal 12th." As the time drew nigh it became evident that a breach of the peace was determined upon, and Sheriff Thompson and a magistrate, named Andrew Dickson, forwarded a requisition to the authorities for troops. Meanwhile, the opponents of the Orangemen were addressed by a Mr. Kelly, who wielded great influence, and the upshot was a promise that no opposition would be offered the processionists. The detachment of troops was halted at the Chat's Rapids, and the day passed off quietly. The Orangemen have walked unopposed ever since.

For some time a bitter antagonism existed between the French-Canadian and Irish shanty-men—the latter being known as "shinners." It culminated in a bloody pitched battle at the Mountain Chute, near Portage du Fort—the French gaining a victory which ensured "equal rights" thenceforward.

Besides Miramichi, Pembroke has been known for short periods as Sydenham and Moffat. In 1858 it was incorporated as a village. The honour of being proclaimed the County Town was secured only after a desperate struggle, characterised by diplomacy worthy of a Berlin Conference or High Joint Commission. The County Buildings were begun in 1861 and finished in 1867—a fierce legal fight raging meanwhile, and the building operations being stayed by injunction. The buildings cost \$50,000, and are in all respects very creditable. The jail contains twenty-four cells, and is a model establishment, except as regards the water supply.

THE LUMBER TRADE AND THE FARMERS.

Pembroke was incorporated as a town in 1876, Mr. William Moffat, a son of the pioneer, being elected Mayor—a position he still holds. The population is reported to be between two and three thousand. Like the other towns and villages along the Ottawa, Pembroke was an outcome of the lumber trade and its fortunes have fluctuated with the ups and downs of that great industry. Four or five years ago, when the trade was brisk, Pembroke grew rapidly and money was plentiful. Everybody either dabbled in lumber or was more or less interested in the business. Very little attention was paid to the agricultural development of the surrounding country. Those who took up farm lands merely tilled just enough to supply their own wants, trusting in the main to employment at the hands of the lumbering firms. When the lumber trade received the severe check under which it is at present labouring, the people of Pembroke felt the blow keenly. Latterly the farming classes have been compelled to pay more attention to their lands, but still the country round about Pembroke has the appearance of having been but recently settled. Perfectly cleared fields and good farm buildings are quite the exception. It is thought, however, that the lesson taught has been a good one, and that the all-important work of building up what is termed "a good back country" will henceforward proceed steadily.

BUSINESS NOTES.

Pembroke boasts several industrial establishments, chief among which stand Moffat's Grist