

Our Library.

No. 18 & 19.

"Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada. By Mrs. Jameson."

The narrative of a residence in Canada, by so celebrated a writer as Mrs. Jameson, cannot fail to be full of interest to every Canadian reader, especially as it took place ten or fifteen years ago, when travelers found many bad roads, strange customs, and raw but witty emigrants, that they had scarce need of anything else to fill up their volumes with romantic adventures. The changes which have taken place, even in this short time, are indeed very striking, and it gives a new interest to the work to mark the contrast between Canada as it was when she described it, and as it is at present. Her descriptions are lively, with here and there the history of some hardy settler, or amusing adventures incidental to travelling in an almost uncultivated country. As she was connected with the government (being the lady of the Vice-Chancellor) she had the best opportunities of gaining information with regard to the country, and her remarks upon political measures and the condition of Canada display much discernment.

Much of the work is also taken up with thoughts on various literary subjects, which happened to engage her attention at the time; especially on German literature, which seems to have been her chief study at this period.

A long and romantic tour on the Upper Lakes, with few companions beside the wild Indians, concerning whom she gives a good deal of information, occupies the principal part of the second volume.

The following is her description of Hamilton—

"Hamilton is the capital of the Gore District, and one of the most flourishing places in Upper Canada. It is situated at the extreme point of Burlington Bay, at the head of Lake Ontario, with a population, annually increasing, of about three thousand. The town is about a mile from the lake shore, a space which, in the course of time, will probably be covered with buildings. I understand that seventeen thousand bushels of wheat were shipped here in one month. There is a bank here, a court-house and jail looking unfinished, and the commencement of a public reading-room and literary society, of which I cannot speak from my knowledge, and which appears as yet in embryo. Some of the linen-draper's shops, called here clothing stores, and the grocery stores, or shops for all the descriptions of imported merchandise, made a very good appearance; and there was an air of business, and bustle, and animation about the place which pleased me. I saw no bookseller's shop, but a few books on the shelves of a grocery store, of the most common and coarse description."

Her remarks on the Railroad between Hamilton and Lake Huron, which was even then proposed, are as follows—

"They have projected a railroad from Hamilton westward through the London and Western Districts—certainly one of the grandest and most useful undertakings in the world—in this world, I mean. The want of a line of road, of an accessible market for agricultural produce, keeps this magnificent country poor and ignorant in the midst of unequal capabilities. If the formation of the Rideau Canal, in the eastern districts (connecting Lake Ontario with the Ottawa river,) has, in spite of many disadvantages in the soil and locality, brought that part of the province so far in advance of the rest, in population, wealth, and intelligence—what would not a railroad do for them here, where the need is at least as great—the resources, natural and accidental, much superior—and the prospect of advantage, in every point of view, infinitely more promising?"

Under all disadvantages, this part of the province has been the usual route for emigrants to the Western States of the Union; for, as you will perceive by a glance at the map, it is the shortest road, to Michigan and the Illinois by some hundreds of miles. If there were but a railroad, opening a direct communication through the principal settlements between Hamilton on Lake Ontario and Sandwich at the head of Lake Erie, there is no calculating the advantages that must arise from it—even immediate advantage; but "want of capital," as I hear all around me—and they might add want of energy, want of every thing needful, besides money—the one thing most needful—are likely to defer the completion of this magnificent plan

for many years. I wonder some of our great speculators and monied men in England do not speculate here, instead of sending their money to the United States;—or rather I do not wonder, seeing what I see. But I wish that the government would do something to remove the almost universal impression that this province is regarded by the powers at home with distrust and indifference—something to produce more confidence in public measures, without which there can be no enterprise, no prosperity, no railroads. What that something is, being no politician nor political economist like Harriet Martineau, I cannot point out, nor even conjecture. I have just sense enough to see, to feel, that something *must* be done—that the necessity speaks in every form all around me.

She speaks frequently and eloquently on the education and rights of her own sex. She looks for their elevation to the right source—a better education, which will train their minds, and fit them for all the emergencies of life. On this subject she remarks—

"Coleridge, who has said and written the most beautiful, the most tender, the most reverential things of women—who understands better than any man, any poet, what I will call the metaphysics of love—Coleridge, as you will remember, has asserted that the perfection of a woman's character is to be *characterless*. "Every man," said he, "would like to have an Ophelia or a Desdemona for his wife." No doubt; the sentiment is truly a masculine one; and what was *her* fate? What would now be the fate of such unresisting and confiding angels? Is this the age of Arcadia? Do we live among Paladins and Sir Charles Grandisons, and are our weakness, and our innocence, and our ignorance, safeguards—or suares? Do we indeed find our account in being

"Fino by defect, and beautifully weak?"

No, no; women need in these times *character* beyond every thing else; the qualities which will enable them to endure and to resist evil; the self-governed, the cultivated, active mind, to protect and to maintain ourselves. How many wretched women marry for a maintenance! How many unmarried women live in heart-wearing dependence; if poor, in solitary penury, loveless, joyless, unendeared; if rich, in aimless, pitiful trifling! How many, strange to say, marry for the independence they dare not otherwise claim! But the more paths opened to us, the less fear that we should go astray.

Surely it is dangerous, it is wicked, in these days, to follow the old saw, to bring up women to be "happy wives and mothers;" that is to say, let all her accomplishments, her sentiments, her views of life, take one direction, as if for women there existed only one destiny—one hope, one blessing, one object, one passion in existence, some people say it ought to be so, but we know that it is *not* so; we know that hundreds, that thousands of women are not happy wives and mothers—are never either wives or mothers at all. The cultivation of the moral strength and the active energies of a woman's mind, together with the intellectual faculties and tastes, will not make a woman a less good, less happy wife and mother, and will enable her to find content and independence when denied love and happiness."

BURLINGTON LADIES' ACADEMY.

THE WINTER SESSION, will commence on THURSDAY, the FIFTH day of OCTOBER, 1848.

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For full information, attention is invited to the Academy Circular, which may be obtained on application to the Principal.

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The Principal invites Ladies and Gentlemen from abroad, at their convenience, to visit the Institution.

D. C. VAN NORMAN, A. M.,

Hamilton, August 9, 1848.

Principal.