

London, in 1818. A free grant of a hundred acres of land in a wilderness, no road, no trail, but the blazed trees of the surveyor, to guide the settler to his intended home. From four to six men and a yoke of oxen from the township of Westminster were employed, engaged for a week; they took with them flour, pork, some bread, a few drawings of tea, and went forth to erect the new house. They took with them the necessary tools, axes, a crosscut saw, a hand-saw, a five-quarter auger, a frow, a square, an adze and a bit and brace. The logs were soon cut, the house, 24 x 16 feet, one storey high, in a week was finished. No lumber to be had in those days, plank were manufactured from some thrifty, straight-grained oak, white ash or basswood. These planks were lined and hewn to about six inches, the edges straightened, and when laid on the sleepers, any inequalities of thickness was reduced by the adze. The roof was covered with clapboards or long heavy shingles, made on the spot from a white-oak tree; a door was made of the same material as the floor, but very much lighter. The inside of the building was hewn down and had quite a finished appearance, the slight spaces between the logs were chinked and plastered with mortar, made from best clay available. Such houses were completed without a nail, a spike, or a single particle of iron. The chimney was to have been built after the family had moved in; good and safe chimneys were erected without either brick, stone or lime. The fire-place was made of well-worked yellow mortar about ten to twelve inches in thickness; the remainder of the chimney was built of mud and split sticks, and during many years I never knew but one house to be burned from a defective chimney. I have said nothing of the windows so far, as houses were frequently occupied weeks and months without a proper glazed window, as such could not be had nearer than St. Thomas, distant twenty-eight miles. The next week the house was occupied by father, mother and three small children, the parents rejoicing that for the first time in their lives, they were the undisputed owners of an estate that in a short time would no doubt become valuable.

Now the European pioneer begins an active life of constant labor. He had laid in a month's provisions for his family. It's now the first of November; instructed by older settlers he underbrushes some five acres, ready to be chopped during the winter. He had never before wielded an axe or felled a tree, but soon became rather an expert, and knew not only how to fall a tree but could tell exactly where the tree should fall. Before the last snows of April had gone, his chopping task was finished. He burned the brush, invited his neighbors to a logging bee. Sixteen active men responded to his call, and with four yoke of oxen the timber was piled in proper heaps, ready for burning. The heaps were all fired in the forenoon of one day; then for three days were the fires carefully watched, the ashes pushed under the still burning timbers until the last stick was consumed. The ashes were then carried to the leaches already prepared, to be converted into black salts.

What is black salts? the novice will ask. It is the father of potash, the grandfather of pearl ash, the great grandfather of salaratus, and the great great grandfather of soda, and a distant relation of baking-powder. From

one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds is made from the ashes of an acre of heavy timber, was always a *coveted cash* article by every country merchant and sold for from two to three dollars per hundred pounds. All went eventually to England, where it was used for bleaching and other purposes. Thus did the first pioneers acquire a cash capital to provide for the future wants of the family. When all means were exhausted the father left his little family, went into the long settled townships, Bayham, Malahide or Yarmouth and worked with the old farmers, to procure provisions, perhaps a cow, or a pair of two-year-old steers.

When the Welland Canal was first commenced most of our unmarried young men went to St. Catharines or Thorold and there found ready employment at \$12 per month. In the autumn they returned to their forest homes and spent the winter months in enlarging their betterments. About the first of May they were found again on the Welland Canal. Some brought home cows, others steers and still others sheep and little pigs, and absolute poverty was no longer threatened. The daily fare of almost every family for the first two years was corn bread, pork, mush, maple syrup, milk and butter, with potatoes galore.

My little "boughten" or imported tea, was used in those days. Good and healthy substitutes were made from cyprus, sage, sassafras and black currant leaves. The best coffee was made from peas, nicely browned. When peas were not on hand Indian corn and bread well toasted were used as substitutes. In a few short years two or three good cows, a yoke of oxen, from ten to thirty sheep, pigs, hens, ducks, geese and turkeys in abundance. Then did the early settlers live on the fat of the land. Clothing of every kind was costly, but prudent industry kept every member of family clothed with the most durable and substantial garments.

The big wheel for wool, the little wheel for flax, the reel, the swift, and the cards for wool, were found in most thrifty houses. The wool from six sheep and the flax grown on an acre of land, all manufactured at home, made flannel, linsey-woolsey, and tow-cloth sufficient for every demand for nearly two years. There were weavers in every settlement. They did their work well and took their pay either in money, produce, or a share of the manufactured goods.

Militia musters were held on the fourth of June. Every man was called out to train for a long summer's day, to be drilled by officers as ignorant of military tactics as the most stupid man in the ranks.

Two or three swords, a couple dozen old guns, some sticks and corn stocks, constituted the whole military outfit. A Scotch piper gave some good music, Ben Dayton with his drum and Tom Anderson with his fife, delighted the untrained militiamen. Those yearly musters became so unpopular, so ridiculous, and so useless that after 1838 we saw no more of them.

A great Reform convention in April, 1833, the first ever held in Canada to nominate candidates for parliamentary honors. The assemblage met in the schoolhouse on the north street of Westminster, was attended by hundreds of earnest, ardent Reformers. I, though not of that stripe, attended as a mere spectator. Amongst the leaders were the Halls, the Hales, the Fergusons, the Beltons, Scatchards,

Ellises, Morals, Andersons, Nortons, Loves, Johnstons, Hanveys, Goodhues, Shaws, Bedalows, Dones, Lawtons, Deckers, Smiths, Tiffins, Crows, Farleys, Caseys, Coynes, Odells, Parks, Morses, etc.

The meeting was well conducted and some excellent speeches made. Old George Lawton, of Yarmouth, an educated, eloquent speaker, was the great orator of the day. Other fairly good speeches were made and some very inferior ones. Thomas Park, of London, and Elias Moore, of Yarmouth, were nominated and triumphantly elected at the ensuing election.

County elections in those days lasted the entire week. Some voters came more than sixty miles to vote for their favorite candidates. The county of Middlesex in those days included all the territory that is now Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, Huron, Perth and Bruce, a territory more than seventy miles square, extending from Lake Huron to Lake Erie, and from the town line of Zone to Burford. Any man who wished to become a member of parliament never sought a nomination from others. He nominated himself, visited some of the leading electors in the townships, went fearlessly to the polls, and was more frequently elected than defeated. The Government appointed a returning officer, who reigned supreme through the week—no ballots, no secret voting, a large open poll-book, each candidate having an active scrutineer, to prevent illegal voting. As the voter advanced to the poll, he was questioned as to his age, his citizenship, and his freehold. If all was right his vote was at once recorded. There was then no bribery, no perjury, no intimidation, but no man could vote unless he had a *bona fide* title to his estate which might be 100 acres or a mere town lot. Every evening we knew how the parties stood on the poll-book, and during the last two or three days of the week great exertions were made to bring in well known absent voters. Banners, music and parties of determined supporters of the different candidates would leave London early in the morning and go to Dunwich or Aldborough to bring in the voters. I've known a procession of more than twenty waggons well loaded with voters, with a band of music and banners flying; these men would march in a body and take possession of the polls, and the candidate who was twenty or thirty ahead last evening, would see that by noon the next day his competitor was twenty or thirty ahead of him.

MARRIAGES—THE PUBLISHMENT.

In the early days no dissenting minister was permitted by law to unite any parties in the bonds of holy wedlock. As we then had no Episcopal clergyman resident within fourteen miles, the magistrate officiated at all weddings. The intending bridegroom went to the squire and demanded a "publishment." This important document ran somewhat thus. "I, Ira Scofield, intend on the sixth day of May next, to unite in marriage, Mr. A. B., of London Township, to Miss C. D., of the Township of Lobo. You, and each of you, who read this document are demanded to come before me, at my office on Lot No. 4, in the Third Concession of London on or before the 1st day of May aforesaid and give some legal reason, if any there should be, why the aforesaid parties should not be joined in the holy bands of wedlock. Otherwise forever after hold your peace." The law required