

# THE WEEKLY EXPOSITOR,



OR REFORMER OF PUBLIC ABUSES,  
AND RAILWAY AND MINING INTELLIGENCE.

Vol. 1.]

MONTREAL, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1846.

[No. 6.

## LITERATURE.

### EIGHT YEARS IN CANADA, &c.

By the Author of "Tears," &c.

DE OMNIBUS REBUS ET QUIBUSDAM ALIIS.

[A difficulty of arrangement having occurred with the only two London publishers to whom the following pages have been submitted, the Author has decided on resuming the usual practice, and publishing in Canada first; thus affording the opportunity of a direct communication with other metropolitan publishers, which business from London renders a matter of much inconvenience. It will be borne in mind, therefore, by the Canadian reader, that what is now offered to his perusal was, intended first, for an English public.]

#### CHAPTER II.

On the 29th of March we took our leave of New York, and embarking on the Rochester, which, by reason of its being one of the earliest steamers of the season, was excessively crowded, ascended the beautiful Hudson as far as Albany, where, on the following morning, we took the cars for Utica. The scenery along the village of the Mohawk, through which we passed, was not at that early season of the year, when the air is bleak and the tree leafless, sufficiently developed to give it much claim to that character for loveliness which has been ascribed to it by the gifted pen of the first among American authors, Cooper; but from the graceful windings of the valley, the undulating hills, or rather hillocks, which enclose it on either hand, and the picturesque and prominent frame in which the whole is set, it was evident that it wanted but the glowing and fertilizing influence of a summer sun to render the landscape one of extreme beauty. Thus much for its character between Albany and Schenectady. From this latter place to Utica the scenery assumes a bolder character, and in the vicinity of a hamlet called, most appropriately, Canajoharie, are exhibited features which, although far inferior in grandeur, in some degree remind one of the mountain passes in Spain.

Utica was the point of termination of the luxurious rail-road travelling, and here I found that the real difficulties of an American spring journey were to commence. I had, as I have elsewhere remarked, a good deal of baggage, and the coach which was to proceed to Syracuse—a distance of fifty miles through (it was stated for our comfort) the most execrable of roads—was the only means by which I could have it transported. Now, as only a limited quantity of "plunder" was allowed to each passenger, there was no alternative than to take as many places in the coach as would pay for the extra baggage. This I did, still leaving one large case behind, to follow on the opening of the canal. To my dismay and surprise, however, I found that, while my trunks and packages had been stowed away in every available part of the coach, the full complement of passengers—most of them fat and heavy men—were preparing to take their places with me. I remonstrated with the agent—pointed out to him the injustice of filling the coach in this manner, after charging me for extra seats, and requested that, if he persisted in forcing these people upon me, he would at least return my money, when I might avail myself of some other conveyance. But I might as well have talked to the winds. The money was in his pocket, and my expostulation was unheeded. He said he had overloaded his coach with my additional "baggage," and that was his "look out." Then gentlemen wanted to go on, and they must go "any how," as well as me, while as for returning the money, he "guessed" he would do no such thing.

Finding it useless to remonstrate, I resigned myself to my fate, and ensconcing myself in a corner of the vehicle, with almost every hope of air taken from me by three of the stout men who sat on the centre bench, supported by a broad strap, that thumped ever and anon against my breast, I resolved to preserve a sullen silence, until released from my purgatory. But this was not to be the penance of a few hours. The roads, as had been truly enough stated, were execrable, even from the commencement of the journey, and as night approached, they grew worse. About midnight, the misery of our position was at its climax. The driver, a fellow who by the way preserved the most extraordinary good humour in the midst of so much difficulty, was frequently, after the most untiring exertions of guidance, compelled to stop in the middle of the road, and exclaim with an oath that he had got into an "almighty fix" for that amid

the mass of mud which surrounded him, he could not tell where the track lay. Then declaring that he would go "slick" through at all hazards, leaving his horses to find their own way, he would drag us over inequalities that threatened at every instant to overturn the coach, and what was worse than the mere act of overturning, to bury my unfortunate baggage in the sea of mire through which we moved. Finally, about two o'clock, we stuck fast, and no exertion of the horses could extricate us. The driver dismounted, and opening the door of the vehicle, courtously intimated that, unless the passengers would get out and walk through the mud, there was no chance of reaching Syracuse until the roads should begin to dry, for that his horses were completely done up. Cheerfully obeying his wish, the whole of the men, with the exception of myself, instantly alighted. I was in no mood, after having paid for my own and several extra places, to wade through deep and seemingly interminable mire, in a night so dark that the driver could not, without straining his vision, see his leaders' heads from his seat, and therefore determined not to move. Moreover, I had no inclination to abandon my baggage to the tender mercies of one who might, for ought I knew, take it into his head to lighten the outside of the coach even as he had done the inside.

Relieved of this mass of human flesh, the jaded yet spirited horses succeeded in extricating the wheels of the vehicle; and the driver resuming his seat, went on floundering as before, yet with the same almost unshaken good humor, and rather leaving the animals to pick their own road, than to guide them, until again we sank in a deep rut, from which no coaxing or whipping could prevail upon them to extricate their burden. Our case was now one of seeming hopelessness, and the only chance of relief we had was that the approaching dawn would shew us to be in the vicinity of some habitation, where assistance might be obtained. With bitter annoyance at my heart, and much the same sort of feeling with which a man takes a forced cold bath in December, I opened the door of the coach, and, plunging into the mud below, began to grope my way in the direction of the dark line before me, which I correctly assumed to be the whole breadth of the trackless road. I had not proceeded many yards, before, from increasing cold and dampness in one foot, I detected that I had lost one of my India-rubber shoes. This was a grievous deprivation at such a season, and in such a road; and satisfied, by feeling, of my loss, I retraced my steps as well as I could, making an ineffectual attempt to recover the lost treasure. But it was vain. The ill-fated shoe was buried far beneath the surface of the mud; and even if there had been light enough to have admitted of an examination, no track could have been found of the foot which had deposited its outward covering far beneath. My hands were much soiled in the fruitless search; and as I thought of Sir Francis Head and his mud-covered high boots, I now fully comprehended the sensible style of dress in which he had travelled, and the difficulties to which he must have been exposed. Giving up the shoe as irrecoverable, I again turned my back upon the horses, with the intention of "going a-head"; and had walked, as I thought, much more than a mile, when the dawning day revealed to me a rude inn on the right of the road, and the shivering passengers grouped around it—front, evidently waiting for the appearance of the vehicle they had so recently lightened. As the grey morning increased in strength, we looked backed in the direction from which it was expected, and, much to my satisfaction, I beheld the coach and horses (albeit still stationary) not more than a quarter of a mile from the house. On the driver coming up, I inquired if this was his third stoppage, and whether he had succeeded in extracting the coach after I had left it. He good humoredly "guessed" not; this had only been his second "fix," and he "rather" expected it would be his last before he reached Syracuse, as he knew where he now was, and the rest of the road was a little better than what we had passed through the preceding night. It was therefore obvious that I must have been floundering about nearly in a circle since leaving the coach, for I had assuredly walked the distance three or four times over, although I had not in reality made more than a quarter of a mile of actual progress.

On reaching the spot where we stood, the driver immediately, and as matter of course, put the services of the passengers under contribution, and they all repaired to the coach once more. Rails were taken from the fences near, and with those they raised and