

THE PASSING OF THE STAGE-COACH

patronized. Luxuries of all kinds were scarce. Musical instruments, for instance, were exceedingly rare even in towns and villages, and almost unknown in the country.

Life as a whole was harder and more prosaic then than now, and although the people generally were healthy, happy and hopeful, there was neither the wealth, the conveniences, the comforts nor the pleasures which are now enjoyed by the great mass of Canadians in all the well settled sections of the Dominion.

Such is a rough outline of the physical and social condition of affairs when our narrative begins. The prospects of the whole Province, however, were on the eve of being considerably brightened and bettered. We were about to enter upon one of those "growing times" which have periodically marked our country's career, and which did much to obliterate the memory of the hardships and dulness of the pioneer days of the past and inspire all classes of the people, whether the British settler or the French habitant, with brighter hopes and stronger confidence in their country's future.