

THE STRAIN OF THE WINTER WREN.

In a cool recess, where the water-cress
And the velvet mosses grow,
By the swamp's dim bed, at a fountain's head,
A sylvan seat I know;
And there you may hear, sweet, strong and clear,
At the early dawn, or when
The twilight dews their stars diffuse,
The strain of the winter wren.

A naiad's song the reeds among—
Love's carol across the hills—
A lilting tune o' light-heart June
Along the hurrying rills—
All these and more fling out their store,
Which melt together, when
There breaks on the ear, sweet, strong and clear,
The strain of the winter wren.

Brown bit of clay, no soul could stay
For long in that narrow part,
Thy breast it fills and then it thrills
The greater human heart;
It ripples forth to gladden earth,
The theme of some eager pen,
And the ages hear, sweet, strong, and clear,
The strain of the winter wren!

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THE STORY OF A FAMILY MIGRATION.

All the records of the early days of any region are of some value. The following is only an account of a family's settlement in Canada, and of its reasons and results, as gathered from old papers, portraits and tradition; but so remarkably meagre are the existing written or authentic contributions to the history of the large district, of whose community they formed part—the western frontier counties of Lower Canada—so completely have almost all early letters and documents relating to their period of settlement (1785-1840) disappeared, that the writer has little doubt that the present sketch, however worthless, will in some degree remain a reference. This will be his excuse for a somewhat excursive narrative. The English-speaking people of the border counties referred to, long formed a community by themselves. Towards the east, they were separated on the one hand, by Lake Champlain and by a wedge of French population along the Richelieu river, from the Eastern Townships proper. On the south, the Adirondack Mountain region, stretching along the frontier in the form of the Chateauguay Hills, kept them apart from any large American centre; while the great St. Lawrence, there widened into Lakes St. Francis and St. Louis, isolated them on the North and West. A few United Empire Loyalists had made some openings in the bush, after the War of the Revolution, but settlement was discouraged by the Government for military reasons, until some time after the war of 1812, when, especially from about 1820, a general movement, chiefly of Scotch immigrants, took place into the present counties of Huntingdon, Chateauguay and Beauharnois, and the country gave promise of rapid improvements. The townships of Lacolle and Odetown, which had previously made considerable advances, took part.

In Lacolle, a few acres from the frontier line, and six miles from Lake Champlain, stand the handsome old house and park, named Rockliffe Wood, the demesne of the Seignory. By its tall fluted pillars, trim-kept lawns and noble trees, it

attracts the traveller's glance. An estate of a thousand acres, much resembling an English one, surrounds it, about half on the Canadian, half on the American side, fenced for the most part by a solid masonry wall running up hill and down dale over the country. Here was established, in 1825, the earliest stock-farm in Canada. The father of Canadian stock-farming was Henry Hoyle, a Lancashire gentleman, whose grandson still inhabits Rockliffe Wood. He was born near Bacupakout in 1785, on lands which for many centuries had belonged to his family. The latter may be described, in the phrase of De Quincey, as "at least belonging to the armigerous portion of the population," as appears by old seals, letters, and similar indications, in the possession of his descendants, though his own occupation was that of farmer and cloth manufacturer. He was a man of upright conscience and strong religious fervour. During the war of 1812, his brother Robert, later generally known as Colonel Robert Hoyle, of Stanstead, came to Canada, and engaging in army contracting for supplies, and in lumbering on the Ottawa, acquired a large tract of land on the Lacolle border, which he named Hoyleville, and in connection with his operations, obtained advances, apparently both in cloth and money, from Henry. After the close of the war, Robert found his estate in difficulties. Henry sailed to Quebec in 1816 to safeguard his interests, travelled through by Montreal to Lacolle, took over Hoyleville in part settlement, and proceeded to New York, where he engaged his return passage. During the journey he kept a diary in three small books, which are preserved. On the evening before the day appointed for sailing, he was present at a party in New York. His diary enthusiastically records his impressions of a Knickerbocker widow and her three beautiful daughters, who were present as visitors from Albany. His heart was at once and irretrievably lost, he gave up his passage, and pressed suit for the hand of the widow, Mrs. Ten Eyck Schuyler, who he was not reluctant to hear was said to be one of the best matches in the State. He was accepted, married her, and forthwith proceeded to her place at Troy, near Albany. The Ten Eyck Schuyler mansion (for by the latter name the houses of the New York gentry were known), the home of Mrs. Schuyler and her first family, now known as the "Old Hoyle House," is still the most prominent historical landmark of the city of Troy. In its day it was one of the great mansions of the Hudson, and was surrounded with gardens and trees and an "estate," or combined grounds and farm, of about 75 acres; now it stands gaunt and bare in the railroad shunting-ground of the vast Burden Iron Works. The Dutch territorial aristocracy of the ex-Royal Province at that period still held a kindly and generous sway, and the old families were bound together by ties of traditional position and alliance. Mrs. Hoyle, a Visscher, of Claverack, was closely connected by blood with Stephen Van Rensselaer, the fifth Patroon Lord of Albany, whose princely manor-house, built in 1765, stood a few miles down the river, on the outskirts of that city, in the midst of his possessions, the two

counties of Albany and Rensselaer. His first husband, Major Ten Eyck Schuyler, represented the leading family in the country historically. He was the favorite nephew of General Philip Schuyler to whom was due the defeat of Burgoyne and therefore the success of the Revolution; and his ancestors, squires of the Flatts, Newark, Saratoga, and Fort Edward, including an extraordinary series of statesmen and soldiers, had no small claim to have been the principal instrument in the breaking of French power in America. Among his cousins by marriage were the Patroon Van Rensselaer and Alexander Hamilton, who, next to Washington, had made the United States a nation. Still another name in the nest of connections was President Van Buren, known in the family as "Cousin Matty."

Even the possessions and household surroundings of Mrs. Hoyle can be enumerated by means of the records referred to and by portions preserved. The Van Buren farm, on part of which the house stood, she had inherited from her mother's family. It now consisted of about 75 acres, valuable on account of its location part of the city of Troy. The house had been erected by her late husband, from whom she held for her children, a portion of the great Fort Edward Palace of the Schuylers. She had in bank between six and seven thousand dollars at that time equivalent to perhaps ten times the amount to-day. She had inherited from England out of the estate of her granduncle, General Garret Fischer, (Visscher) of the Grenadier Guards, who had greatly distinguished himself in the fighting the French toward Guadaloupe, at the end of the last century, a large share of valuables, among which were all his silver plate bearing his arms quartered with the ancient lion of the Traversors, the family coat-of-arms of his wife, Lady Sarah Traver. Around the walls of the house—in which, tradition also remarks, the fireplaces were of "marble brought from Italy," hung a great store of portraits, the accumulation of several generations of Schuylers, Van Rensselaers, Visschers, Ten Eycks, Van Burens, and Van Cortlands. The furniture was chiefly heirlooms, but elegant, for the Dutch were specialists on that point. Her coach and black footman come down in an envious tradition, which pretends that Mrs. Hoyle was misled as to her wealth, a statement easily refuted by his diary. The household servants had been manumitted in 1811, a grand ceremony of manumission had been held by Ten Eyck Schuyler, and all were set free. Slavery was not abolished by statute in New York until 1833. Gathering from portraits and tradition, Mrs. Hoyle was a gay dark-eyed, lively-natured woman, fond of society and generous to a fault. Mrs. Schuyler had been like her in these qualities, but he was blonde. Lovers in a queue, of a beautiful brown colour, adorned with her own of jet black, and a number of brooches of her gold ornaments. In these days the house was a centre of open-handed, uncalculating hospitality. The daughters, who were educated in the best style of those days, especially in the piano and the making of silk pictures. They moved in the Albany society, and there was constant