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MY RECOLLECTIONS OF TORONTO FORTY YEARS AGO.

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It is both profitable and pleasing, more especially in this country where development is so rapid, to look back to old times, when both Canada and you were comparatively young, and to reflect on the changes that have come over both.

"Forty years ago" is but a very short sentence to write, but what a world of experience it embraces! Forty years ago, the present "flowery month of May,"* the writer of these recollections left Montreal to commence the first strictly wholesale business established in Toronto. I was then a mere lad of seventeen, promoted by the partiality of friends to open perhaps the largest business west of Montreal, while others of my age were still attending school. Montreal then, as now, was the pleasantest city in Canada, with the exception of Quebec, and the contrast was great in leaving it and going into what was then nearly a wilderness, with a few cleared farms and the nuclei of villages scattered here and there, some of which have since grown into cities, while others have remained nearly stationary or dwindled away.

Forty years ago, Hamilton, London, Paris, Goderich, Oshawa, Bowman-

ville, and many other thriving cities and towns of Western Canada had no existence; while Cornwall, Prescott, Brockville, Kingston, Cobourg, Port Hope, Dundas, St. Catherines, Niagara, Brantford, Sandwich, and Amherstburg were but villages, and nearly all the intermediate towns and villages were not commenced.

The journey from Montreal to Prescott was by steamboat and stage alternately, the same as it was till a much later period. At Prescott, where we remained over night, I remember attending the consecration of a small, new Roman Catholic church, by the late Bishop Macdonald, of Kingston, who was the only Bishop at that time in Upper Canada. We embarked next morning on the old steamboat "Queenston," commanded by Capt. Whitney, and owned by the late Robert Hamilton, of Queenston, a brother of the Hon. John Hamilton, of Kingston, who, I believe, is the last survivor of a large family of enterprising and intelligent brothers, who did a great deal to open up and extend the commerce of the country. No other family that I remember, with the exception of the Crooks, did more in opening up Western Canada, though many single individuals did as much or more in proportion.*

The only passengers that I now

* This was written in May, 1868, and laid aside to be afterwards corrected; but as the time and opportunity for this has never occurred, it is now given as originally written, with possibly some inaccuracies, arising from defective memory.

* The only other British boat on Lake Ontario at that time was the "Alciope," Capt. Mosher. The "Great Britain" was built afterwards.