

A GERMAN TRAVELLER IN UPPER CANADA IN 1837

TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN

BY THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM RENWICK RIDDELL

[*Freidrich Gerstäcker, born in 1816, at Hamburg, sailed in 1837 for America on the Constitution. After remaining a short time in New York, he went up the Hudson to Albany, and then by the Erie Canal westward. The account below begins with his leaving Niagara Falls. It is believed that a foreigner's impressions of Upper Canada in those times may be of interest. The passages translated begin at page fifty-nine of the Tostenoble (Jena) edition of Gerstäcker's "Strief—und Jagdzüge durch die Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerikas."*]

MY heart was still full of this magnificent wonder of nature, and I had no desire to spend the night in the small town of Manchester, lying close by the Falls; so I followed the first road into the country which presented itself, partly to hunt and partly to seek out a house in which to find shelter for the night.

It was growing darker and darker, the mud becoming deeper and deeper, as I at last by good fortune noticed the glow of a light breaking like a guiding star through the ever-thickening gloom. It was the peaceful and pleasant dwelling of a Pennsylvania blacksmith who had settled here in the State of New York, and who, with generous hospitality, now fed the hungry and prepared a warm bed for the weary.

I heard here, as well as at several farm-houses, that Canada was a beautiful country, that game filled the woods there to overflowing and that bears and wolves not seldom gave occupation to the bold hunter.

Here, then, was the prospect of an interesting life. "Canada," "bear-hunt"—these two words were in themselves sufficient to unfold before me new and delightful pictures. Where I should go was a matter of absolutely no importance: I should get to know the country; and whether I began at the north or the south was all one.

So I did not require long consideration. On November 1st, a steamboat took me from Lewiston, a little town on the Niagara, to Toronto: at this place, however, I remained only a night, as I arrived very late, and early the next morning went by another boat on to Hamilton.

Hamilton is a pleasant little city on Lake Ontario, in Canada, and, though it lies but a short distance from the frontier of the United States, a very great difference can be observed, as well speaking generally as in many small particulars. The greater part of the settlers in Canada are English, Scotch or Irish; and these