

## CHAPTER II

### OLD RESIDENCES OF ANCASTER

"Green rollers breaking,  
On an ancient shore."

\* \* \*

Come out and hear the waters  
Shoot, the owlet hoot, the owlet hoot:  
Yon crescent moon, a golden boat,  
Hangs dim behind the tree, O!  
The dropping thorn makes white  
The grass, O sweetest lass.  
And sweetest lass;  
Come out and smell the ricks of hay  
Adown the croft with me, O!

—Old English Song.

\* \* \*



ES, come, come up  
the winding moun-  
tain road, higher  
and higher still,  
through ever purer,  
fresher air, up to  
old Ancaster, all in  
this leafy month of  
June, while "the  
roses bloom and the cuckoo sings all  
day." Come, and drink full measure  
of the healing beauty of the early sum-  
mer which, like a great green wave,  
has broken in spray of blossom, and  
streams of emerald on leaf and grass  
through all the sunny land.

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Enter with reverence this cathedral  
of the rolling year, so full of pictures  
and carvings and delicate tracery and  
vistas pleasant to the eye.

Bend to hear the pulse of nature's  
heart beat,  
And in it find the truest voice of God.

Here in the green temple, surrounded  
by miracles, it is easier to understand  
our own Tennyson when he writes of  
the—

Flowers in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies;  
Hold you here, root and all, in my  
hand  
Little flower, but if I could under-  
stand  
What you are, root and all, and all in  
all.  
I should know what God and man is.

It is a royal progress, that gradual  
ascent to Ancaster, and even the no-  
bodies must turn their heads in right  
royal fashion from side to side to  
greet the "woodsey smell" of the  
mossy fern carpet spread over the  
rocks there in the shade, to catch a  
breath from "the far off greenhouses  
of God"—to quote the Khan's beauti-  
ful conception—"To look deep into the  
rocky gorge where the bridge crosses  
over a real Hieland stream foaming  
down in haste after rains, round bould-  
ers and over hollows to join fortunes  
with the Yuba hastening from its work  
above at Ancaster."

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Just here the road begins to crawl,  
and so do the horses, giving time to  
enjoy all the beauteous vale of foun-  
tains, which lies revealed, perhaps in  
level beams of evening, to the never  
satisfied eye. A wonderful old basin  
it is which meets the downward glance  
with a strange story of the conflict of  
time seamed and furrowed on its aged  
face; so water-worn, so evidently once  
the head of Lake Ontario, that a very  
limited imagination could picture it  
overflowing with a wild, dark play of  
waters in which strange saurians  
swam and sported—a dusky chaos,  
spreading from rim to rim of the val-  
ley, where now the peach and apple  
bloom, and the happy fields spread out  
beside the streams, and where the dis-  
tant spires of Dundas, that Sleeping  
Beauty in her wood, make the behold-  
er cordially endorse the entry made  
long ago by William Chambers, of  
Chambers' Journal fame, in his notes  
on Canadian Travel: "Passed by Dun-  
das, a place to live and die in." Clear  
case of love at first sight, from a car  
window! Presumably it was good luck  
and water privileges, more than inher-  
ent good taste, which led the earliest  
forefathers of the hamlet to form a  
nucleus at Ancaster, but it is hard to  
imagine, looking back from the turn  
of the mountain, how they could pos-