

Correspondence.

Emigration and Misrepresentation.

To the Editor.

SIR—It may not be uninteresting to my brother-farmers to place before them my views and ideas on emigration, and its misrepresentation. I am the more induced to do this, from the strong impression, which is gaining ground through this country, and consequently, by reflection, through England, that the emigrants lately arrived under the charge of Mr. Currie and others have not been fairly dealt with, but have been deceived by too highly coloured accounts of Canada. Their own complaints are bitter enough for the philanthropists at home to hear, without having it believed in this country to be a fact "that any ordinary emigrant, especially a skilled mechanic, is quite out of his element here, and not wanted," and is unable to make a living; also, "that even labourers who hired here with farmers have been grossly deceived," by false representations from those gentlemen who have so kindly come forward with money and time, to assist those to emigrate to Canada who avowedly cannot live at home. The immigrant even complains that he cannot get his money after having earned it, and has been discharged without it. We all are aware that our laws afford instant relief in these cases. Also, that the remuneration was very small, only about \$10 a month, with board; and for board, the word was a misnomer, as he could not get even sugar in his tea. A gentleman who writes over the signature "Canadian Owl," in the *London Field*, goes further yet, and says that not even can any gentleman with £300 sterling (about \$1,600) get a living in Canada. All these accusations most seriously affect our farming community, and although distorted and exaggerated from the smallest foundations of truth, are very far from just, and not by any means the *whole truth*. These false representations are most injurious to us. We want cheaper labour and more of it. There are plenty of enterprises that are difficult to be made to pay, from this reason alone, but there is also an abundance of employment for labour, as capital is at present engaged. We will take the charges seriously, and see what truth they really possess, and what portion of the *whole truth* is not mentioned. I employ about nine or ten men, with wages from \$22 to \$26 and \$38 a month, who board themselves. I have never got any efficient hands for less, that were used to the country. All my men but two board with some one of their fellow workmen who are married, and they pay for their board about \$2 a week. They never ask for or are allowed sugar in their tea; they all would consider it a superfluity, if not an extravagance. I have had many men at work, during a period extending over up-

wards of nine years, at my present avocation, and have had no complaint whatever worth mentioning about board - and I board more plainly than many others do.

As for people being grossly deceived by the gentlemen at home concerning the value of their labour in Canada, it is simply false. There has been no deception whatever. The regular price of labour by the day is one dollar, for an ordinary labouring man; and for mechanics, I will venture to say that if all the contractors and master-men in the cities here, and elsewhere, were to show their pay-lists, by which their labour is paid every two weeks, that in no instance would you find a good mechanic working for less than \$1 25 to \$1 50, and often \$1 75 to \$2, without board. I am quite well acquainted with what I assert, and challenge any one to prove the contrary. In the country, mechanics are not always required, except in some manufacturing villages, but in the country the active, civil labourer can always find work, at such rates as are paid for ordinary labour.

But even here *all* the truth is not told. Labour is governed by the great law of supply and demand. If you bring into any locality in the world a number of hands, unless where some great contract is just commencing, the first feeling in the employer's mind is, "Now there will be plenty of labour, and I can get it cheaper. Immigrants have arrived, and I can do better than I have done." The employer at once, naturally, offers employment at reduced rates, at which the immigrant is hugely disgusted. I have often had them say to me, "I did not come to Canada to work for the same or less than I got at home, but to get the high wages that you are giving to your other hands." Nine times out of ten the employer refuses this, on various pleas, sometimes on the ground of inefficiency, sometimes on the ground of the immigrant being a greenhorn; but most generally the true reason is that there is an opportunity to reduce the price of his labour by the quantity of the supply.

But what is the state of the immigrant soon after? We will suppose he takes the low price offered, and for a time suffers hardship. The pay list again soon shows that this is only temporary, that there are no men employed at low rates for any length of time, unless when wheat is 60c. a bushel, and pork 1c. a pound. Then men's labour is cheaper, and well it may be, as living is cheap also.

The immigrant soon finds his proper level. If a good mechanic, he soon can better himself at other shops; and if a good labourer, as soon as he learns to do the farm work done here as others do it, and as fast, he can do better where first hired or elsewhere, and he soon finds it out. There again, every farmer will prove I am speaking truth, as it is the universal rule. There is no doubt whatever that any man, gentle or simple mechanic or labourer, who has a wife and family, without money, will suffer in any

country on the face of the globe, until he gets into the ways of the new country, and acquires some capital, furniture, &c., necessarily wanted for their support; and these privations are doubled by having generally to travel about in search of employment with a family, often as many as six or more. The fault lies, not for one moment in the country, but in the fact that a man has incurred certain liabilities he is unable to meet.

I have often thought of a scheme to meet these great objections to families emigrating without means, where single men would find no difficulty, but I shall confine myself now to answering those objections and accusations made by others, without entering into the remedy adapted for the future.

In answer to "Canadian Owl," stating that "farming in Canada is no place for a gentleman," even if possessed of £300, or \$1,600 currency, I have only to say, to show the utter fallacy, and I had almost said misrepresentation, of such a remark, that I will take eight out of any ten gentlemen he may name, who have always lived in idleness and comparative ease, and offer them any one business that they may select from one end of King Street, Toronto, to the other, and they shall have even a moderate, small capital—and after a few years they will have lost every cent of it. And this rule applies to any city in the United States or elsewhere; and why is this the case? Because they know nothing about the business, and cannot for one moment contend with those who do, and live as they have been accustomed to live, "like gentlemen." I will freely leave this fact to the decision of any board of merchants or manufacturers, professionals or agents. They are all well posted in their business, and the "gentleman" knows nothing about it.

The same thing applies to an agricultural life, for a person of the class referred to, but with better prospects of not losing all his capital. He will suffer deprivation, and will find farming in Canada not what he has been accustomed to think it, that is to say, that he can work for a month in the spring, put in a good breadth of crop, and then take all the sporting pleasures he has been accustomed to until harvest; then another month's work, and sell the produce—and a winter's ease is the reward. Here again the fault is not in the country, but in the man. After the gentleman has farmed for two or three years, supposing he had money enough to buy his farm, he very often sells out to some one else, and goes to some other employment more congenial to his former life and tastes, and now he often succeeds—that is, if he has had strength of mind to keep out of debt at any cost. Self-denial has been his first great lesson, and his farm now by its sale affords the means of the capital required, and success is then by no means rare.

You may, as well send such a man to one quarter of the globe as another. He will