

PREFACE.

IN compiling this, the first Gazetteer of Canada West, I was induced to undertake the task by the great ignorance which I found to exist respecting the Province, not only amongst persons in Great Britain, or newly-arrived emigrants, but even amongst many of those who had been for years resident in the country; and from ascertaining that the various, contradictory, and occasionally false accounts given to emigrants on their arrival, respecting distant localities, frequently led them to alter their original intentions respecting their destination; and often induced them to leave the Province altogether, and settle in the United States. This I found to be the case myself, on my arrival in Canada, when I was told that I should find the western borders of the Province a complete wilderness—that on the River St. Clair, for instance, there was a marked difference between the appearance of the country on the American and on the British side—that on the former all was bustle and activity, fine farms and flourishing orchards; while on the Canadian side nothing was to be seen but uncleared forest—and that the Western District was very sickly. In travelling by stage, during the winter of 1844, from London to Chatham, one of my fellow passengers, who had been for some years in the Province, told me that he was going to Chatham, from whence he intended to cross over the river to Detroit; and he was astonished when informed, that to reach Detroit, he would have to travel *fifty miles* farther! Again, during the last year, I remember seeing amongst the articles in the newspapers respecting the western railroads, Windsor and Sandwich spoken of as *being on the River St. Clair*!

Respecting the natural productions and capabilities of the Province, I have found also quite as much misinformation. Many persons, for instance, have been quite surprised to hear that marble was plentiful in the Province; and one individual told me, as a very great secret, that he had made what he considered a most valuable discovery, that in the course of his explorations about Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay, he had discovered a quarry of white marble, but he thought the secret so valuable that he would not tell the situation in which he had found it.

To collect materials for the first Gazetteer of any country, (which in itself implies that it is a Gazetteer of a *new* country,) may truly be called “the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties;” which may be supposed to be the reason, that although it is now three hundred years since the first settlement was made in Canada, no one has hitherto had sufficient resolution to undertake and carry through the task. These difficulties arise principally from the obstructions and inconveniences of travelling in remote places, and from the difficulty in many