

fair province of Ontario forty years ago. At that period, there were settlers still living, whose farms yielded them ample and independent support, whose first beginnings obliged them to carry their seed for the first crop upon their backs, from Little York (now Toronto), a distance of one hundred miles through the woods, by an Indian trail, known then as the Mohawk Road. Things were at this time, however, in a sort of transition state; immigration of people of social standing and considerable private means, as well as hosts of agricultural laborers and mechanics began to pour in to occupy the wild lands, and the prospects of future progress were as promising as could well be desired; when, in that same year, 1837, the unnatural and detestible rebellion broke out, which threw Canada back in the scale of advancement nearly twenty years. But in spite of all obstructions, nature was bound to maintain the supremacy of her laws; and it became clear enough to the inhabitants of Canada, that unless they chose to abandon the great inheritance bequeathed upon them in their birth as British subjects, they must advance in material condition with the genius of the age; or their country and themselves would inevitably be swallowed up by the stranger looking in at the window, whose energies are ever keeping pace with the fittest to fight the great battle of life.

The revolution that has taken place in the state of communication in Canada, and with that change the enormous advance in all matters connected with civilization, within the last twenty years, is perhaps as astounding as the world ever saw; and far surpasses in degree, comparatively, the results attained in Great Britain in the course of two centuries. But in Canada as well as in Scotland, the less intelligent classes were hard to move out of the old groove; and well do I remember, after good plank or macadamised roads were constructed, how these people clung like parasites to the old tracks; carrying half-loads, wearing and tearing both waggons and horses ruinously, rather than pay a sixpenny toll for easy, rapid and safe communication. In 1837 not one solitary iron rail was laid in Canada;—In 1864 there were about 2,000 miles of iron railroad complete and running, and at the present time there is little if anything less than 4,000 miles, inclusive of the Great Intercolonial, in perfect working order. This estimate is exclusive of the great Canada Pacific, and sundry other projected lines, now under the Engineership in Chief of my old friend, Mr. Sandford Fleming, who also constructed the Intercolonial; the latter being recognized as the finest structure of the kind on the continent of North America, and is allowed to rank among the best railroads in the world.

In 1853 I surveyed a section of country between Lake Huron and the Ottawa, by the valleys of the Muskoka and the Petewahweh, returning by the valleys of the Bonne Chere and Madawaska to Balsam Lake. At that time the whole extent of that vast region was a complete, unbroken, and unknown wilderness, with the exception of some lumbering localities near the mouths of the rivers falling into the Ottawa. Now, the whole country is intersected by roads; townships have been laid off; villages have sprung into existence; lumbering limits have extended to the shores of Lakes